

# **Queen Mary University of London Assessment Handbook 2020-21**

# Contents

Contents .....	1
1. Introduction .....	6
Scope .....	6
Further information .....	6
Assessment calendar 2020-21 .....	7
Degree Examination Board meetings 2020-21 .....	7
2. Assessment framework and delegations .....	8
Degree awarding powers .....	8
Management of academic standards .....	8
Examination boards .....	8
Relationship between examination boards and other committees of the Senate .....	8
Delegated authority .....	8
Academic Regulations .....	9
Queen Mary Academic Credit Framework .....	9
Assessment requirements for modules, programmes, and awards .....	9
Modules .....	9
Programmes .....	10
Awards .....	11
3. Setting assessment .....	12
Degree awarding powers .....	12
General .....	12
In-course assessment .....	12
Dissertations and projects .....	12
In-class tests .....	13
Examination papers for invigilated examinations .....	13
Procedure .....	13
Oral examinations .....	13
Assessment for resitting students .....	14
Resitting assessment that requires regular attendance .....	14
Resitting in-course assessment .....	14
Resitting dissertation and projects .....	15
Resitting examinations .....	15
Alternative assessment .....	15
Preparing students for summative assessments .....	16
3. Conduct of invigilated examinations .....	17
Official examination periods .....	17
Examination and assessment access arrangements ('special arrangements') .....	17

Religious holidays .....	17
Examination timetables.....	18
Clashes .....	18
Invigilation arrangements .....	18
Problems with examinations.....	18
Emergency evacuations.....	18
Suspected examination offences .....	19
Invigilator and student reports .....	19
Consideration of reports by Subject Examination Boards .....	19
Archiving examination scripts .....	19
5. Marks and Marking .....	20
Marking schemes .....	20
Code of Practice on Double Marking and Moderation .....	20
Preliminary.....	20
Underlying principles applicable to all methods.....	20
The 50 percent rule .....	21
The five methods .....	21
Resolving differences between markers .....	23
Marking trails .....	23
In-course assessment .....	24
Scaling and standard-setting .....	24
Scaling.....	25
Standard setting .....	25
Reporting.....	25
Students who answer too many examination questions .....	25
Students who exceed or do not meet a specified word limit .....	25
Late submission of coursework and other in-course assessment .....	26
Marking assessments for students with specific learning disabilities .....	26
Late diagnosis of Specific Learning Difficulties .....	27
Anonymous marking.....	27
Collaborative programmes.....	27
Designation and preparation of marks .....	27
Responsibilities.....	27
Calculation of marks.....	27
Designation of marks .....	28
Designation of awards .....	28
Submission of marks and subsequent changes .....	28
Publication of marks and awards.....	29
6. Subject and Degree Examination Boards.....	31
General .....	31

Membership and officers .....	32
Chair .....	32
Secretary .....	33
Scheduling SEB meetings .....	33
How many meetings are needed? .....	33
Preparing for the SEB meeting .....	34
Generating reports.....	34
Review of reports .....	34
Production and circulation of papers .....	34
Sub-boards.....	35
Running an SEB meeting .....	36
Preliminary items.....	36
Consideration of module results.....	38
Consideration of student results.....	38
External examiners' reports and other matters.....	41
After the SEB meeting.....	42
Servicing examination boards.....	42
SEB reports to DEBs.....	44
Degree Examination Boards .....	44
Academic Regulations .....	46
Quick reference guide to examination board authorities .....	46
7. Student Failure and Reassessment .....	47
Agreeing failure.....	47
Reassessment .....	47
Resits .....	48
Resitting individual elements of assessment.....	49
Retakes.....	50
Required retakes.....	50
Retaking dissertations and projects.....	50
Recommending and agreeing retakes .....	50
Requests to retake after the SEB.....	51
8. External Examiners .....	52
General.....	52
Purpose of external examiners.....	53
Appointment of external examiners.....	53
Period of appointment .....	53
Moderation of assessment .....	54
External examiners' views .....	54
Views that contravene regulations or guidance .....	55
External examiners' reports .....	55

9. Extenuating Circumstances .....	56
Basic principles .....	56
Informing students of EC procedures .....	56
Submission of extenuating circumstances .....	56
Late submission of extenuating circumstances .....	57
Fitness to sit and absence from examinations .....	57
Illness during examinations.....	57
Decision making.....	58
Extenuating circumstances sub-boards.....	58
Consideration of claims .....	59
Deferral of decisions .....	59
Double counting.....	59
Possible EC outcomes.....	59
Rejection .....	60
First sits .....	60
First takes .....	61
Discounting elements of assessment.....	61
Deferring classification (certain UG programmes only) .....	61
Discounting credits from classification (certain UG programmes only) .....	61
Discretion in classification and progression .....	61
Monitoring.....	62
10. Exceptions and Special Cases.....	63
Loss of work, scripts and marks by Queen Mary .....	63
Suspension of regulations .....	63
Authority to request and grant a suspension of regulations.....	64
Procedure.....	64
Academic Misconduct (assessment offenses).....	65
Debtors.....	65
Terminated students .....	65
Non-terminated students .....	66
Aegrotat provisions.....	66
Academic appeals.....	66
Revocation of degrees .....	67
Data protection and release of information .....	67
Appendices.....	68
Glossary of Terms.....	69
Queen Mary Assessment Strategy .....	72
Notes on the Use of Amanuenses:.....	74
Guidelines for Schools and Tutors .....	74
Examination Board Structure 2020-21.....	76

Undergraduate examination boards 2020-21 .....	76
Postgraduate examination boards 2020-21 .....	77
Generating SEB Reports from MySIS .....	78

# 1. Introduction

## Scope

- 1.1 The Assessment Handbook provides the regulatory framework, policy, and procedures for the assessment of all taught students (and research students taking taught modules). It is designed to ensure consistent approaches to the management of academic standards.
- 1.2 The Assessment Handbook contains useful advice and information for all staff involved in the assessment of students, including academic and administrative staff. It does not extend to research students studying for an MPhil or PhD.
- 1.3 The Assessment Handbook should be used as a companion document to the Academic Regulations. It should also be used alongside the [Assessment Strategy](#), which focuses on pedagogical issues. The Academic Regulations (including previous iterations) and other policy documents, can be found on the [ARCS website](#).
- 1.4 The Assessment Handbook is approved by the Senate.
- 1.5 The following are common acronyms used in the Handbook and in assessment at Queen Mary more generally:
  - ❖ ARCS Academic Registry and Council Secretariat
  - ❖ BDS Bachelor of Dental Surgery (UG Dentistry programme)
  - ❖ DEB Degree Examination Board
  - ❖ EC/ECs Extenuating circumstance(s)
  - ❖ MBBS Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (UG Medicine programme)
  - ❖ PG/PGT Postgraduate/Postgraduate taught
  - ❖ SEB Subject Examination Board
  - ❖ TNE Transnational education
  - ❖ UG Undergraduate

## Further information

- 1.6 Staff comments or queries on the Assessment may be directed to the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance) or the Academic Quality and Standards Officer. The Handbook is written for staff, but if a student has a query then they should contact their academic school or institute.
- 1.7 The following external sites hold information applicable to the sector more generally. Queen Mary is not responsible for the content of external websites:
  - ❖ [The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education \(QAA\)](#)
    - ◆ [Quality Code](#)
    - ◆ [Subject benchmark statements](#)
    - ◆ [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications \(FHEQ\)](#)
  - ❖ [Advance HE](#)
  - ❖ [The Office for Students \(OfS\)](#)
  - ❖ [The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#)

## Assessment calendar 2020-21

1.8 The calendar below includes the key dates related to assessment for this academic year. The full academic calendar is available on the [ARCS website](#).

Dates for 2020-21 have not yet been set. They will be published here in due course.

## Degree Examination Board meetings 2020-21

1.9 The Degree Examination Boards will meet on the following dates:

❖ Examination Board Briefing	DATE
❖ UG Dentistry DEB	DATE
❖ UG TNE (China programmes) DEB	DATE
❖ UG Medicine (MBBS) DEB	DATE
❖ UG Humanities and Social Sciences DEB 1	DATE
❖ UG Humanities and Social Sciences DEB 2	DATE
❖ UG Science and Engineering DEB 1	DATE
❖ UG Science and Engineering DEB 2	DATE
❖ PGT DEB (all faculties)	DATE
❖ PGT Humanities and Social Sciences DEB	DATE
❖ PGT Science and Engineering DEB	DATE
❖ PGT Medicine and Dentistry DEB	DATE



## 2. Assessment framework and delegations

### Degree awarding powers

- 2.1 The University of London delegates authority to Queen Mary to make awards of the University (Ordinances, 12-15). Queen Mary also possesses and exercises independent degree awarding powers. All new cohorts are registered for Queen Mary awards unless individual programme/award regulations specify otherwise.

### Management of academic standards

- 2.2 Responsibility for the management of academic standards is delegated to the Senate (Charter, 11). The Senate delegates authority for the consideration of awards, progression, and student achievement to the examination boards. The application of this authority is specified in the Academic Regulations.
- 2.3 The [Quality Assurance Agency \(QAA\)](#) also sets standards for the management of academic standards and the assessment of students, in its [Quality Code for Higher Education](#). Queen Mary is required to adhere to all sections of the Quality Code.

### Examination boards

- 2.4 Queen Mary operates a two-tier system of examination boards: Subject Examination Boards (SEBs) and Degree Examination Boards (DEBs). The terms of reference and membership of [Subject](#) and [Degree Examination Boards](#) are included in the Assessment Handbook.
- 2.5 SEBs agree module results and failure, student progression, and extenuating circumstances claims. They make recommendations to DEBs on awards, classifications, retakes/first takes, and requests for the suspension of regulations. SEBs meet in February (associates), June (main UG boards, PG resit/progression), August/September (UG resit/progression), and October (main PG boards).
- 2.6 DEBs consider and agree recommendations for awards, classifications, and retakes/first takes. Progression and module marks are implicitly endorsed by DEBs. DEBs consider recommendations for the suspension of regulations and must endorse these requests if they are to be considered by the Academic Registrar. DEBs ensure consistency and fairness between SEBs and the proper application of regulations; an external member may sit on a DEB to help meet these aims. DEBs meet in June/July, and October.

### Relationship between examination boards and other committees of the Senate

- 2.7 Programme and module proposals and amendments are considered by the Taught Programmes Board and/or the relevant Teaching and Learning Committee (or equivalent). Changes to the Academic Regulations and other institutional governance and policy are considered by the Senate. Task and finish groups may be established to work on specific assessment projects and make recommendations to the Senate. There is more information on the Senate and its committees [online](#).

### Delegated authority

- 2.8 Authority for the award of degrees and management of academic standards is delegated through a clear cascade from the Senate. The full framework of these delegations is in the Academic Regulations; this includes delegations to Heads of Schools and Institutes.
- 2.9 Heads of Schools/Institutes will normally appoint nominees for procedures such as authorising interruptions of study, and investigating assessment offences and disciplinary cases. Further advice on appropriate delegations of authority can be sought from ARCS.

## Academic Regulations

- 2.10 The Academic Regulations set out common rules for the management of academic standards and form the basis of Queen Mary's contract with students. In publishing the Academic Regulations, Queen Mary makes a clear statement on the ways in which it assesses the achievement of academic standards and the bases for the conferment of awards.
- 2.11 The Academic Regulations are amended annually and issued with guidance identifying changes from previous iterations. The majority of regulations apply to all students. Examples of regulations that may not normally be amended during an individual student's period of registration include those on progression, award, and duration of study.
- 2.12 Advice for staff on the application and interpretation of the Academic Regulations can be sought from the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance) or the Academic Quality & Standards Officer. Students should contact their school/institute, or the [Student Advice Centre](#).

## Queen Mary Academic Credit Framework

- 2.13 The Queen Mary Academic Credit Framework (QMACF) provides a structure for all Queen Mary programmes leading to an award of Queen Mary or the University of London. The QMACF informs curriculum design and structure, and the ways in which Queen Mary understands and expresses its academic standards. The QMACF is reflected in the Academic Regulations and in programme and module regulations.

## Assessment requirements for modules, programmes, and awards

### Modules

- 2.14 Assessment requirements (including weightings and reassessment details) for every module are laid out in the module specification and regulations. These are agreed through the module approval processes (Academic Regulations, Section 1). Guidance on module amendment and approval is available [online](#), and from the Academic Quality and Standards Officers in ARCS.
- 2.15 Students will be informed of the assessment requirements for each module at the start of the academic year. Only approved assessment methods can be used in the processing and agreement of results. Rarely, it may be necessary to make minor amendments to module assessment in the course of the academic year due to unforeseen circumstances. In this situation, advice must always be sought from ARCS.
- 2.16 All elements of assessment are categorised as one of the following types:
- ❖ **Invigilated examination (EXM/EXN)**  
A formal, timed and invigilated assessment that takes place under the regulations for invigilated examinations.  
To include but not limited to: seen and unseen examinations (including on-line examinations).
  - ❖ **Coursework (CWK)**  
An assessment that takes place during the module.  
To include but not limited to: essays, reports, presentations, poster presentations, seminar/tutorial work, in-class or in-semester tests, mid-session examinations, project proposals, gobbet exercises and homework sheets.

- ❖ Practical (PRA)  
An assessment that requires the application or demonstration of knowledge and/or skills/competencies in a practical context.  
To include but not limited to: laboratory work, computer work, performances, fieldwork, Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) and oral assessments in languages.
- ❖ Dissertation/project (DIS)  
An extended piece of independent study that is assessed by the output report or long essay.  
To include but not limited to: dissertations, research projects and project reports.
- ❖ Professional capability (CAP)  
An assessment of a student's professional attitude and conduct to meet the requirements of a Professional and Statutory Regulatory Body.  
To include but not limited to: assessment of behaviour and conduct (primarily for primary qualifying medical and dental qualifications but may be appropriate in other programmes).
- ❖ Final mark (FIN)  
Used by ARCS to denote module marks awarded for by non-Queen Mary modules.  
To include: intercollegiate and study abroad modules.

- 2.17 It is good practice to review module syllabi and requirements annually. Any changes must be made by a specified deadline well before the start of the academic year, using module amendment or proposal forms. These shall be considered for approval by the relevant school/institute Teaching and Learning Committee (or equivalent). The exact processes and levels of approval required depend upon the nature of the amendments; further details are available [online](#), and from the Academic Quality and Standards Officers in ARCS.
- 2.18 When changes to modules are approved, the responsible school or institute must communicate this to other schools whose students take the modules as part of their programmes of study.
- 2.19 Modules may specify prerequisites. These may be generic (e.g. 'A-Level French or equivalent'), or specific modules. Prerequisites can be waived on the direct or delegated authority of the Head of School/Institute; this is normally be delegated to programme directors or module organisers.
- 2.20 Each module is 'owned' by a single Subject Examination Board (SEB), which is responsible for setting assessment and agreeing results. Teaching may be delivered by other schools or institutes where appropriate and necessary, though this is rare.
- 2.21 Students frequently take modules belonging to multiple SEBs. SEBs must ensure that all results are submitted to SITS by the published deadlines, and that the dates of other SEBs are noted. The responsible SEB must inform those other affected SEBs if any results will not be submitted by the deadline. Failure to submit marks by the deadline risks the other SEB making incorrect decisions.

## Programmes

- 2.22 Programme requirements are detailed in the programme specification and regulations, agreed through the programme approval and amendment processes. Programme specifications include learning outcomes, and how those are to be assessed. Programme specifications also include details of modules that are core, compulsory, and elective for the programmes, and the patterns through which these will be studied; this is known as the 'diet'. Students should be informed of their programme requirements at the start of their studies.

- 2.23 Any regulations that deviate from the Academic Regulations must be stated in the programme specification. Deviations (known as special regulations) are subject to approval from the Taught Programmes Board and/or the Education Quality and Standards Board (as appropriate) and will be granted only in exceptional cases, eg where professional accreditation requirements apply. Guidance on programme approval and amendment is available [online](#), and from the Academic Quality and Standards Officers in ARCS.
- 2.24 Changes to the programme structures are normally phased in so that changes only affect new cohorts of students. This is not always possible however and, where there is a clear rationale, changes may be proposed during the course of a student's studies. The student body must be consulted in these instances to take account of their concerns (Academic Regulations, Section 1). Once this consultation has taken place, changes to programme specifications must be agreed through the Taught Programmes Board in the normal manner.
- 2.25 Should changes to programme specifications be required for one year only, or should they only relate to a specific group of students, then a suspension of regulations may be sought to permit students to take a diet of modules that is not formally approved. For example, should a module be unexpectedly cancelled at late notice, a suspension of regulations should be sought to permit students for whom the module was compulsory to take an alternative module.

### Awards

- 2.26 Award and progression requirements are specified in the Academic Regulations (Sections 4 (UG) and 5 (PGT)). Where non-standard requirements have been approved, these are detailed in the Special Regulations (Sections 6 and 7).

## 3. Setting assessment

### Degree awarding powers

- 3.1 The University of London delegates authority to Queen Mary to make awards of the University (Ordinances, 12-15). Queen Mary also possesses and exercises independent degree awarding powers. All new cohorts are registered for Queen Mary awards unless individual programme/award regulations specify otherwise.

### General

- 3.2 Assessments are set and approved as part of the module approval process, and details (including reassessment information) should be communicated to students at the start of the academic year.
- 3.3 Every element of assessment must be tied to specific learning outcomes for the associated module. The marking scheme for the assessment should likewise measure the learning outcomes, though where these are 'generic', the assessment marking schema may likewise be generic. The most commonly used marking schemes/systems are criterion referencing, model answers, and skeleton answers. Queen Mary recognises the need for variations in practice in the use of marking schemes to take account of discipline-based differences.

### In-course assessment

- 3.4 In-course assessment refers to all module assessment except for examinations. The following assessment categories used at Queen Mary are considered as in-course assessment: coursework, practical assessment, professional capability, and dissertation/project. Definitions of the assessment categories are [detailed in the Assessment Handbook](#).
- 3.5 Examples of good practice and approaches for designing in-course assessment can be found in the [Assessment Strategy](#).
- 3.6 There is no formal requirement for in-course assessment to be approved by external examiners. However, it is good practice to seek external examiners' views on the nature of proposed assessments. Where modules are assessed solely by in-course assessments, SEBs are strongly encouraged to discuss the assessment design with the external examiner, as well as student performance and results. SEBs must supply marking schemes to external examiners at the time of sending the assessment itself. These can (and should) still be amended following comments from the externals or discovery of alternative solutions.

### Dissertations and projects

- 3.7 Titles for individual dissertations and projects shall be agreed between students and supervisors. Titles may be selected from prescribed lists or derived from discussions. Marking schemes tailored to the specific module learning outcomes shall be made available to students at the beginning of the academic year (as is the case for all modules).
- 3.8 It is strongly recommended that supervisors and students keep summary records of supervision meetings. These are helpful for monitoring progress and can be useful in allegations of inadequate supervision.

## In-class tests

- 3.9 The dates of tests shall be released at the start of the academic year, and the conditions under which the tests will take place shall be communicated to students in writing in advance.

## Examination papers for invigilated examinations

- 3.10 It is the responsibility of Heads of Schools and Institutes to ensure that appropriate examination procedures are in place. However, it is the responsibility of SEB Chairs to oversee the production and agreement of examination papers. This shall normally be delegated to a subset of examiners known as a scrutiny committee. The Queen Mary procedures and policies may be found in the Production of Examination Papers document, circulated annually by ARCS.
- 3.11 Every SEB must operate a Scrutiny Sub-board to ensure the quality and standards of the papers. As well as ensuring that the questions (and answers) are fully correct, the Sub-board shall ensure that no errors in spelling or grammar are present.

## Procedure

- 3.12 Examination papers (both questions and solutions) shall be prepared by internal examiners in accordance with Queen Mary's approved [minimum standards](#) and [template](#). These shall be reviewed by scrutiny committees (sub-committees of SEBs) before being sent to the appropriate external examiners for review and approval.
- 3.13 SEBs must ensure that papers are entirely free of grammatical and typographical errors before sending them to external examiners. SEBs must supply marking schemes to external examiners at the time of sending the assessment itself. These can (and should) still be amended following comments from the externals or discovery of alternative solutions. Any comments or amendments suggested by the external examiner must be responded to and acted upon.
- 3.14 Should an external examiner refuse to agree an examination paper, a report must be submitted to the Chair of the DEB, and to the Academic Registrar (or nominee). The Chair of the DEB shall rule on whether or not the paper should be approved, or if amendments are needed. This decision shall be based upon consideration of both the external examiner's objections, and the viewpoint presented by the school or institute responsible for setting the examination paper.
- 3.15 The final copies of examination papers shall be approved by SEB Chairs before the question paper is submitted to Registry by the set deadline.
- 3.16 Examination papers for *all* sittings of examinations must be set, scrutinised and approved according to the approved procedures and to the required minimum standards. External examiners must review and approve all examination papers (including resit papers just for resitting students), even where individual questions have been agreed separately in the past.
- 3.17 SEBs are strongly encouraged to approve more than one paper per module; the second paper can be used for resits/first sits, or as a fall-back if a problem is discovered with the first paper or there is a security breach. If the second paper is not used, it can be used the following year provided that the syllabus has not changed.

## Oral examinations

- 3.18 Oral examinations shall only be used as approved elements of module assessment for taught programmes, with detailed marking schemes. Where an oral assessment is used in this way, it must be conducted by no fewer than two examiners. Where an oral assessment is recorded, the second examiner may mark the recording rather than (or in addition to) attending the examination. Oral examinations should not be used to determine classifications in borderline cases.

## Assessment for resitting students

- 3.19 Students shall be informed of all arrangements for assessment, including reassessment, when they commence modules for the first time. These arrangements must be in accordance with the approved module specifications and regulations (Academic Regulations, Section 3).
- 3.20 Reassessment is either 'synoptic', or 'standard' (i.e. not synoptic). Where synoptic reassessment is used, students failing the modules shall take a single assessment weighted at 100 percent for the resit (rarely, and where approved in the module specification, synoptic reassessment may comprise more than one element of assessment). Where standard reassessment is used, students shall resit the failed elements of assessment, and the marks for any elements that were passed on the first attempt shall stand.
- 3.21 Students may need to resit out of attendance. While resitting out of attendance, they are not enrolled, and have limited entitlement to use campus facilities (libraries, computer rooms, schools and institute facilities, laboratories, etc) (Academic Regulations, Section 2).
- 3.22 Where a student has resit attempts (in or out of attendance) these must be taken at the next normally available assessment opportunity (Academic Regulations, Section 2).
- 3.23 Students are automatically registered for resit and first sit assessments. Students may opt out, but in doing so they forfeit any remaining attempts to pass the relevant module, and students resitting out of attendance may have their registration terminated (Academic Regulations, Section 2).
- 3.24 Resitting students are only permitted to attempt the assessment again; they are not entitled to attend teaching for the modules.
- 3.25 Resitting students will be assessed on the curricula from when they first attempted the module in attendance. Examiners must consider the specific needs of resitting students when setting formal assessment.
- 3.26 The elements to be reassessed for each module and student shall be agreed by SEBs. The SEBs' decisions must not contravene any previously published information on resit arrangements.

## Resitting assessment that requires regular attendance

- 3.27 Where assessments require regular attendance (such as laboratory sessions, or field work), students cannot resit and must retake the modules. However, in common with all retakes, this must be explicitly agreed by the DEB. Further information on retaking modules is provided in [Section 7](#).

## Resitting in-course assessment

- 3.28 Where the assessment for a module combines an examination and in-course assessment, the option to resit the in-course assessment shall be offered wherever practicable. Where this is not practicable, students must be notified at the start of the module.
- 3.29 Where students (i) fail to meet prescribed in-course assessment hurdles, or (ii) pass examinations but not whole modules, it is possible to resit only the in-course assessment (where standard reassessment is used). In these cases, examination marks shall be carried forward and combined with the new in-course assessment marks. The marks from the best attempt shall be used where students fail again.

- 3.30 In-course assessment for resitting students shall be designed so that it can be completed and submitted without full attendance, and shall be based upon the curricula that students studied when they last took the module in attendance. Module organisers are advised to contact resitting students to ensure that they are aware of the in-course assessment requirements and deadlines. Deadlines for submission shall match those for the current cohort of students.
- 3.31 Resitting students are eligible to take in-class tests in reassessment, as these only require attendance on a single day. Resitting students shall sit the assessment at the same time as the current cohort and shall be informed of the test dates as soon as those are agreed.

### Resitting dissertation and projects

- 3.32 Where students fail dissertations or projects and do not meet their award requirements, SEBs shall determine whether a resit or a retake for the module should be awarded. The dissertation or project is often core (must be taken and passed), and in those cases it is impossible to meet the award requirements without passing the module.
- 3.33 Resitting dissertations and projects requires students to rework and improve their original submissions to bring them up to a passing standard; for projects, only the report may need improvement. Students shall receive minimal support (no more than two supervision sessions are advised). As for all resits, the module mark achieved shall be capped to a bare pass.
- 3.34 Retaking dissertations and projects requires students to undertake new pieces of work, with full supervision and full access to facilities. Students pay pro-rata fees and their marks are capped. Permission to retake any module can only be granted by DEBs, on the recommendation of SEBs. Further information on retaking modules is provided in [Section 7](#).

### Resitting examinations

- 3.35 Resitting students shall always be assessed on the curriculum from when they last took the module in attendance. Therefore, all examination papers shall be prepared with resitting students in mind.
- 3.36 If the curriculum for a module has changed to such an extent that resitting students may not be expected to answer the examination paper set for the current cohort, then either, (i) a separate examination paper must be set; or, (ii) a limited number of specific questions to be answered only by resitting students shall be included within the examination paper.
- 3.37 Changes to the format of examinations do not necessarily require separate papers for resitting students; however, this *is* required for changes to the examination duration.

### Alternative assessment

- 3.38 Exceptionally, Queen Mary may use its discretion to use alternative methods to those stated in the module specifications for individual candidates, either when making assessment arrangements for students with registered disabilities (on the advice of the Disability and Dyslexia Service), or when setting a resit or first sit assessment, subject to the following conditions:
- i. The alternative assessment must involve some additional assessment activity that constitutes a justifiable and efficient assessment of the intended learning outcomes;
  - ii. A full statement of the alternative assessment methods and the reasons for their use is made in a Chair's action form from the SEB Chair, submitted to the Academic Secretariat.



3.39 Further information may be sought from ARCS, and the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance) must always be consulted in advance where a SEB intends to employ alternative assessment.

### **Preparing students for summative assessments**

3.40 Schools and institutes shall ensure that their programmes provide students with practice in the required assessment techniques and familiarity with the marking schemes for major components of assessment.

### 3. Conduct of invigilated examinations

- 4.1 The regulations on invigilated examinations can be found in section 3 of the Academic Regulations.

#### Official examination periods

- 4.2 Queen Mary's hours of operation stipulate our teaching periods, holidays, and examination periods. These dates are approved by the Senate and can be found [online](#). Students are required to be available during those periods, and commit to this as part of enrolment when they confirm acceptance of the Academic Regulations.
- 4.3 Queen Mary has three main examination periods, in January, April-June, and a resit period in August. There are also separate dates for MBBS and BDS examinations. The dates are included in the [assessment calendar](#).

#### Examination and assessment access arrangements ('special arrangements')

- 4.4 Students with physical or learning disabilities may apply to sit examinations with access arrangements, formerly known as 'special arrangements' (Academic Regulations, Section 3). Applications are considered by the Disability and Dyslexia Service, which will agree the arrangements and notify the student, the school or institute, and Academic Registry or the SMD Student Office. Applications for access arrangements must be submitted by the specified date.
- 4.5 Access arrangements are intended for students with existing or long-standing circumstances, and as a result may also apply outside of the examination periods. Emergency and *ad hoc* requests just before the examination period will be considered, but no guarantee can be given that students can be accommodated. For example, should a student break their writing arm just before the examinations and request an amanuensis (scribe), it may not be possible to grant this. Where this is not possible, the student should not attempt the examination and instead should submit an extenuating circumstances claim form; if the SEB accepts the claim, the student may be granted a first sit at the next available opportunity.
- 4.6 Further advice on access arrangements and support for students with disabilities or learning difficulties can be sought from the Disability and Dyslexia Service: [www.dds.qmul.ac.uk](http://www.dds.qmul.ac.uk). Guidance on the use of amanuenses is provided later in the [Assessment Handbook](#).

#### Religious holidays

- 4.7 Students may inform Queen Mary, using a standard form, of any religious holidays that fall during the official examination periods that will prevent them from attending. This form must be submitted by the deadline specified in the [assessment calendar](#). Efforts will be made to accommodate these requests so far as is practicable, but this cannot be guaranteed. This procedure applies only to specific dates in the year, not to normal religious practice.
- 4.8 Students are expected to participate in teaching, learning and assessment activities during Queen Mary's approved term and semester dates and hours of operation (Academic Regulations, Section 2). If the occurrence of a religious festival or holiday will result in absence, students may make formal requests to their Heads of School or Institute to permit the absence. If students miss any assessments as a result of approved absences then a best effort approach should be taken to permit late submission, or to rearrange tests or laboratory sessions.

## Examination timetables

- 4.9 Students will receive personal examination timetables at least three weeks before the main official examination period is scheduled to begin (Academic Regulations, Section 3). These will be provided electronically through MySIS, and students must confirm that they have read the 'Notes for Examination Candidates' document before accessing the timetables. Students not in attendance receive their timetables by post; it is the responsibility of students to ensure that address details are correct.
- 4.10 Students are responsible for informing themselves of examination dates, times and venues. This includes responsibility for routinely checking for timetable amendments and making enquiries if they think there are any errors or omissions (for example, incorrect module registration) (Academic Regulations, Section 3).
- 4.11 Forgery of an examination timetable is an assessment offence (Academic Regulations, Section 3).

## Clashes

- 4.12 Queen Mary completes a detailed examination scheduling process using data from individual records in SITS; examination clashes are therefore rare. However, where clashes are unavoidable, affected students shall sit both examinations on the same day and be quarantined during the interim period (Academic Regulations, Section 3). Quarantine arrangements are the responsibility of the academic school or institute.

## Invigilation arrangements

- 4.13 All examinations are monitored by invigilators. Invigilators are paid members of staff who are hired for the role and given professional training. Staff and students from academic schools and institutes may not act as invigilators. The prescribed ratio is one invigilator to 50 students, including one senior invigilator for each venue. The senior invigilator is ultimately in control of the conduct of the examination. Queen Mary's Chief Invigilator is the Deputy Academic Registrar, Academic Registry.
- 4.14 An internal examiner must be contactable for the entirety of each invigilated examination to provide any clarifications needed through the senior invigilator. Senior invigilators will note any queries in their reports. Clarification of examination questions is limited to the correction of misprints or typographical errors, and announcements will be made to all students. See also Academic Regulations, Section 3.
- 4.15 Separate invigilation arrangements may apply for examinations in the School of Medicine and Dentistry.

## Problems with examinations

- 4.16 SEB Chairs and examiners shall be notified of problems with examinations through invigilators' reports; more details are provided below.

## Emergency evacuations

- 4.17 In the event of an emergency evacuation, the intention is always to resume the examination. Students shall be kept under examination conditions (silence, and no consultation of unauthorised materials) by the invigilators and Registry staff, and question papers and answer scripts shall be locked in the room by the senior invigilator. Where disruptions last longer than 15 minutes, or where 25 percent or less of the examination duration remains, examinations shall be abandoned. The Chief Invigilator shall rule on whether examinations should be abandoned or resumed (Academic Regulations, Section 3).

- 4.18 When examinations are abandoned, this shall affect only those students whose venue was abandoned. If a cohort is split between two venues and only one is affected, the scripts of the students in the unaffected room will stand. The SEB must make allowance for the fact that not all students in a cohort took the same examination in these instances.

### Suspected examination offences

- 4.19 Details of alleged examination offences shall be included in invigilators' reports. These shall be provided to SEBs for information only, as the resulting investigations shall be conducted by the Academic Secretariat.
- 4.20 Where examiners suspect that offences have been committed but not detected during the examination, they shall inform their SEB Chair. The SEB Chair shall return the script, with a report, to ARCS for further investigation.

### Invigilator and student reports

- 4.21 Senior invigilators are instructed to make reports on each examination. These reports are sent to the relevant SEB chair as soon as possible after the examination. The reports note any problems that arose in the conduct of the examination, with the question paper, and issues raised by students.

### Consideration of reports by Subject Examination Boards

- 4.22 Each SEB will receive invigilators' reports for its examinations. These reports shall note where issues arose in examinations and the nature of those issues, and also where examinations ran smoothly. SEBs shall note the reports and agree actions where required. SEBs shall also note any individual student reports and agree any actions to be taken by examiners in response.
- 4.23 Appropriate actions for SEBs to take in response to invigilator and student reports will vary depending on the situation; these may include discounting one or more questions where these are deemed invalid. It is paramount that SEBs ensure that all students are treated equitably, and that all marks awarded are true reflections of achievement. Marks cannot be awarded in compensation for problems with examination questions, though such issues can be taken into account when calculating marks; all such actions must be included in the SEB's report to the DEB.

### Archiving examination scripts

- 4.24 Answer scripts, absence forms, attendance sheets, and a final set of marks for each module shall be stored in labelled boxes, arranged by module and then by Student Identity Number. Schools and institutes shall retain scripts for around four weeks after results have been released by Registry to allow for any administrative checks, and to provide feedback; this may be requested by students, or by the Academic Secretariat as part of an academic appeal case. After this time, schools and institutes must make arrangements for boxes of scripts to be delivered to ARCS. These shall be archived and kept for one calendar year from the date of the examination.

## 5. Marks and Marking

5.1 It is strongly recommended that the [Assessment Strategy](#) be read alongside this section.

### Marking schemes

- 5.2 Each element of assessment shall have a marking scheme or set of assessment criteria that can be provided to other examiners, including external examiners. For examinations, these shall be the solutions that are prepared at the same time as the question paper. Marking schemes shall be written in relation to the learning outcomes for individual elements of assessment and make clear what is being assessed and what is expected of students. It is the responsibility of Head of Schools and Institutes (or nominees) to ensure that marking schemes are in place for each element of assessment. Marking schemes and assessment criteria are important to the clear articulation and management of academic standards.
- 5.3 Every element of assessment must be tied to specific learning outcomes for the associated module. The marking scheme for the assessment should likewise measure the learning outcomes, though where intended learning outcomes are 'generic', the assessment marking schemes may likewise be generic). The most commonly used marking schemes/systems are criterion referencing, model answers, and skeleton answers. Queen Mary recognises the need for variations in practice in the use of marking schemes to take account of discipline-based differences.
- 5.4 It is imperative that SEBs make certain that the marks awarded are accurate reflections of achievement (and only of achievement: never potential). Award classification, where used, is based on the 'Classification Mark'. The Classification Mark is the final, weighted and calculated mark for a programme; it combines all module marks achieved by a student (save 'transcriptable' and 'study only' modules). Ensuring that assessment and module marks are correct ensures that final classifications are appropriate for the level of attainment.
- 5.5 Further guidance on the design of learning outcomes and marking schemes is available online: <https://academicdevelopment.qmul.ac.uk/educational-development/>

### Code of Practice on Double Marking and Moderation

#### Preliminary

- 5.6 Queen Mary permits the use of five alternative methods in marking and assessment, to take account of disciplinary based differences and the requirements of individual examination boards. However, there is an underlying principle common to all five approaches: 50 percent of the assessment for each module must be double marked or moderated.
- 5.7 The primary function of double marking and moderation is as a quality assurance process, to confirm the standard of marking. This ensures that assessments have been considered thoroughly, conscientiously and objectively, and that the method of assessment complies with the marking scheme approved by the examination board.

#### Underlying principles applicable to all methods

## The 50 percent rule

- 5.8 A minimum 50 percent of the assessment for each module must be subjected to one of the five approved mechanisms detailed below to assure standards in marking. This is 50 percent of the elements of assessment, not 50 percent of the students or 50 percent of the content for each element of assessment. For example, where a module comprises an examination (60 percent) and an essay (40 percent), the examination would have to be double marked/moderated. The board would also have the option of double marking/moderating the essay.
- 5.9 Where blind double marking, open double marking, or mark checking are employed, the second marker must double mark the full work of all students taking the assessment. Where moderation is employed the moderator shall sample the assessments of the designated percentage of students (as a minimum). Where electronic marking is employed, item analysis shall be applied.
- 5.10 Where two (or more) elements of assessment will be subjected to the process, the same method does not have to be used for both elements.

## The five methods

- 5.11 Having established which elements of assessment will be subjected to the quality assurance procedures, the examination board shall select and apply a means of double marking or moderation from the following options:
- i. Blind double marking
  - ii. Open double marking
  - iii. Mark checking
  - iv. Moderation
  - v. Electronic marking
- 5.12 Where one element of assessment comprises more than one type of assessment (for example, an examination with both short answer and essay-based questions), more than one of the five methods may be applied.

### Examinations

- 5.13 All examinations (all assessments coded EXM/EXN in SITS) must be subjected to one of the five quality assurance methods, irrespective of their weightings within a module. These count toward the minimum 50 percent of the module assessment to be double marked/moderated.

### Dissertations and projects

- 5.14 Dissertations and project reports must be double marked, using models A or B (blind or open double marking); models C, D and E are not available for these assessment types. This is principally due to the differences between individual dissertations and projects; they are on wide ranging topics, and frequently employ large pools of markers when compared to other modules. Therefore, moderating a sample would not guarantee that the same level of scrutiny had been applied across the piece, as it would for other types of assessment.

### A: Blind double marking

- 5.15 Independent assessment of the piece of work by two markers, where neither sees the comments or marks of the other until the whole procedure has been completed.

### B: Open double marking

- 5.16 Assessment of the work by two markers, where the second marker is able to see the comments and marks made by the first marker.

#### C: Mark checking

5.17 In disciplines that have a detailed marking scheme that allows little or no discretion to the examiner, the second examiner checks that all sections of the piece of work have been marked, and that the marks have been correctly totalled.

#### D: Moderation

5.18 Note: The requirements below constitute a minimum level of moderation that must be carried out, where moderation is used. In addition, where specifically agreed by a Subject Examination Board (SEB), moderators may complete tasks such as (for example) reviewing all borderline marks (this cannot be limited to those in the sample), where clear criteria are approved by an SEB for the purpose.

5.19 Where moderation is employed, a defined minimum percentage of the students' assessments (within the 50 percent element of assessment rule) are reviewed by a second individual, the moderator. The full spread of marks for all students in the cohort shall normally be made available to the moderator.

5.20 The moderator does not have the power to change individual marks when reviewing a sample, as this would be unfair to the students not included in the sample. Instead, the moderator may:

- i. approve the marking for the assessment, for all students;
- ii. approve the quality of the marking, but deem it either too lenient or too stringent across the cohort in the marks awarded, recommending that marks for the entire cohort be either raised or lowered by an appropriate amount;
- iii. approve the quality of the marking for part of the cohort, but deem that the full range of marks has not been used effectively, recommending that marks falling within certain affected range(s) be either raised or lowered by an appropriate amount;
- iv. reject the marking as unsound, requiring second marking of the full set of assessments by an experienced and independent marker with appropriate subject knowledge.

5.21 The moderated marks shall be presented to the Subject Examination Board and shall always include explanations for any rescaling or other processes that are applied. Where marks are scaled, this may be either by a percentage or by a set number of marks, depending on the case under consideration; the reasoning behind the choice shall be included in the details presented to the Subject Examination Board and the external examiners.

5.22 Moderation outcomes may be applied by question or by paper. Where different questions in a paper are marked by different individuals, it may be that only one question requires scaling or remarking. In that situation, all answers to the affected question shall be considered for scaling/a remark. Where an entire paper is marked by a single marker, it shall normally be the total mark for the paper that shall be considered for scaling/a remark), unless there is a clear reason for targeting an individual question.

5.23 The percentage to be moderated (sample size) shall be dependent upon the nature of the assessment and determined by the table below. However:

- i. there shall always be a minimum sample of ten students; and,
- ii. numbers in samples shall be rounded up – to the next whole number.

### Minimum sample

10 percent of the cohort  
(or ten students, whichever is greater)

25 percent of the cohort  
(or ten students, whichever is greater)

Moderation not permitted

### Assessment types

Examinations, coursework, practical assessment or professional capability assessments with short-answer questions or detailed marking schemes that allow little or no discretion to the marker.

Examinations, coursework, practical assessment or professional capability assessments that **do not have** short-answer questions or detailed marking schemes allowing little or no discretion to the marker (notably including essay-based and discursive assessments).

- ◆ Dissertations and projects
- ◆ Oral examinations
- ◆ Any assessment with a cohort of <10 students

5.24 The sample shall include assessments from across the range of performance, where possible taking equal numbers from each decile/quartile (as determined by the sample size).

### E: Electronic marking

5.25 All results of electronically marked assessments shall be checked for item difficulty and discrimination, and any items that do not perform correctly shall be checked. All student data shall be checked for missing data points and these shall be checked against the original forms. Forms from students with anomalously low scores shall be checked against the original mark-sheets.

### Resolving differences between markers

5.26 Where models A, B, or C are used, disagreements may arise between markers in relation to individual students' submissions. Where this is the case:

- i. The markers shall attempt to resolve the difference through discussion, and to agree upon a mark.
- ii. Where the markers fail to agree upon a mark:
  - a. Where the difference is of ten percent of the total marks available or fewer: The markers may split the difference, rounding to the nearest whole number.
  - b. Where the difference is greater than ten percent of the total marks available, or the markers do not wish to split the difference: The assessment shall be marked for a third time, and that third mark shall stand. The third marker shall review the marking trails of the first two markers when deciding upon a mark.

5.27 The third marker shall be an independent and experienced marker with appropriate subject experience; this shall normally be a member of Queen Mary staff, but may be an external examiner (by specific agreement with the external, as this is not part of their core responsibilities).

5.28 Where, for one assessment, first marking has been undertaken by more than one individual and moderation is used or where multiple double marking pairs are used, examination boards must ensure that measures are undertaken to ensure consistency of approach between markers.

### Marking trails

5.29 Examination boards must ensure that there is a clear marking trail of comments and notes that can be followed by readers (notably external examiners). The first and second marker/moderator must use either ink or paper of differing colours to ensure that this is the case. Where assessments are marked using an electronic application (including QMplus), differing font colours or an alternative means of making the markers' input clearly identifiable must be employed. In some cases, particularly where electronic marking is used, comments from markers may be aggregated; it should be made clear where this is the case.



- 5.30 Where moderation is used, markers and the examination board must ensure that there is clear written evidence that the moderation process has been completed.
- 5.31 Markers must give both the total marks for the assessment as well as the breakdown of marks by section on the cover sheet (or equivalent alternative).
- 5.32 When double marking or moderating, at least one member of the marking pair must be a member of Queen Mary's academic staff, though the first marker may be an assistant examiner.
- 5.33 Double marking and moderation are important mechanisms through which Queen Mary manages and demonstrates its academic standards. Each SEB must ensure that there is sufficient evidence of double marking and moderation for both external examiners and auditing purposes.
- 5.34 Different arrangements are in place for the MBBS programme, and only short answer question scripts from resit examinations are double marked.

### In-course assessment

- 5.35 Where modules are assessed wholly by in-course assessment, the elements selected for double marking/moderation must be the same for all students, insofar as this is practicable. Where assessment is based upon a number of in-course submissions (for example, the best three of four essays), the elements for double marking/moderation must be drawn from those that will contribute to the module mark.

### Scaling and standard-setting

- 5.36 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.
- 5.37 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.
- 5.38 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

- 5.39 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.
- 5.40 Scaling of results to meet predefined norms or targets is not acceptable under any circumstances, and scaling is to be reserved as a repair tool to fix problematic assessments rather than to adjust the performance of a cohort. Marking must always be criterion-referenced, and clear and well-protected academic standards are paramount.
- 5.41 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.
- 5.42 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.
- 5.43 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.
- 5.44 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

- 5.45 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 must develop a written policy.

## Reporting

- 5.46 SEBs shall summarise the procedures used to monitor the standard of marking in reports to DEBs and shall outline the SEBs’ conclusions on the standard of marking for the session.

## Students who answer too many examination questions

- 5.47 Where a student answers more questions than required by an examination rubric, the marker(s) shall mark the first  $x$  question marks in the calculation of the total mark for the script (where  $x$  is the number of questions specified in the rubric). Answers given beyond the first  $x$  shall not be marked.

## Students who exceed or do not meet a specified word limit

- 5.48 Schools/institutes may choose whether or not to apply penalties where students exceed a specified word count. This may include instances where the length of a submission is considered under the standard marking conventions rather than as a statutory penalty
- 5.49 Where a school/institute does apply a penalty, students must be made aware of the penalty in advance. The penalty for exceeding the word count must be published to students; this may be in the programme handbook and/or - where a school/institute does not use the same policy for all assessments - in module handbooks.
- 5.50 There is no fixed penalty for submissions that are under the specified word length. In these cases, students will have displayed skill in covering the material concisely, or else have failed to fully address the material; in either situation the normal marking conventions should take this into account.

## Late submission of coursework and other in-course assessment

- 5.51 If an assignment is submitted after the specified deadline it shall be recorded as late and a penalty shall be applied, unless there are valid extenuating circumstances:
- i. 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 0FL (zero, fail, late).
  - ii. 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.
  - iii. 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 (0FL) 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.
  - iv. 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.
  - v. 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.

## Marking assessments for students with specific learning disabilities

- 5.52 Students with specific learning difficulties, or SpLDs, (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia) may be granted additional time in invigilated examinations.
- 5.53 The amount of additional time allotted to each student shall be based upon the recommendations made by the university's Disability and Dyslexia Service. The Disability and Dyslexia Service will consider the content of the diagnostic evidence presented by the student when making their recommendations. The scripts of students with specific learning difficulties shall be identified to markers.
- 5.54 Examination scripts for students with specific learning difficulties shall be marked in precisely the same manner as those of other students, although those marking the scripts shall be asked to consider the advice on the SpLD Cover Note when assessing work. This is a document that the Disability and Dyslexia Service produce to advise those marking students' work. Amongst the advice provided is that marks shall not be deducted for poor sentence structure, punctuation, or spelling (unless these are elements being assessed by the examination).

- 5.55 SEBs shall detail how the scripts of students with specific learning difficulties have been marked in the report to the DEB.

### Late diagnosis of Specific Learning Difficulties

- 5.56 Where a student is diagnosed with specific learning difficulties after the commencement of their studies, the following arrangements shall apply. Any marks that have already been approved by an examination board (including all work from previous years of study) shall stand. Any work from the present academic year that has not yet been through a board shall be re-marked as specified above, with the advice of the SpLD Cover Note in mind.
- 5.57 Where a student received a late diagnosis of a specific learning difficulty and a significant proportion of marks had already been approved by a board, SEBs may choose to include this as a factor when considering candidates for the application of the borderline classification policy in the same way that they would with extenuating circumstances not taken into account elsewhere, (though note that a diagnosis of SpLDs is not an extenuating circumstance).

### Anonymous marking

- 5.58 All examination scripts must be marked anonymously; the only identifier shall be the Student Identity Number, issued to each student when they enrol with Queen Mary. This number can be found on the student identity card. The MBBS programme continues to use old-style Candidate Numbers for technical reasons associated with mark-reading software.
- 5.59 In-course assessments shall be marked anonymously by Student Identity Number wherever practicable. Queen Mary recognises that this is not always possible.

### Collaborative programmes

- 5.60 When Queen Mary enters into collaborative agreements with other institutions, it accepts the marking standards and quality assurance procedures of those institutions. The regulations for the lead institution shall normally apply for the whole programme. Differences in pass marks and grade boundaries can therefore occur, especially with overseas institutions. It is sometimes necessary to apply a mark scaling process, though this cannot be employed without approval. Further advice may be sought from the ARCS.

### Designation and preparation of marks

#### Responsibilities

- 5.61 Heads of Schools and Institutes are ultimately responsible for marking processes, though SEB Chairs have a particular role in overseeing the generation of marks from SITS for the SEB; the actual generation shall normally be carried out by the SEB Secretary.

#### Calculation of marks

- 5.62 When marking an assignment, markers should mark to integers. Students should not normally receive a mark with a decimal point for an individual element of assessment (see [‘Resolving differences between markers’](#) for details of how to avoid this in those circumstances).
- 5.63 Module marks (and the Classification Mark) are held to one decimal place. Therefore marks are not rounded to the next integer (for example, 49.5 is not rounded to 50.0) unless, exceptionally, this has been explicitly agreed in the regulations for a named programme (such as the MBBS). Marks are held in the background in SITS to two decimal places, so some minor automatic rounding may occur at lower levels, for example from 49.95 to 50.00.

- 5.64 Minimising the use of rounding ensures that marks are accurate reflections of student achievement, and only of achievement.
- 5.65 Module pass marks are determined by the academic levels of modules. In some instances, multiple versions of a module may operate at different levels.
- 5.66 Markers shall give a breakdown of marks by question on cover sheets (or equivalent) for examinations, to allow internal and external examiners to follow the pattern of marking. This does not necessarily need to extend to sub-questions.

### Designation of marks

5.67 The following terminology shall be used for marks at the designated stages:

- i. Provisional (or actual): Provisional marks are those that are recommended by internal examiners, and are subject to change before SEB meetings.
- ii. Final (or agreed): Final marks are those that are agreed by SEBs and/or DEBs, and shall not be subject to further changes save in cases of administrative error or successful academic appeal. Module marks become final following SEBs, whereas Classification Marks become final following DEBs.

### Designation of awards

5.68 The following terminology shall be used for awards at the designated stages:

- i. Recommended (or provisional): Recommended or provisional awards are those that are recommended by SEBs, and are subject to DEB approval.
- ii. Final (or confirmed): Final or confirmed awards are those that are agreed by DEBs, and shall not be subject to further changes save in cases of administrative error or successful academic appeal.

### Submission of marks and subsequent changes

- 5.69 Provisional assessment marks shall be entered into the Student Information System as soon as possible; there is no need to wait for the results of moderation by external examiners. This shall normally be within a few days of the end of the examination period (though provisional in-course assessment marks can be entered earlier, throughout the academic year). The deadline for uploading marks is specified in the '[Key dates](#)' section of the *Assessment Handbook*.
- 5.70 SEBs are likely to consider students taking modules from the domains of other boards, and early entry of marks enables other SEBs to run smoothly by granting time for the respective chairs to identify any issues and discuss possible solutions.
- 5.71 Once SEBs have confirmed assessment and module marks, any changes to marks shall be submitted immediately by staff with 'supervisor' access to the SIS. Any certified absences shall also be submitted at this time, using the codes '0 NA' (extenuating circumstances accepted), '0 NR' (extenuating circumstances rejected), or '0 EH' (extenuating circumstances awaiting outcome). When using the EH code, be sure to update it as soon as the outcome is known. Further details on extenuating circumstances may be found in [Section 9](#).
- 5.72 Once the confirmed marks and certified absence details from SEBs have been entered, Registry shall lock down marks for consideration by DEBs. Schools and institutes cannot modify marks after this point. The date of lockdown is specified in the [assessment calendar](#).

- 5.73 Changes to individual marks after a DEB has met shall be approved only with completed Chair's Action memoranda, which shall be sent to the Assistant Academic Registrar (Student Records), who is authorised to action these changes, and copied to the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance).

### Publication of marks and awards

- 5.74 Students are entitled to receive marks for individual elements of assessment, as well as aggregated module marks. This approach was agreed by the Senate, and complies with data protection legislation. The release of these marks provides helpful feedback on performance.
- 5.75 The term 'marks' refers only to numerical marks; not to grades or classifications.
- 5.76 Mark and award details may be disclosed to students at each of the following stages: provisional, recommended (applies to awards only), and final. It *must* be made clear to students that provisional and recommended decisions are subject to further ratification, and may change. SEBs may also release marks to students before DEBs, though again it must be made clear that these are not final marks.
- 5.77 Provisional marks for in-course assessments shall be provided with the returned original work, where practicable. The intention of returning submissions to students with marks is to create learning and development opportunities from the assessment.
- 5.78 Students are entitled to know the marks for examinations, but not to receive their examination scripts; examiners shall not release these (though with permission from the SEB, a student may view a script under supervision). Examiners may discuss results with students on an individual basis, and this is strongly encouraged where students raise queries after the release of marks (this has a significant impact in reducing academic appeals).
- 5.79 Marks and comments on examination scripts are deemed 'personal data' under data protection legislation. Students may make subject access requests to see this information, though there is only a right of access for comments and marks – not actual scripts.
- 5.80 Module marks may be published, but this must be done anonymously. Assessment results are deemed 'personal data', and their publication where individuals can be identified is potentially in breach of data protection legislation.
- 5.81 Students are able to view agreed marks for modules and assessments in MySIS ([mysis.qmul.ac.uk](https://mysis.qmul.ac.uk)) after the examination boards. Marks for individual elements of assessment become visible in MySIS throughout the year as they are entered, though these are provisional and clearly marked as such. QMplus and Queen Mary email may also be used to publish marks without a potential breach of data protection legislation, but these systems must be used cautiously (ensuring that the correct marks are released). Publication of anonymous lists to provide marks is acceptable, but students must be notified of this, and individual students' data must be removed on request.
- 5.82 Confirmed marks and progression/award outcomes cannot be released to students with tuition fee debts to Queen Mary. The student view of confirmed marks in MySIS is blocked for debtors. Further information on debtors is provided in [Section 10](#).
- 5.83 The HEAR transcripts issued by Registry are the official publications of approved module results and awards. Transcripts are not issued until after DEBs have met.

- 5.84 Publication of degree classifications does not need to be anonymous. Any publication of classifications made before the DEB has met to approve recommended awards must be clearly marked as provisional. It is advised that recommendations made under the borderline classification policy are not included in such lists, in case they are refused at the DEB.
- 5.85 Examination board business is strictly confidential. Members must never speak to students about their performances in detail, or provide students with results that have not been agreed by the SEB and supplied through the official channels. This does not preclude the discussion of where students' performances were unsatisfactory, or could be improved, in general terms. Further information on confidentiality is provided in [Section 6](#).
- 5.86 The examination board as a body agrees the marks awarded to students. Members must never undermine a board's authority by commenting to students on the role of particular board members or other individuals in the marking process. The official record of an examination board is provided in its minutes.

## 6. Subject and Degree Examination Boards

### General

- 6.1 Examination boards act on behalf of the Senate in assessing students and recommending and approving awards. Queen Mary operates a two-tiered system of examination boards: Subject Examination Boards exist at disciplinary level and report to Degree Examination Boards, at award level.
- 6.2 Subject Examination Boards (SEBs) consider and can approve marks and progression, can agree failure and award resits, and can approve extenuating circumstances claims. SEBs make recommendations for awards, first takes/retakes, and suspension of regulations. The SEB terms of reference are:
- i. to take an overview of the assessment processes that operate for the programmes and modules in the subject area, with a particular view to ensuring fairness and impartiality, including: setting examination papers, essay titles, and other assessment tasks, marking processes (including double marking), application of regulations, and the conduct of oral examinations (where used as part of the approved module assessment);
  - ii. to receive reports from invigilators and students on examinations, and to consider appropriate actions in the light of such reports;
  - iii. to agree the results of students in individual assessments and modules;
  - iv. to consider claims of extenuating circumstances and, where valid, to approve any proposed actions to be taken;
  - v. to make recommendations to the DEB for results to be set aside where there are accepted extenuating circumstances;
  - vi. to approve the progression of students;
  - vii. to approve the progression of students to alternative programmes, if applicable;
  - viii. to make recommendations to the DEB for the exclusion of students due to failure;
  - ix. to make recommendations to the DEB for award and classification;
  - x. to agree actions in the event of failure of a module (including qualified failure) by a student, including resit provisions that may include appropriate alternative assessment arrangements;
  - xi. to make recommendations to the DEB for students to retake or first take modules, where applicable;
  - xii. to make recommendations to the DEB and to the Senate (or its delegated authority) for the suspension of regulations for individuals or groups of students, where applicable;
  - xiii. to exercise discretion, where appropriate and within the permitted scope of any Queen Mary policy or regulation, in order to agree results or progression and make recommendations for awards and classifications;
  - xiv. to review statistics on academic performance and to comment upon the performance of cohorts in particular assessments;
  - xv. any other duties delegated to the SEB by the DEB or the Senate.
- 6.3 Each meeting of an examination board is discrete. Boards cannot reverse decisions taken at previous meetings of the same board, excepting cases considered under the [Appeal Policy](#). Boards cannot make decisions that would affect future meetings, except in setting precedents.



## Membership and officers

6.4 The membership of a Subject Examination Board is:

- i. a Chair, appointed to the role by the Senate, or its delegated authority;
- ii. a Deputy Chair, appointed to the role by the Senate, or its delegated authority;
- iii. the programme coordinators or directors;
- iv. the internal examiners for the modules under consideration; v. the external examiners;
- v. the DEB Chair, who may attend any examination board under the DEB's jurisdiction as a member;
- vi. the Vice-Principal (Education), who may attend any examination board as a member.
- vii. in the case of the MBBS SEBs, the Head of Year and Head of Assessment shall be members, and the internal examiners shall be defined as the Principal and Senior Internal Examiners (PIEs and SIEs).

6.5 The following are not SEB members and do not count towards the quorum, but may attend:

- i. the Secretary, and other professional services staff associated with the SEB;
- ii. representatives from other SEBs, where joint programmes are under consideration;
- iii. the Academic Registrar (or nominee);
- iv. the Principal, Faculty Vice-Principal & Executive Dean, and Faculty Dean for Education.

6.6 Each examination board must have a Chair and a Secretary; these are the primary points of contact between the SEB and ARCS.

### Chair

6.7 SEB Chairs are appointed on the delegated authority of the Senate. To appoint a new Chair, the relevant Head of School/Institute should send a short email nominating and endorsing the candidate to the Academic Quality & Standards Officer. This is an important process that places the authority of the Senate behind the Chair.

6.8 Chairs must be experienced members of academic staff, but not serving Heads of School/Institute, Deans for Education, honorary member of staff, or programme directors for a programmes under consideration at the board.

6.9 Chairs are appointed for three-year terms, renewable for two terms (six years in total). Renewals should be notified to the Academic Quality & Standards Officer.

6.10 SEBs are strongly advised to appoint one or more Deputy Chairs, who can take action in the Chair's absence and gain experience of the role for the future. Deputies are appointed in the same way as Chairs, and for the same terms.

6.11 The Chair is responsible for the conduct of the examination board, and for ensuring that the Academic Regulations are adhered to (both at the meeting and throughout the year). The Chair is also responsible for the approval of examination papers and the accompanying security arrangements.

6.12 The Chair must complete a Report to the DEB after the SEB meeting, summarising all points requiring particular discussion at the DEB (more details below).

6.13 The Chair shall maintain a list of internal and external members of the examination board, and ensure that steps are taken to replace members when terms of office end. This may be delegated to the Secretary in practice.

## Secretary

- 6.14 A Secretary will be appointed by the SEB; there is no formal appointment process, but any changes must be notified to the Academic Quality & Standards Officer in order to maintain accurate records and mailing lists. The Secretary is not a member of the board but is always in attendance. The Secretary can be a member of administrative or academic staff.
- 6.15 The Secretary is responsible for, among other matters, the circulation to members of information on the date, time, and venue of meetings; the production of the agenda; assisting the Chair during meetings; and producing minutes. The generation of results for consideration is normally the responsibility of the Secretary.
- 6.16 The Secretary shall circulate information on arrangements for the examination board meeting at least two weeks in advance. Most examination boards agree dates for the next meeting well in advance, but it is helpful to remind members. The agenda shall also be circulated at this point.
- 6.17 There is more information on of the Secretary's role under '[Servicing examination boards](#)'.

## Scheduling SEB meetings

- 6.18 SEB meetings must be scheduled within [the defined periods](#) specified by ARCS. Meetings must not be held outside of these periods, and SEBs will be unable to run accurate board reports or guarantee technical support from ARCS at other times.
- 6.19 Once set, SEB dates should be sent to the Academic Quality & Standards Officer for publication online, and to other SEBs where cross-representation is needed.

## How many meetings are needed?

- 6.20 The number of full SEB meetings that are required will depend on individual practices. Failure must always be agreed at an SEB before a resit is given. All meetings must meet the specified quorum.
- 6.21 Undergraduate boards have a main meeting in June each year, a late summer exam board to agree failure and/or consider progression and awards following late summer resits or first sits, and a board in February to consider module marks for semester one associate students only (the results of January exams for non-associate students will not normally go to that meeting).
- 6.22 Postgraduate boards have a meeting in June to agree the results of taught modules, progression, and to award late summer resits, and a main meeting in October. There may also be an associate board in February.
- 6.23 A meeting must be held in February to consider the results of single semester associate students. This is not a full board meeting, and requires attendance only from the SEB Chair, Director of Education, and the associate student coordinator. Minutes should be taken as usual. No direct external examiner involvement is required.
- 6.24 When scheduling a meeting, please ensure that the venue is fit for the purpose. The confidential nature of the meetings requires that boards not be held in venues where discussions may be overheard by students or other individuals. Venues should be booked for a period of time that allows for the meeting to run past its expected end-time if necessary.

## Preparing for the SEB meeting

### Generating reports

- 6.25 When preparing for the SEB meeting, the Chair and Secretary shall ensure that all results have been entered into SITS with the module results calculated, by the specified deadline.
- 6.26 Once Registry has run the TMR process, the Chair and Secretary will be able to run SEB reports, from this web page: <https://webapps2.is.qmul.ac.uk/seb/> (guidance is given at the end of the [Assessment Handbook](#)). A range of reports are available:
- i. Student detail: An individual profile of each student (Word format);
  - ii. UG/PG/SMD UG summary: a summary of all students (Excel format). This is generally the main report to be used in decision making;
  - iii. Module detail: a breakdown of performance by student on each module (Excel format);
  - iv. Module summary: summary information on each module, such as spread of marks, number of students achieving each grade, etc (Excel format).
- 6.27 Reports can be run with names, or anonymously. Unless specific guidance applies for a programme, this decision rests with the SEB. Anonymity is taken into account in the marking stages, so Queen Mary does not demand that it be used at the SEB.
- 6.28 SEBs can also use the module results app within [Power BI](#), the Queen Mary Business Intelligence Tool. This provides a greater detail and more flexible reporting at module level, but does not make progression or award calculations.

### Review of reports

- 6.29 The Chair shall review the reports, considering students' results and identifying those that might require special discussion or further information. These may include those with borderline marks, those who have taken a number of modules from another SEB's domain, and those making claims for extenuating circumstances.
- 6.30 It is strongly recommended that a preliminary meeting be held before the meeting of an examination board. These informal meetings shall discuss and resolve problems in order to expedite the main meeting. Recommendations to the SEB on fields of study (see below) can be considered at preliminary meetings.
- 6.31 Careful preparation can greatly expedite proceedings, and may include requests for further information and discussions with the chairs of other SEBs. Even where there is cross-representation, the Chair shall consult informally with the chairs of other SEBs concerned. There are diagrams showing all Queen Mary exam boards and their reporting lines [here](#).

### Production and circulation of papers

- 6.32 The agenda shall be drawn up by the Secretary in consultation with the Chair; it shall follow the online template, available [here](#).
- 6.33 Mark-sheets and summaries of student performance should not be circulated with the agenda; these shall normally be tabled at the board. Mark-sheets shall be clearly labelled to indicate which group of students is under discussion.

- 6.34 The Secretary shall also circulate or table any further information that the board requires for its work. This should include, as a minimum, the following:
- i. the Assessment Handbook;
  - ii. Academic Regulations for all cohorts under consideration.
  - iii. Programme regulations for all programmes under consideration.
  - iv. Approved conventions for the exercise of the borderline classification policy.
  - v. The SEB's scaling policy, where relevant.
- 6.35 Where regulations have changed recently, copies of the iterations that refer to each cohort under consideration shall be provided, and it shall be made clear at the beginning of the meeting which iteration applies to which cohort of students.
- 6.36 Examination boards may be held using electronic copies of papers. Those using this approach must ensure that all information is provided in a format that is accessible for all members; paper copies shall be provided where required. The security of information before, during, and after the board shall be considered thoroughly.

### Sub-boards

- 6.37 Subject Examination Boards may establish sub-boards to assist in their work. Establishing a sub-board requires the support of the Senate and the relevant external examiner(s). Sub-boards must have clear terms of reference and membership approved by the SEB.
- 6.38 The most common subcommittees are:
- i. **Scrutiny Sub-board**  
These sub-boards are required, and are tasked with the responsibility for drafting, checking, and proofreading examination papers. This does not remove the requirement for each question paper to be approved by at least one external examiner.
  - ii. **Extenuating Circumstances Sub-board**  
These sub-boards are required, and are tasked with the consideration of claims of extenuating circumstances prior to the SEB meeting. The sub-boards shall make recommendations to the SEB on whether claims are valid, and on any actions to be taken. It is recommended that this subcommittee be chaired by a senior member other than the Chair, such as the Senior Tutor. It is advised that these sub-boards only inform SEBs of the specific details of claims where absolutely necessary. A set of confidential minutes should be taken and retained for reference. The main SEB only requires a summary of recommended actions from the sub-board.
  - iii. **Specialist Sub-boards**  
SEBs with a wide remit may establish subcommittees to give initial consideration to the performance of students within a particular discipline.
- 6.39 Sub-boards are intended to assist examination boards, and not to carry out the work of full boards. Sub-boards cannot approve decisions, and their recommendations shall be subject to ratification by the full examination boards. SEBs may elect to take alternative decisions without recourse to the sub-board.

## Running an SEB meeting

6.40 The section below follows the structure of an SEB meeting as set out in the standard agenda. It should be used to inform the running of each meeting

### Preliminary items

#### Quorum

- 6.41 The SEB must ensure that it meets the quorum before it can proceed with the meeting. If the meeting does not meet the quorum then its decisions are not valid or binding. Where there is exceptionally good reason why a meeting will not meet the quorum, a suspension of regulations may be sought via the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance) to make the board's decisions binding. However, this should be sought in advance of the board, and SEBs are responsible for ensuring that members attend.
- 6.42 The quorum for a Subject Examination Board is 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.
- 6.43 Members, including external examiners, may be counted as in attendance if using video conferencing technology, a telephone, or similar.
- 6.44 Though highly desirable, it is not a fixed requirement for all external examiners to attend an SEB. At least one must normally be present, but if others are unable to attend the board can proceed provided that absent externals are consulted before the board, that their views are communicated to the board, and the outcomes are reported back to and endorsed by the absent externals after the board.
- 6.45 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.
- 6.46 The quorum does not apply to preliminary board meetings, or to sub-boards.

#### Joint honours programmes and cross-representation

- 6.47 Students registered for joint degree programmes must be considered by a single SEB. Each programme has a lead school or institute, and the SEB associated with that school should be the one to consider students for award and progression decisions. Module results should be considered by the SEB responsible for the module, and the results communicated to the lead SEB for the programme.
- 6.48 Detailed arrangements shall be discussed between the boards involved, and the Chair of the lead SEB shall ensure that there is cross-representation from the other SEB. Cross-representation should be used where students have taken one third or more of their modules (by credits) from another SEB's domain.
- 6.49 DEBs have a specific responsibility to ensure that joint programme students are treated fairly and equitably.

### Confidentiality

- 6.50 Once the board has been confirmed as meeting the quorum, the Chair shall note that the business of the meeting is strictly confidential. Discussion of any detail of a meeting is highly irresponsible and undermines the authority of the board; this includes detailed discussions of marks and performance with students.
- 6.51 The Chair should also note the means by which results will be communicated to students. Generally, a statement that these will be made available to students via MySIS on the official release of results date will be sufficient, but if the board will be making [supplementary arrangements](#) then those should be noted. Outcomes of the board must not be communicated to students or others through any other channels.
- 6.52 Any breach of confidentiality may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

### Conflicts of interest

- 6.53 Following the confidentiality statement, the Chair shall invite all of those present to declare any conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest arise where a chair, member, or attendee of an examination board has a familial or other close relationship with any student under consideration.
- 6.54 Where a conflict of interest is declared at an examination board meeting, this shall be recorded in the minutes by the Secretary and the individual concerned shall take no part in decision-making related to the students concerned.

### Debtors

- 6.55 Students with tuition fee debts should be considered as normal at the meeting. When the debt is cleared, a student will be able to view the results in MySIS. The Chair should note Queen Mary's policy of withholding official notifications of results from students with tuition fee debts. If the SEB has any queries over a debt then it should contact Finance.
- 6.56 If a debtor comes forward with queries, or seeks to make a subject access request to access their results then they should be referred to the [Records & Information Compliance Manager in ARCS](#).

### Minutes of the previous meeting

- 6.57 The minutes of the previous meeting should be considered by the board for accuracy. The board should then either confirm the minutes as an accurate record of proceedings, or confirm them subject to specified changes.

### Matters arising from the previous meeting

- 6.58 Typically, there should not be any matters arising from the previous meeting as each meeting of an SEB is discrete, and any outstanding actions should have been resolved by Chair's action. However, if there are exceptions then this is the point at which they should be considered and acted upon.

### Report of Chair's action

- 6.59 A report of all Chair's actions taken since the previous meeting should be available to the board. These should be recorded (in summary form) at the end of the minutes of the previous meeting. There is no need for an oral report or for discussion unless the board members have any queries.

### Regulations and borderline classification conventions

- 6.60 The Chair should confirm that the board has complied with the Academic Regulations and note the regulations that apply to the programme – especially any special regulations. Where standard regulations apply it is sufficient to state that (for example) the standard BA progression and award regulations will be used. It can be helpful to give some details of the regulations for external examiners and new board members. The Chair should also explain the borderline classification policy.

## Consideration of module results

### Report on the monitoring of marking practices

6.61 The next section of the meeting looks at results in individual modules. The Chair should open the section by detailing the marking practices used by the board, and in particular confirming that the [Code of Practice on Double Marking and Moderation](#) was followed.

### Invigilator and candidate reports

6.62 The Chair should then present for discussion any invigilator or candidate reports that have been received, giving details of events in the examinations, including alleged irregularities. Where the board determines that there has been an actual irregularity that may have had an impact on an examination, action shall be taken to remedy the problem, and details shall be recorded in the minutes.

### Module results and internal examiners' comments

6.63 Finally, and most significantly, the board should look at performance in individual modules. Each module convenor shall give a brief oral report on how things have gone, commenting in particular on any irregularities, the general level of performance (and whether it is broadly in line with the same module in past years, and other modules in the current year), and whether changes may be required to the module for future years. The board shall consider the module marks for approval, taking action to address any outstanding issues where necessary.

## Consideration of student results

### Outstanding investigations into assessment offences

6.64 The Chair should begin this section of the meeting by identifying candidates who are under investigation for alleged assessment offences. The board cannot consider these candidates at all, and they must be dealt with by Chair's action once the allegation has been resolved. Even if the allegation only pertains to one module, the penalty may affect all modules.

### Pre-final year performance and progression

6.65 The board should then consider the progression of first year students into the second year (or progression to the project for some postgraduate programmes; single-year programmes with no progression point can skip this stage). This process should then be repeated for each subsequent developmental year.

6.66 The board shall make recommendations and decisions as follows, paying close attention to individual cases:

- i. approval of progression, where students are eligible;
- ii. approval of first sits, and other EC related decisions;
- iii. approval of resits;
- iv. recommendations for deregistration where students have failed and have no attempts remaining (and recommendations for exit awards, where appropriate);
- v. recommendations for first takes and retakes;
- vi. recommendations for suspension of regulations.

6.67 The board should note and endorse the recommendations of the extenuating circumstances sub-board, and discuss any cases that could not be resolved by the sub-board (see [here](#) for more details). The board should approve the recommendations; this can be done implicitly in straightforward cases such as first sits, but some cases, notably recommendations for first takes (reattempting the year with full teaching) must be presented to the Degree Examination Board for authorisation.

#### Final year performance and award recommendations

6.68 The board should next consider the performance of final year students. Please note that there are considerable variations between the rules for individual awards, and that boards should refer closely to the Academic Regulations (Sections 4 and 5), as well as to the Assessment Handbook. Remember that where Special Regulations have been approved, these override the standard award regulations.

6.69 The board shall make recommendations and decisions as follows, paying close attention to individual cases:

- i. recommendations for award, where students are eligible (including exit awards);
- ii. recommendations for exercise of the borderline classification policy (see below);
- iii. recommendations for suspension of regulations;
- iv. recommendations for application of unusual regulations (notably, discounting modules due to extenuating circumstances, deferral of classification, and recommendations for EC pass degrees and aegrotats – these recommendations are only permissible where strictly defined criteria have been met, and not all of these are possible for all programmes);
- v. recommendations for first takes and retakes;
- vi. recommendations for deregistration where students have failed and have no attempts remaining (and recommendations for exit awards, where appropriate
- vii. approval of first sits, and other EC related decisions;
- viii. approval of resits.

6.70 The board should note and endorse the recommendations of the extenuating circumstances sub-board, and discuss any cases that could not be resolved by the sub-board (see [Section 9](#) for more details). The board should approve the outcomes of the recommendations; this can be done implicitly in straightforward cases such as first sits, but some cases, notably recommendations for first takes (reattempting the year with full teaching) must be presented to the Degree Examination Board for authorisation.

6.71 Extenuating circumstances not taken into account elsewhere may be a factor in classification. These may be used in the exercise of the borderline classification policy, and for some undergraduate programmes a board may recommend discounting a limited number of credits with outstanding certified absences, or deferring classification pending first sits (Academic Regulations, Section 3).

#### Advanced standing in classification

6.72 Marks achieved at other institutions shall not be included in the calculation of the Classification Mark. Instead, a truncated weighting shall be used, which simply removes the year that will not count; for example, 1:3:6 becomes 3:6.

#### Discretion and borderline policy

6.73 SEBs have a certain degree of flexibility in applying certain regulations, for example:

- i. SEBs may choose to recommend the award of a higher classification of degree where the Classification Mark is marginally below the required threshold, within the bounds of the borderline classification policy (see below).
- ii. SEBs may choose to condone failure in up to 30 credits of modules for most postgraduate postgraduate programmes, where students achieve marks of 40.0 in the failed module and 50.0 across all modules (Academic Regulations, Section 5). The required marks vary for some programmes on special regulations.



6.74 It shall be noted that each situation is dependent upon the SEB's judgement in respect of the specific situation under consideration. Discretion shall never be used as an automatic response, as this would in effect lower Queen Mary's requirements for award, including lowering the classification boundaries.

#### Borderline classification policy

6.75 The borderline classification can be used to award a higher classification than that indicated by a student's Classification Mark where strict criteria are met and the SEB agrees, with collective academic judgement, that the higher classification is more reflective of the student's overall performance.

6.76 There is no discretion at the pass/fail border, as this is a minimum standard of achievement for award. However, the board should look carefully at the marks for these borderline students to ensure that it is fully confident in them.

6.77 The borderline classification policy shall never be used to lower the classification of a student once the individual module marks have been agreed.

6.78 The use and consideration of the borderline classification policy shall always be recorded clearly in the minutes of the board, with a rationale for the decision. All students in the zones of consideration should be discussed; the minutes will then give an accurate record of discussions, which is important as the decision may need to be defended on academic grounds in the event that a student lodges an academic appeal. The views of external examiners are particularly important in such cases; these shall be sought and recorded in the minutes where the borderline classification policy is applied, along with their agreement.

6.79 As with all award decisions, recommendations from the SEB on the exercise of the borderline classification policy are subject to approval from the DEB.

6.80 Queen Mary has a formal borderline policy that applies to all students completing classified awards in 2014/15 or later (with the exception of the MBBS, BDS, and pre-2020-21 LLB cohorts). Discretion outside of these bounds requires suspension of the *Academic Regulations* (2.113), and will not normally be approved. The borderline policy is as follows:

- i. Students with Classification Marks within one per cent of a borderline (except at the pass/fail border) shall be determined to fall within the 'zone of consideration';
- ii. Students with Classification 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;
- iii. All students falling within a zone of consideration shall be considered as possible cases for application of the borderline policy;
- iv. 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.

- v. 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.

6.81 The borderline policy is applied after the initial award and classification calculations (based on the Classification Mark only). Where awards have specific requirements for marks in particular modules (e.g. minimum dissertation/project marks for Merit and Distinction at PGT level, those rules take precedence over the borderline policy (i.e. if a student meets the borderline policy requirements but does not meet the dissertation/project requirement, the classification will not be raised).

#### Field of study

6.82 SEBs may need to consider the recommended field of study when making decisions on classification and award. Fields of study are the approved titles of awards made to students. These are determined by programme titles, and are therefore agreed when students register for their programmes, though approved exit titles may apply in some cases.

## External examiners' reports and other matters

#### List of outstanding external examiner reports from the previous year

6.83 The board should note where an external examiner has not submitted a report from the previous year (where they were expected to do so). In such cases, the SEB should remind externals of the need to submit reports. The SEB should consider whether it would be appropriate to terminate a contract where a report has not been received, but this last should be handled outside of the meeting in liaison with ARCS.

#### Matters arising/outstanding from previous reports

6.84 The externals and the board should discuss progress made on points raised in the previous set of reports, and any issues that have not been resolved should be flagged, and action agreed where appropriate.

#### Oral reports from the external examiners

6.85 The externals should be invited to give short oral reports on their experiences with the board (both at the meeting and throughout the year). These comments should be recorded in the minutes, though it should also be noted that externals submit written reports that go into more detail.

#### Authority for the Chair to act on behalf of the board

6.86 The board should then agree to confer authority upon its Chair, to act on its behalf until the next SEB meeting. This conferral of authority should be recorded in the minutes. A log of Chair's actions taken after the meeting should also be maintained throughout the year; it is convenient to maintain this at the end of the minutes, so that they can be noted at the board's next meeting.

#### Arrangements for the next meeting

6.87 The board should discuss the details of the next meeting. It is not necessary to set an exact date (though this can be helpful, where possible), but the published windows of time in which SEBs must take place should be noted and adhered to.

#### Prizes

6.88 The allocation of prizes, where used, may be discussed either at the end of the consideration of student results or, separately, at the end of the meeting. Prizes are managed by the Bursaries, Grants and Scholarships Office in ARCS.

6.89 Schools and institutes shall inform the Bursaries, Grants and Scholarships Office of all prize details (both nominations and awards). These shall be communicated at the earliest possible opportunity, in a separate list from the SEB minutes. The communication must include the following details:

- i. Student name and Identity Number;
- ii. Title of the prize;
- iii. Whether it is a nomination for, or an award of the prize;
- iv. Amount of prize money to be awarded
- v. Whether the prize is funded by the school/institute, Queen Mary, or an external body.

6.90 The Bursaries, Grants and Scholarships Office confirms awards with schools and institutes, and informs students of awards (though not nominations). The Office shall also arrange payments and the production of certificates. Students may collect prizes from the Office, or have them posted to their registered addresses.

6.91 Schools and institutes are encouraged to inform students of awards and nominations themselves, rather than awaiting confirmation at the degree ceremonies. Where a student has been nominated but the actual prize has not yet been allocated, this fact shall be made clear in correspondence.

### After the SEB meeting

6.92 Immediately after the SEB meeting there are a number of tasks that must be completed within a short timeframe to meet the deadlines for the associated DEB. These include:

- i. Entry to SITS of any mark changes agreed at the SEB, and recalculation of module marks for affected modules;
- ii. completion of the SEB minutes (guidance is given below), EC monitoring form and first take/retake forms by the Secretary;
- iii. completion of the report to the DEB by the Chair;
- iv. submission of all of the above to the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance) and Assistant Academic Registrar (Student Records).

6.93 ARCS will review submissions, generate DEB reports, and liaise with SEBs to resolve queries during the period between the SEB and the DEB.

### Chair's action

6.94 Any SEB decisions taken after the SEB meeting (before and after the DEB) are taken by the Chair alone, as Chair's action. These must be submitted on the [Chair's action template](#) to the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance) (for items requiring DEB approval), and Assistant Academic Registrar (Student Records). It is generally helpful to submit all forms to both Assistant Academic Registrars.

## Servicing examination boards

### General

6.95 Examination boards must be properly serviced. Each meeting shall have an agenda, and all decisions shall be formally recorded. Each SEB meeting must also produce a report to the DEB. This expedites the meeting's business, and is also required to:

- i. Provide a clear audit trail should there be a question on the board's decision-making;
- ii. Provide a clear record should there be a challenge to the board's decisions (for example, in case of an academic appeal);
- iii. Enable the board to examine past decisions, and to set and follow precedents.

## Minutes

- 6.96 Minutes must provide a clear summary of the decisions taken at each meeting, and also of the discussions leading to those decisions where this is required to understand the decision or to set a precedent.
- 6.97 The template for SEB minutes must be used to guide the format of minutes wherever possible. The template is [online](#).
- 6.98 Secretaries may prefer to type minutes directly into a prepared document using a laptop at the meeting. This may be partially completed before the meeting, where certain information is already known (e.g., apologies for absence).

## Style of minutes

- 6.99 Minutes shall be written in such a way that a person not in attendance at the meeting can follow the decisions made. Minutes will or may be read by a variety of groups external to the board, including other SEB Chairs, ARCS staff, the QAA, and the OIA.
- 6.100 The following standard conventions shall be used when writing SEB minutes:
- i. All minutes shall be written in the past tense;
  - ii. The Board is singular, not plural;
  - iii. Begin the minutes with an attendance table, listing:
    - a. members present;
    - b. members who are absent or have sent apologies ;
    - c. individuals present 'in attendance' (separately to avoid confusion with members);
  - iv. Never refer to individuals by name in the actual minutes, and only refer to them by role where it is directly relevant that the role holder made the point (e.g. 'The CLA4001 module organiser noted that failure rates had improved since last year.'). For more generic points, use 'The Board...'.
  - v. Record student details as follows: SURNAME Forename (ID number). Minutes should not be anonymous.
  - vi. Begin each minute with 'The Board action... Use the following actions:
    - a. The Board **noted** (information received);
    - b. The Board **received** (documents received);
    - c. The Board **considered** (debate);
    - d. The Board **approved** (decisions taken);
    - e. The Board **recommended** (recommendations to the DEB where the SEB is not empowered to act, e.g. suspension of regulations requests or awards).

## Information to be recorded

- 6.101 Boards are not required to minute decisions in respect of every student; it is standard practice to refer to an attached schedule of marks or pass list ('as detailed in the SITS-generated report'). However, individuals shall be referred to in the following situations:
- i. where a board has considered and/or recommended the exercise of the borderline policy on classification;
  - ii. where a decision of the board is not in accordance with past precedents.
  - iii. where there is a request for suspension of regulations.
  - iv. where there are extenuating circumstances (if a student requests the review of a board's decisions through an academic appeal, it is important to know whether extenuating circumstances were reported, and if they affected the board's decision).
  - v. where the board has exercised its discretion, for example in the consideration of whether to apply the borderline classification policy.

6.102 Extenuating circumstances shall be referred to in the minutes, but detail is not required. This ensures that it is clear where circumstances have been considered and taken into account.

6.103 Comments from the external examiners shall be summarised in the minutes, in addition to the separate, written reports from external examiners.

6.104 Minutes shall always be approved by the Chair, with any amendments made, before being released. Once approved by the Chair, a copy shall be sent to each member of the board including the external examiners, and to the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance). The Secretary shall retain a copy as part of the SEB records for the year, and may distribute further copies to new external examiners appointed in the following year.

### SEB reports to DEBs

6.105 The SEB Chair is responsible for the production of the Report to the DEB. This document is used by ARCS in the production of the DEB reports to ensure that all items requiring specific discussion or approval at the DEB are flagged.

6.106 For programmes other than the MBBS and BDS, reports shall be submitted electronically to the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance) and the Assistant Academic Registrar (Student Records) by the prescribed deadline so that they can be checked, collated, and circulated to members of the DEB. The deadlines are provided in the '[Key dates](#)' section of the *Assessment Handbook*.

6.107 Although this is a tight deadline, SEBs must ensure the accuracy of the information provided in order to avoid delays in the decision making processes for awards.

6.108 There may be queries on the content of the Report to the DEB, and SEB chairs and secretaries shall aim to be available for the period of time before the DEB meeting. SEB chairs shall notify the DEB Secretary and Chair of any difficult cases in advance of the meeting.

6.109 The SEB shall provide the following items for the DEB.

- i. report to the DEB;
- ii. minutes of the SEB;
- iii. extenuating circumstances monitoring form;
- iv. signed retake/first take forms (if any).

6.110 The most recent approved templates for these documents must be used. These templates are available online: [www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/examination-boards](http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/examination-boards)

### Degree Examination Boards

6.111 Degree Examination Boards consider and may approve the recommendations made by SEBs for awards, suspension of regulations, and retakes/first takes, and ensure (as far as possible) that academic standards are comparable across all disciplines. DEBs pay special attention to these roles in regard to joint degrees and condoned pass degrees.

6.112 The terms of reference of Degree Examination Boards are:

- i. to consider and approve recommendations from SEBs on awards and classifications, and fields of study where necessary (pre-2008/09 cohorts only);
- ii. to consider and approve recommendations from Subject Examination Boards to set aside results affected by accepted extenuating circumstances;

- iii. to consider and approve recommendations from Subject Examination Boards for the termination of registration and enrolment of students due to academic failure;
- iv. to exercise discretion - where appropriate, and within the permitted scope of any Queen Mary policy - in order to agree results, progression and award;
- v. to pay particular regard to matters of consistency across programmes leading to the same awards;
- vi. to resolve differences between and within SEBs, where these occur;
- vii. to consider recommendations for the suspension of regulations, and to make recommendations where appropriate;
- viii. to consider recommendations for retakes and first takes, and to approve these where appropriate;
- ix. to ensure the consistent application of the Academic Regulations;
- x. to monitor the performance of Subject Examination Boards;
- xi. to consider other matters referred by the Senate.

6.113 Where there are reservations concerning any degree recommendation, the DEB shall refer the matter back to the SEB to ensure that comparability between students is maintained. Where the issue concerns a single student, the chairs of the two boards shall normally settle the matter, consulting with an external examiner if necessary. Where a group or whole cohort of students is affected, the SEB shall be reconvened.

6.114 Issues that cannot be resolved at the DEB shall be handled by Chair's action, through the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance).

6.115 The membership of a Degree Examination Board is as follows:

- i. a Chair, appointed to the role by the Senate, or its delegated authority;
- ii. the Chairs of the Subject Examination Boards reporting to the DEB;
- iii. external members, where appointed to DEBs by the Senate, or its delegated authority;
- iv. external examiners shall be members where the functions of SEB and DEB are combined;
- v. the Vice-Principal (Education) may attend any DEB as a member;
- vi. in the case of the MBBS DEB, the Head of Assessment and the Head of Year 5 shall also be members

6.116 The following are not DEB members and do not count towards the quorum, but may be in attendance:

- i. the Secretary to the DEB;
- ii. the Academic Registrar (or nominee);
- iii. staff from Academic Registry and the Academic Secretariat;
- iv. Deputy Chairs of the SEBs reporting to the DEB;
- v. Secretaries of the SEBs reporting to the DEB;
- vi. External examiners;
- vii. the Principal, Faculty Vice-Principal & Executive Dean, and Faculty Dean for Taught Programmes.

6.117 Should a DEB Chair be unable to attend a meeting and there is no Deputy Chair, an SEB Chair shall deputise, but shall not be empowered to take Chair's action.

6.118 The quorum for a DEB is 50 per cent of the total membership for the SEBs under consideration, excluding the Vice-Principal (Education).

## Academic Regulations

6.119 The Academic Regulations set out a common set of rules for the management of academic standards, and form the basis of Queen Mary's contract with its students.

6.120 In publishing the Academic Regulations Queen Mary makes a clear statement on the ways in which it assesses achievement of academic standards and the basis for the conferment of awards. It is therefore paramount that the Academic Regulations are followed.

6.121 It is not permissible for boards to create and impose alternative regulations where an examiner (internal or external) disagrees with an element of the Academic Regulations. Such actions shall be overturned by the DEB in almost all cases.

6.122 Students may request the review of an examination board decision, through an academic appeal, on the basis that the examinations or the board meetings were not held in accordance with the relevant regulations. This includes both the application of the wrong regulations, and the incorrect application of the proper regulations.

6.123 Advice on the application and interpretation of the Academic Regulations must always be sought from the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance) or the Academic Quality & Standards Officer.

## Quick reference guide to examination board authorities

6.124 The table below is a quick reference guide, showing where authority in decision making lies for examination board processes:

Action	SEB	DEB
Marks	Approve	(implicitly endorsed)
Failure of assessments/modules	Approve	(implicitly endorsed)
Failure of programme	Recommend	Approve
Resits	Approve	(implicitly endorsed)
Progression	Approve	(implicitly endorsed)
Award and classification	Recommend	Approve
Borderline policy in classification	Recommend	Approve
Extenuating circumstances claims	Approve	(implicitly endorsed)
Extenuating circumstances outcomes (excluding first <u>takes</u> )	Approve	(implicitly endorsed)
Discounting modules affected by ECs (regulation 3.56.vi)	Recommend	Approve
Deferring classification pending first sits (regulation 3.56.v)	Recommend	Approve
First takes/retakes	Recommend	Approve
Suspension of regulations	Recommend	Recommend

## 7. Student Failure and Reassessment

### Agreeing failure

- 7.1 SEBs must agree failure of the previous attempt before a reassessment attempt can be granted. There have been past instances of reattempts awarded prior to SEB meetings. These actions shall in most cases invalidate the original failure, and do not conform to the requirement for collective decision-making at the SEB.
- 7.2 Where students are permitted multiple attempts at tests or other forms of assessment, this shall be clearly specified and a cut-off point established for the agreement of pass or failure.
- 7.3 Where students fail to meet award requirements and have no further attempts remaining, this shall be clearly indicated in the SEB minutes and reflected on the pass-list. These students shall be identified as distinct from those with remaining reassessment opportunities.
- 7.4 It is recommended that all failures be subject to a double-checking process by examiners and SEBs, especially where students are awarded a '0 NS' mark for non-attendance/submission, and in borderline pass/fail cases.

### Reassessment

- 7.5 There are two forms of reassessment: resits and retakes. The main difference between the two is that retakes require students to sit the module again (including attendance at lectures, and completion of all assessments), while resits simply require students to reattempt the failed assessment.
- 7.6 The form of reassessment shall be agreed by the SEB. However, retakes can only be awarded when specifically agreed by the DEB, on the recommendation of the SEB.
- 7.7 Students must be informed of the reassessment methods at the start of each module.
- 7.8 Students cannot reattempt modules that they have already passed, although exceptionally, a first take may be permitted. The BDS and MBBS are exceptions to this rule.
- 7.9 The majority of programmes permit at least one reattempt, though the exact numbers of attempts permitted (including the original attempt) vary as follows:
  - i. LLB:
    - a. 2011/12 and earlier cohorts: 4
    - b. 2012/13-2019/20 cohorts: 3
    - c. 2020/21 and later cohorts: 2
  - ii. All other UG awards:
    - a. Most pre-2011/12 cohorts: 3
    - b. 2011/12 and later cohorts: 2
  - iii. All PGT awards: 2
- 7.10 A small number of programmes have special regulations permitting SEBs to use their discretion to grant one additional attempt. Please refer to the programme regulations.



- 7.11 A student due for a reattempt must take it at the next available opportunity (Academic Regulations, Section 2). Where students opt out of a reattempt, or register and fail to complete the reassessment, this shall count as one of the permitted attempts. Students who opt out of a reattempt must still be considered by the SEB.
- 7.12 The SEB may recommend to the DEB that Queen Mary should terminate the registration and enrolment of students who fail to reattempt at the next available opportunity. This should be clearly documented in the SEB minutes, the report to the DEB, the pass list, and in the results (Academic Regulations, Section 2).
- 7.13 Where students opt out of a reattempt at the next available opportunity, they shall not be permitted to register at a later point and shall lose all remaining attempts.

## Resits

*Note: first sits are discussed in [Section 9](#).*

- 7.14 Resits are by far the most common mode of reassessment. Resitting students reattempt assessment from failed modules at the next available opportunity.
- 7.15 Resits do not incur additional fees.
- 7.16 Each resit shall count as one permitted attempt at a module unless a 'first sit' is agreed (see [here](#)).
- 7.17 Resit marks are capped (for the module) at the pass mark for all programmes except for a small number of programmes with special regulations. Resit marks count toward the developmental year in which the module was first attempted, not the year in which the resit occurred.
- 7.18 Each module has an approved mode of reassessment, held in the module regulations and in SITS:
- i. Synoptic reassessment overrides all elements of reassessment (whether passed or failed) from the original failed attempt at the module with one (or more) mark from a new element of assessment weighted at 100 percent of the module (or adding up to 100 percent).
  - ii. Standard reassessment requires students to reattempt only those elements of assessment from a failed module that were failed on the original attempt. The marks from passed elements on the first attempt and from reattempts shall be combined to produce the module mark. Where students fail elements of assessment repeatedly, the mark from the best fail shall stand (rather than the most recent mark) unless special regulations apply. Where students fail individual elements of assessment but still pass the module, no reassessment is permitted.

### Timing of resits

- 7.19 The timing of resits shall be determined by the module concerned, rather than by the student reattempting the module or the programme on which they are registered.
- 7.20 Resits shall be taken at the next normally available assessment opportunity for the module(s) in question.

- 7.21 There are normally two assessment opportunities for each module each year. The appropriate Subject Examination Board must agree failure in the module (not just the assessment) before any resit can take place. Queen Mary has a system of semester-based examinations for most modules; the first attempt will occur at the end of the semester in which teaching ended, and the resit opportunity in the late summer examination period (ie a student who fails an examination at the end of semester one will not resit it at the end of semester two, but will resit in the standard late summer resit period).
- 7.22 The semester one module examination period takes place in January, and the semester two and year-long module examination period takes place in May/June each year. A late summer examination period for non-MBBS and BDS students takes place in August each year before the start of the next academic year.
- 7.23 Late summer resits are available to all students (UG and PG, including finalists). The late summer period shall be the next normally available assessment opportunity for all programmes except the MBBS and BDS (below) and certain postgraduate programmes with programme specific examination dates.

#### MBBS resits

- 7.24 MBBS students resit in the late summer examination period of the same academic year for Parts 1 – 4. Resits for Part 5 shall normally occur in May or June of the same academic year.

#### BDS resits

- 7.25 BDS students resit in July for Parts 1-4, and in June for Part 5.

### Resitting individual elements of assessment

- 7.26 Where standard reassessment is used (see above), students may select which failed elements they wish to reattempt when registering for reassessment. Where students elect not to register for one or more elements of reassessment, this shall count as a missed opportunity. Students may not reattempt failed elements of assessment where the module as a whole has been passed.

#### Resitting dissertations and projects

- 7.27 Where students fail dissertations or projects and do not meet their award requirements, the SEB shall determine whether a resit or a retake for the module should be awarded. The dissertation or project is core (must be taken and passed) for most programmes, and in these cases it is impossible to meet the award requirements without passing the module.
- 7.28 Resitting a dissertation or project requires students to rework and improve the original submission to bring it up to a passing standard; for projects, only the report may need improvement. Students should receive minimal support; no more than two supervision sessions are advised. As for all resits, the module mark achieved is capped to a bare pass.
- 7.29 The procedure for retaking a dissertation or project is entirely distinct from resitting; details on retaking these modules are given [below](#).
- 7.30 Deadlines for students reattempting projects or dissertations shall be set for the next normally available assessment opportunity (as for all reassessments).

## Retakes

- 7.31 Retakes are the second, much less common, mode of reassessment. Examination boards may require or permit students to retake one or more modules. Retake students reattempt entire modules from scratch, including tuition and completion of all elements of assessment, at the next available opportunity. Retakes shall only be awarded following a recommendation from an SEB and approval from a DEB.
- 7.32 Retakes incur pro-rata tuition fees; retake students attend lectures and classes and complete all elements of assessment.
- 7.33 Each retake shall count as one permitted attempt at a module, unless a [‘first take’](#) is agreed.
- 7.34 Marks for retakes are capped at the pass mark (for the module) ([‘first takes’](#) are not capped).
- 7.35 Retakes are generally best applied to postgraduate dissertations and projects (especially in science-based disciplines), where students are required to complete considerable additional practical work in order to pass.

## Required retakes

- 7.36 Retakes may be required in place of resits (i.e. a retake is the standard mode of reassessment) where students cannot resit due to the nature of the assessment (e.g. laboratory-based assessment, or field work). For in-class tests, a resit may be awarded rather than a retake, as students only need to attend for test.

## Retaking dissertations and projects

- 7.37 Where students fail dissertations or projects and do not meet their award requirements, SEBs shall determine whether resits or retakes for the modules should be awarded. The dissertation or project is core (must be taken and passed) for many programmes, and in these cases it is impossible to meet the award requirements without passing the module.
- 7.38 Retaking a dissertation or project requires students to undertake a new piece of work, with full supervision and full access to facilities.
- 7.39 The procedure for resitting a dissertation or project is entirely distinct, and the two must not be confused; information on resitting these modules is provided above.

## Recommending and agreeing retakes

- 7.40 Retakes shall only be awarded on the recommendation of SEBs and with the approval of DEBs.
- 7.41 SEBs must discuss the issues and implications of retakes with affected students before they present retake recommendations to DEBs. Retakes involve attendance and the payment of fees; there are funding implications for all students, and visa implications for overseas students. These issues must be discussed with and explained to students.
- 7.42 Where retakes are required for modules where it is impossible to resit the assessment (fieldwork, laboratory work, etc), all students on the module are informed at the start of the module (students must always be informed of reassessment methods at the start of each module), and further discussion is not required.

- 7.43 Students shall be charged pro-rata fees to retake modules, irrespective of any accepted extenuating circumstances. Undergraduate students paying home fees will generally receive LEA funding for an additional year; however, overseas and postgraduate students must generally fund retakes themselves. Students should also consider the living and support costs of a further year in study.
- 7.44 Visas for overseas students do not permit part-time study. Further information on visas can be sought from the [Advice and Counselling Service](#).
- 7.45 SEBs shall recommend retakes to DEBs using the appropriate form, available from Registry. All retakes, and the details of the retakes, shall be agreed at DEBs (or, exceptionally, by Chair's action), using these forms. Retakes cannot be recommended or agreed during the following academic year; this includes retakes of semester two modules.
- 7.46 When retakes are agreed, students shall retake the modules that were failed; they may not replace the failed module with a 'retake' in a module that has not been taken previously, unless the original module has been discontinued, the module is not running, there has been an approved change to the code or title of the module, or there is a clash with another module (only core or compulsory modules take precedence) (Academic Regulations, Section 2).
- 7.47 Students are not permitted to take new or additional supplementary modules where they are retaking less than 120 academic credits.
- 7.48 The SEB shall determine the nature of reassessment, and whether this should be a resit or a retake. Individual members of staff cannot supersede the SEBs' decisions. Individual students cannot simply switch from resitting one element of assessment to retaking the entire module upon payment of the appropriate fee; approval from SEBs and DEBs is required in such cases, and this shall only be granted in truly exceptional cases.

### Requests to retake after the SEB

- 7.49 School and institute handbooks shall inform students that retakes can only be agreed by SEBs and DEBs, in concert. Requests from students to retake rather than resit modules after the publication of results cannot and shall not be considered.
- 7.50 Students seeking to retake a module after the publication of results shall be advised to submit academic appeals. These appeals shall request the review of the examinations boards' decisions to award resits rather than retakes. Further information on academic appeals may be found [in Section 10](#), and [online](#).

## 8. External Examiners

### General

- 8.1 External examiners are appointed by the Senate (or its delegated authority) in accordance with the approved processes and criteria; these pay due regard to the [QAA Quality Code](#).
- 8.2 External examiners are accountable to the Principal, and make their reports to the Principal. However, reports shall be directed to ARCS, which is responsible for their review.
- 8.3 External examiners are appointed to each programme of study, and are be members of the Subject Examination Board for the appropriate programme. In some cases, multiple external examiners may be appointed to a single programme of study, or a single external examiner may be appointed to multiple cognate programmes.
- 8.4 The numbers of external examiners appointed to a programme and their range of expertise must be sufficient to permit the effective completion of their duties. This is a requirement of the external examiner appointment criteria.
- 8.5 External examiners are permitted to view and comment upon all student submissions for all forms of assessment. The precise role of an external examiner shall be agreed by the Subject Examination Board in consultation with the appropriate academic schools or institutes. This must include approval of examination papers and an appropriate method of sampling marked assessment, and may include details of participation in oral examinations, etc. Further information on the role of external examiners may be found in the [Guidance for External Examiners](#).
- 8.6 The core duties of external examiners are:
  - i. to comment upon the assessments for each module for which they are responsible, the extent to which the assessments cover the syllabus, and whether they enable students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes;
  - ii. to consider, comment upon, and approve all examination question papers, and to comment upon marking schemes for individual papers, assessment criteria, and model answers;
  - iii. to confirm whether or not the standard of marking is satisfactory by scrutinising a sample of examination scripts for each module and, if necessary, a sample of in-course assessment;
  - iv. to comment upon the standards of achievement of students, and the comparability of this achievement to standards elsewhere;
  - v. to comment upon the standards of proposed awards, and their comparability to similar awards made elsewhere;
  - vi. to make known any causes for concern in relation to academic standards achieved by students, the standards of modules, and the standards of awards to be made;
  - vii. to provide independent opinion where there is a significant, unresolved difference between marks awarded by first and second markers on a script or piece of work;
  - viii. to advise the Subject Examination Board on appropriate actions where the marks for a module are significantly outside the normal pattern, and to confirm recommendations by markers for actions where the marks for a module are significantly outside the normal pattern;
  - ix. to attend - or conduct - oral examinations, where applicable;
  - x. to attend meetings of the Subject Examination Board, and to participate fully in decision making;
  - xi. to endorse decisions on results and progression, and recommendations for award, by signing the relevant documentation;
  - xii. to attend meetings of the Degree Examination Board, where the external examiners choose;

- xiii. to submit a full report, including an optional confidential report to the Principal;
  - xiv. to perform any other duties requested by the Senate or the Degree Examination Board, following appropriate consultation over the nature of those duties.
- 8.7 By agreement with the Subject Examination Board and in consultation with the relevant schools and institutes, external examiners may also carry out other duties including: the approval of project topics and essay titles, interviewing students on their programmes of study and experiences, commenting informally on proposed curriculum changes, commenting upon proposed changes to assessment methods.

### Purpose of external examiners

- 8.8 External examiners ensure that the standards of awards and assessment at Queen Mary are consistent with those of comparable awards from other UK institutions.
- 8.9 External examiners ensure that all students are treated equitably, and that due consideration is given to individual students.
- 8.10 External examiners review assessment processes and comment upon their operation in a formal report, and can offer valuable counsel at examination boards and, individually, to programme and module organisers.

### Appointment of external examiners

- 8.11 External examiners are appointed by the Deans for Education (Humanities and Social Sciences, and Science and Engineering), or the SMD Head of Quality Assurance (Medicine and Dentistry). This authority is delegated from the Senate.
- 8.12 External examiners must be nominated using a [standard form](#). The form shall be submitted with a CV of no more than two pages to the Academic Quality & Standards Officer. Nominations without a CV will not be considered. ARCS will ensure that the nominee meets the Queen Mary appointment criteria.
- 8.13 Where a nominee meets the appointment criteria, the nomination will be approved by ARCS and passed to the faculty Dean for consideration. Where approval is given by the Dean, the nominee will be appointed, and the SEB and school or institute informed by ARCS.
- 8.14 Where a nominee does not meet the appointment criteria or is rejected by the Deans, ARCS will refer the matter back to the SEB. Where there is an exceptionally strong case for appointment, the SEB may resubmit the nomination with a statement of justification. These appointments require approval from the Vice-Principal (Education), in addition to the faculty Dean and the Academic Secretariat. In most instances, SEBs should seek alternative candidates when nominations are rejected.

### Period of appointment

- 8.15 External examiners are appointed for terms of four years; this may be extended for one further year in very exceptional circumstances. An extension of appointment must be approved by the Dean for Education or Head of Quality Assurance. A [standard form](#) is used for extensions.
- 8.16 ARCS monitors the appointment of external examiners, and attempts to remind SEBs when a new appointment or extension is required; however, it is the responsibility of SEBs to manage this information. ARCS holds records on all external examiners, and can answer queries on the terms of office of individual external examiners.

## Moderation of assessment

- 8.17 External examiners are permitted to view and comment upon all student submissions for all forms of assessment. The external examiners' role is to moderate the marking of internal examiners; they should not be involved in double marking.
- 8.18 Sampling arrangements for the moderation of assessment shall be agreed between the SEB and the external examiner in advance, on an individual basis. External examiners must be provided with sufficient evidence to determine whether the internal marking and classification for honours is consistent, and of an appropriate standard.
- 8.19 Samples shall in all cases include a range of assessments. Sampled assessments shall be sent together with all comments from the internal examiners. The range of assessments sampled shall include examples of the following (excepting significant differences of opinion, there is no need to include all examples from each category):
- i. assessments from the top, middle, and bottom of the performance range;
  - ii. first class or distinction grade assessments;
  - iii. failed assessments;
  - iv. scripts of borderline students;
  - v. assessments where the internal examiners' marks differed significantly (see [Marks and Marking](#) – it is not the externals' responsibility to resolve these differences).
- 8.20 Where moderation indicates that significant alterations to one or more marks may be necessary, the internal and external examiners shall consider whether the change relates to the individual submission, or to all submissions of the assessment. In the latter case, the marks for the entire cohort shall be reviewed; the examiners have discretion on whether to remark all submissions, or to scale marks according to an agreed benchmark. Rescaling shall be reported to, and endorsed by, the SEB.
- 8.21 Examination board chairs shall ensure that any significant elements of in-course assessment are made available to external examiners if requested, in addition to samples from examination scripts, dissertations, and projects. The definition of significant may vary between disciplines, but elements of assessment weighted at 25 percent or more of a module should be made available. Where submissions have been returned to students, SEBs must have a means of returning samples to external examiners where required.
- 8.22 External examiners are not markers. Exceptionally, and by mutual agreement, they may be asked to give a mark where there is dispute among the SEB over the provisional mark. However, comments from external examiners on marks to be awarded are recommendations and are subject to approval from the SEB itself. Externals should not change marks unless specifically asked to give a mark in the circumstances outlined here.

## External examiners' views

- 8.23 Chairs of examination boards shall ensure that external examiners are invited to express their views. This is especially important for difficult or contentious decisions, as external examiners' views carry a particular weight.
- 8.24 Where the board disagrees in a routine case, the final decision shall be reached by a majority vote; chairs have a second and casting vote in the event of a tie. However, where external examiners express grave concerns that particular decisions would be improper or inequitable, chairs must seek the views of all external examiners on the issue. The board shall defer to the majority decision of the external examiners, and the substance of the discussions shall be recorded in the minutes.

## Views that contravene regulations or guidance

- 8.25 External examiners may occasionally recommend courses of action that contravene Queen Mary's regulations or guidance documents. The Academic Registrar or Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance) should be consulted without delay in such cases; discussion of the issue shall be closed until guidance is received.

## External examiners' reports

- 8.26 External examiners are required to complete a formal report for each academic year of service. A standard template, available [online](#), shall be used in all cases.
- 8.27 External examiners should send their reports to ARCS, and not directly to SEBs, schools, or institutes. ARCS will note any issues in the reports, and send copies to the SEB Chair, Secretary, and the Head of School/Institute. The SEB Chair and Head of School/Institute must provide a written response to the external examiner where any issues are raised, and this should be copied to ARCS. Reports are also considered by the Vice-Principal (Education) and the faculty Deans for Education.
- 8.28 Universities are required by the QAA to make external examiner reports available to students. Schools and institutes should share reports and SEB responses with students through Student Staff Liaison Committees and make reports available to individual students on request.



## 9. Extenuating Circumstances

- 9.1 Extenuating circumstances are circumstances that are outside a student's control which may have a negative impact on a student's ability to undertake or complete any assessment so as to cast doubt on the likely validity of the assessment as a measure of the student's achievement (Academic Regulations, Section 3).

### Basic principles

- 9.2 Two basic principles underpin the consideration of extenuating circumstances:

- i. Assessment shall measure achievement, not potential.
- ii. Only extenuating circumstances beyond the control of students are valid.

- 9.3 The first principle is that assessment shall measure achievement, not potential (there is only one exception to this rule, detailed below, under '[Degree classifications](#)'). Marks cannot be awarded on what a student had the potential to achieve. Therefore, the only pertinent extenuating circumstances are those that cast doubt upon the validity of assessments as measures of achievement. This excludes circumstances that do not relate to the *assessment* (for example, absence from sections of teaching due to illness). Students may not always reach their full potentials, but this does not affect the validity of assessments as measures of achievement.

- 9.4 The second principle is that the only relevant extenuating circumstances are those beyond the control of students. Students are responsible for submitting assignments on time, attending examinations at the appropriate times and venues, and submitting information on extenuating circumstances in the proper format by the specified deadlines. Excuses such as workload, computer failure, misreading exam timetables, forgetting to set an alarm, or misjudging the time required for revision are invalid.

### Informing students of EC procedures

- 9.5 Information on extenuating circumstances is provided in the Academic Regulations, the Student Guide, and school and institute handbooks. These documents are available online, and it is the responsibility of students to familiarise themselves with these documents, and to follow the procedures. The Advice and Counselling Service also provides a [specially designed booklet](#) for students, which should be their main point of reference.
- 9.6 It is strongly recommended that schools and institutes remind students of extenuating circumstances procedures at appropriate times in the academic year, such as the beginning and end points of the examination periods. Communications should be sent by email, and can be supplemented by posters, in-class announcements, etc.
- 9.7 Schools must inform students at the start of each academic year if their accrediting PSRB prohibits the use of self-certification for extenuating circumstances.
- 9.8 Where extenuating circumstances are submitted and accepted, SEBs shall agree outcomes and amend grades to reflect their decisions in the period between the SEB and the lockdown of SITS.

### Submission of extenuating circumstances

- 9.9 It is the responsibility of students to submit extenuating circumstances claims using the appropriate forms. These shall be submitted to a designated contact in the school or institute as soon as possible, and no later than three working days before the meeting of the relevant SEB's extenuating circumstances sub-board.

- 9.10 All submissions must be accompanied by appropriate documentary evidence, such as medical certificates, death certificates, or police reports. Schools and institutes shall issue receipts for extenuating circumstances claims and evidence. The use of receipts precludes (or substantiates) claims from students that schools and institutes have lost their submissions.
- 9.11 Students may self-certify a maximum of three instances of extenuating circumstances during an academic year. This means that these claims will be considered without the submission of documentary evidence. An instance is defined as one submission of an extenuating circumstances form. Self-certificated extenuating circumstances should be considered in the same way as documented extenuating circumstances.
- 9.12 Where students submit evidence of extenuating circumstances without completing a form or giving further details, the SEB shall make efforts to obtain this information. Where this information is not submitted, the SEB shall still attempt to consider the evidence properly and record a decision.

### Late submission of extenuating circumstances

- 9.13 Late submission of claims for extenuating circumstances shall not be considered. Students making such claims shall be consulted by the SEB and, if necessary, advised to submit an academic appeal. Further information on academic appeals may be found [below](#) and [online](#).
- 9.14 However, where a submission is received shortly after the deadline, an SEB may, exceptionally, consider the claim if there is manifest evidence of good reason why the submission was not made by the deadline. These are the grounds for appeal, and in situations where an appeal would clearly be upheld in a student's favour, there is no purpose in delaying the process. The definition of 'good cause' in the [Appeal Policy](#) is extremely stringent, and the cause must be beyond the student's control.

### Fitness to sit and absence from examinations

- 9.15 The Academic Regulations stipulate that where students are unwell on the day of an examination, they should not attempt the examination. Instead, these students should submit claims for extenuating circumstances, with medical evidence, in accordance with the normal procedures (Academic Regulations, Section 3).
- 9.16 Where a student is absent from an examination due to valid, accepted extenuating circumstances, the SEB shall award a first sit (or a first sit resit) at the next available opportunity. Further information on first sits is given below.
- 9.17 Where students attend examinations or submit assignments, they automatically declare themselves 'fit to sit', and the marks awarded are deemed an accurate reflection of their performances. Extenuating circumstances claims cannot be considered in these circumstances, and shall be automatically dismissed.

### Illness during examinations

- 9.18 Where students fall ill during the course of an examination, the Senior Invigilator shall record the event in the Invigilator's Report, which shall be sent to the SEB chair as normal.

- 9.19 Students who fall ill during the course of an examination should submit claims for extenuating circumstances, with documentary medical evidence, in the same manner as any other claim if they wish to receive special consideration. Such claims shall only be accepted if the student was fit to sit on entering the examination venue, but – for unforeseen reasons - became ill during the examination. Where a student leaves the venue in these circumstances, any work completed up to the point of departure shall become null and void, irrespective of whether the extenuating circumstances claim is subsequently upheld; the student shall be treated as if they had never attended the examination (Academic Regulations, Section 3).

## Decision making

### Extenuating circumstances sub-boards

- 9.20 Every SEB must operate an Extenuating Circumstances Sub-board to consider claims in advance of the main SEB meeting.
- 9.21 The sub-board acts as a filter for the SEB, rejecting cases that are unsupported or irrelevant, making recommendations on clear-cut cases, and identifying cases that require consideration by the SEB (normally where classifications may be affected).
- 9.22 The sub-board cannot act on behalf of the SEB; it can only make recommendations for consideration for approval by the full SEB. However, the full SEB will not normally consider individual cases in detail unless the sub-board is unable to make a clear recommendation.
- 9.23 The terms of reference for extenuating circumstances sub-boards are:
- i. to consider extenuating circumstances submitted by students and supporting evidence, and the overall profile of the students with such circumstances;
  - ii. to consider whether or not, in the subcommittee's judgement, the extenuating circumstances are valid and whether or not they had an impact on the students' performance or participation in assessment;
  - iii. to make recommendations to the Subject Examination Board about actions to be taken in the light of extenuating circumstances;
  - iv. to maintain a record of extenuating circumstances submitted and considered, and the recommended actions.
- 9.24 SEB chairs may serve on extenuating circumstances sub-boards, but they are not required to chair the sub-board (though they are entitled to do so). This role is often taken by Senior Tutors.
- 9.25 Extenuating circumstances sub-boards shall be properly serviced. It is recommended that the secretary to the SEB also acts as secretary to the sub-board, and maintains a set of confidential minutes. This ensures a clear flow of information between the sub-board and the full SEB. The sub-board minutes shall record details of each case, including the reasons for the submission, and the recommendation of the sub-board.
- 9.26 All submissions shall be considered properly, and decisions recorded for each submission in the minutes of the full SEB. The minutes of the full SEB shall not, however, include the full details of each claim unless these are discussed in depth.

- 9.27 Decisions on the validity of extenuating circumstances claims shall be made on the basis of academic judgement, provided that decisions are in accordance with the Academic Regulations and the published procedures on extenuating circumstances.

### Consideration of claims

- 9.28 SEBs may take into account extenuating circumstances in mitigation of poor performance, or of failure to attend an examination or submit an assignment. The SEB shall consider the effects of extenuating circumstances upon the validity of the assessments, and also their cumulative effects upon students' progression or classification (this last is the only situation in which poor performance may be considered, as marks cannot be given on potential). However, the performance of an individual student must always be considered in the context of the performance of the entire cohort.
- 9.29 SEBs shall dismiss claims made on the basis of a series of examinations scheduled in close succession. These situations are bound to occur with over 1,000 examinations timetabled over a short period.
- 9.30 Employment commitments and workload issues are not valid extenuating circumstances; students commit to being available during teaching and assessment periods when they enrol with Queen Mary.

### Deferral of decisions

- 9.31 Where an SEB has insufficient information to reach a decision on a particular claim for extenuating circumstances, it may defer the decision and authorise the Chair to act on its behalf. This generally occurs when a student submits a claim but is awaiting evidence.
- 9.32 SEBs shall agree clear frameworks for chairs to follow when deferring decisions. For example, 'if evidence is received for the alleged extenuating circumstances, the student will receive  $x$ ; if evidence is not received or is found inadequate, the student will receive  $y$ '.
- 9.33 SEBs shall also specify timeframes in which the matters must be settled, even where evidence is not later submitted. The timeframe shall normally be determined by practical constraints, particularly the timing of DEBs.
- 9.34 Where SEBs defer decisions, a holding mark of '0EH' must be entered into the Student Information System; this must be updated as soon as the outcome is known.
- 9.35 Deferred decisions shall be made and recorded using Chair's action memoranda. Where these actions occur after the relevant DEB, and require DEB approval, the Chair's action memoranda must be sent to the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance).

### Double counting

- 9.36 Where a student's extenuating circumstances are considered in the context of individual modules, there will be no outstanding issues to consider in regard to progression or award, and no further action can be taken on the basis of that claim.
- 9.37 SEBs must ensure that extenuating circumstances are never 'double counted' (for example, permitting a certified absence for an individual module, and then also used as part of the borderline classification policy).

### Possible EC outcomes

- 9.38 An SEB may recommend or agree the following extenuating circumstances outcomes, subject to the approval from the specified authorities.

Action	SEB	DEB
Reject	Approve	-
First sit	Approve	-
First take	Recommend	Approve
Discount module assessment of ≤20 percent	Approve	-
Defer classification*	Recommend	Approve
Discount ≤30 credits from classification*	Recommend	Approve
Exercise of borderline policy in classification	Recommend	Approve
Suspension of regulations	Recommend	Endorse

\* limited applicability

9.39 Schools and institutes are responsible for notifying students of the outcomes of EC claims.

## Rejection

9.40 An SEB may reject a claim for extenuating circumstances if it is without merit, in which case no further action shall be taken.

## First sits

9.41 A first sit is an attempt at the assessment for a module that replaces an earlier attempt missed due to accepted extenuating circumstances that resulted in a certified absence. The mark for a first sit shall not be capped (though students can receive first sits of resits, which are capped). A first sit does not count as an incremented permitted attempt; instead, it takes the place of the attempt affected by extenuating circumstances. Please note the distinction between first attempts and first sits.

9.42 Where students submit evidence of extenuating circumstances that have impacted upon their performances, and these are upheld by SEBs, SEBs may award first sits for the affected individual elements of assessment (Academic Regulations, Section 3).

9.43 Students may have extenuating circumstances which affect resit attempts. In these cases, a first sit may be applied to the resit, becoming a 'first sit resit'. First sit resits follow the normal resit procedures for the modules, and the module mark may be capped. However, a first-sit-resit does not count as an additional attempt; it replaces the resit attempt affected by extenuating circumstances.

### Timing of first sits

9.44 First sits shall occur at the SEB's next normally available assessment opportunity.

9.45 Decisions on extenuating circumstances claims are made by SEBs, which meet after provisional module marks have been submitted to the Student Information System (SITS). It is therefore necessary for SITS to be amended after the SEB has confirmed marks for all students and made its decisions, including agreed first sits.

9.46 Where SEBs agree first sits, 'ONA' shall be entered against the elements of assessment affected. Where claims are rejected, 'ONR' shall be entered. Where a decision is on hold (for example, where a claim has been received but the promised evidence is awaited), 'OEH' shall be entered. SEBs must ensure that all certified absences are correctly entered before the [deadline for confirmed marks](#), and that OEH marks are updated as soon as the outcome is known.

9.47 A first sit must be of the same format and rigour as the missed assessment. The SEB shall determine whether or not this is the case. First sit marks are not capped, except in the cases of first sit resits (which follow the normal resit procedures).

## First takes

- 9.48 A first take is an attempt at a module - including teaching - that replaces an earlier attempt; it can only be granted under very specific conditions (see below). For undergraduate students, the mark for a first take shall replace the mark for the first attempt at the module, which will no longer be used in classification. First takes do not count as additional attempts; instead, they take the place of the attempt affected by extenuating circumstances.
- 9.49 Where students submit evidence of extenuating circumstances that have impacted upon their performances, and these are upheld by SEBs, DEBs may award first takes (for whole modules and with teaching) rather than a first sit (for one or more individual elements of assessment). This shall only be considered in exceptional circumstances, where a student has missed a large proportion of teaching due to accepted extenuating circumstances and there is exceptionally good reason why the student did not simply interrupt (Academic Regulations, Section 2). In such situations, students should be advised to interrupt their studies before it comes to the point of requiring a first take.

## Discounting elements of assessment

- 9.50 Where a student has a certified absence for a minor element of assessment for a module, the SEB may agree that the element be discounted from the calculation of the module mark. This is only permitted where the missed element is worth 20 percent or less of the module, and should preferably be used only where it is impractical for a first sit to take place. A first sit is always preferable, where possible.

## Deferring classification (certain UG programmes only)

- 9.51 Undergraduate finalists may on occasion meet the programme and module requirements for award (and therefore be eligible for classification) despite missing a significant portion of final year assessment due to valid extenuating circumstances.
- 9.52 In these circumstances, SEBs may recommend to DEBs that the award should not be agreed, and that the student should be permitted to return at the next available opportunity for first sits (Academic Regulations, Section 3). This is not a suspension of regulations, but does require DEB approval.

## Discounting credits from classification (certain UG programmes only)

- 9.53 Undergraduate finalists may on occasion meet the programme and module requirements for award (and therefore be eligible for classification) despite missing a significant portion of final year assessment due to valid extenuating circumstances.
- 9.54 SEBs may also recommend that DEBs agree the awards, but discount the affected module marks from the calculation of the Classification Mark where there are valid and accepted extenuating circumstances and the award rules allow for this. No more than 30 credits of modules may be discounted in this way (Academic Regulations, Section 3), and core modules cannot be discounted.

## Discretion in classification and progression

- 9.55 There is one (and only one) instance in which potential, rather than achievement, may be considered in relation to extenuating circumstances.

## Classification

- 9.56 Where a student's Classification Mark falls within the zone of consideration, an SEB may use extenuating circumstances not taken into account elsewhere as a reason to consider the student for the higher classification via the application of the borderline classification policy. Where a student falls within one per cent of a classification boundary, the extenuating circumstances may be used as an additional factor in considering whether or not to raise the classification. Where a student falls within 1.5 per cent of a classification boundary, the extenuating circumstances may be used to consider the student as being within the zone of consideration, though in those circumstances they cannot also be used as a factor in raising the classification. SEB's should be confident that the student would have achieved the higher classification had there been no extenuating circumstances – it is not an automatic recommendation.
- 9.57 Where a student has suffered 'general' extenuating circumstances during their studies, the consideration of the application of the borderline policy in classification may be the only possible way to consider the circumstances. Therefore, these may be carried forward from year to year; SEBs should keep a note of such cases so that the details are considered when the student reaches the point of classification. Wherever possible, action should be taken to 'use up' the extenuating circumstances before that point, for example by first sits, etc.

## Monitoring

- 9.58 SEBs shall complete summary reports on extenuating circumstances for consideration by DEBs and the Academic Secretariat, in order to work towards more standardised decision-making. The [summary report template](#) should be submitted with the other SEB paperwork.

## 10. Exceptions and Special Cases

### Loss of work, scripts and marks by Queen Mary

- 10.1 Every effort must be made to ensure the security of in-course assessments, examination scripts, and mark details. In the unlikely event that these items are mislaid by Queen Mary, the SEB chair should immediately notify the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance), who will provide advice on how to proceed.
- 10.2 Students should be advised to retain copies of in-course assessment submissions. Where the lost item is a written in-course assessment, students shall be asked to resubmit the assignment; the resubmission shall be marked, or remarked, as normal.
- 10.3 Where students cannot or will not resubmit assignments without good cause, bare pass marks shall be applied. These may be offered alongside the option of submitting a further assignment, in order to seek to achieve higher marks.
- 10.4 Students may occasionally have good cause for being unable to resubmit assessments. Such instances may include examination scripts and practical or skills assessments that leave no physical copy. Two approaches are available to ensure that students are not disadvantaged and academic standards not compromised:
- i. Where the lost assignment is not the sole element of assessment for the module and the remaining elements provide sufficient evidence of achievement of the module learning outcomes, the lost assignment shall be disregarded. The module mark shall be calculated only on the elements that are marked. This shall be done by increasing the remaining elements proportionately. For example, if a module should have been assessed by: Exam (50%), Essay 1 (25%), Essay 2 (25%), and 'Essay 2' was lost, the remaining elements should be rescaled to Exam (66.67%) and Essay 1 (33.33%). Remaining elements with similar learning outcomes shall not be disproportionately increased to attempt to replace the missing element (e.g. keeping 'Exam' at 50% but doubling 'Essay 1' to 50% in the example above)
  - ii. Where the lost assignment was the sole element of assessment for the module, or where the remaining elements do not provide sufficient evidence of achievement of the module learning outcomes, the module shall not count toward the calculation of the developmental year mark or the Classification Mark. This approach is preferable to attributing marks without sufficient evidence of students' achievements, though of course this should be avoided wherever possible.
- 10.5 Students may, on occasion, wish to submit a new assignment or resit an examination to replace the lost work. SEB chairs shall use their discretion in such instances, and may elect to set an alternative assessment for the purpose.

### Suspension of regulations

- 10.6 Requests for the suspension of regulations (module, programme, or Academic Regulations) shall be extremely rare; SEBs must make all possible efforts to avoid the need for suspension. Requests will only be considered in two instances (Academic Regulations, Section 1).
- i. Where a situation has arisen that was not foreseen by the regulations (where the regulations require amendment, but a suspension is needed for the current cohort);
  - ii. Where the application of the regulations would be manifestly unfair to one or more students.



## Authority to request and grant a suspension of regulations

- 10.7 Requests for the suspension of regulations are reserved to Heads of Schools, Institutes, Directorates or equivalent, and to the Degree Examination Boards (Academic Regulations, Section 1).
- 10.8 Heads of Schools, Institutes, Directorates or equivalent will normally only request suspensions that do not relate to examination board proceedings, for example admissions decisions, but may act on behalf of a SEB Chair/Deputy where unavailable.
- 10.9 All requests for the suspension of regulations related to examination board proceedings shall be endorsed by the appropriate Degree Examination Board. Such requests shall normally derive from a recommendation placed by the Subject Examination Board. The DEB may elect to endorse the SEB's recommendation, or to agree an alternative approach; this may include the suspension of other regulations than those proposed by the SEB. Where a DEB does not endorse a request for the suspension of regulations, the matter shall be closed.
- 10.10 The suspension of any regulation can only be agreed by a designated nominee of the Principal; no other individual or group may approve suspension requests. Where the nominee of the Principal does not approve a request for the suspension of regulations, the matter shall be closed.

## Procedure

- 10.11 Requests for the suspension of regulations related to examination board processes should take the form of a written [Chair's action](#), endorsed by both the SEB and the DEB (or the respective chairs). Suspension requests from Heads of Schools and Institutes shall take the form of formal memoranda. All requests for the suspension of regulations shall include the following information:
- i. full details of the regulations to be suspended, including numbers and verbatim text. Guidance may be sought from the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance) or Academic Quality & Standards Officer;
  - ii. a case for the approval of the suspension. This shall be made as clearly as possible while providing all relevant information. Any precedent set by past cases shall also be included;
  - iii. the desired outcome of the suspension; for example, for a particular mark to be expunged and the student permitted a first sit;
  - iv. the full names and Student Identity Numbers of any affected students.
- 10.12 Requests for the suspension of regulations shall always be made to the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance); the Principal's nominee should not be approached directly by schools and institutes on these matters. The Assistant Registrar shall then prepare further paperwork, and send this with the original request to the Principal's nominee. The Assistant Registrar may require that further information or evidence be supplied before forwarding requests to the Principal's nominee. Requests for the suspension of regulations shall not be made by any other approach.
- 10.13 The case details and rationales of suspension requests made by SEBs shall be included in the SEBs' reports to the DEBs; no decisions on the affected students may be published until the Principal's nominee has taken a final decision. Suspensions sought by chairs between boards shall be reported at the next board meeting.
- 10.14 The Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance) will communicate the outcome of suspension of regulations requests to those who requested the suspension (SEB and DEB chairs, or Heads of Schools/Institutes/Directorates). These individuals shall be responsible for ensuring that outcomes are communicated to the affected students (Academic Regulations, Section 1).

10.15 ARCS submits annual reports on suspensions of regulations to the Senate, to ensure full academic oversight and to identify problematic regulations.

### Academic Misconduct (assessment offenses)

10.16 Academic misconduct is cheating (or attempted cheating) that occurs in relation to an assessment. It includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, examination offences, falsification of data, collusion, use of a ghost-writing service, impersonation, and breach of any of the Academic Regulations on Assessment. Queen Mary takes any allegation of academic misconduct seriously, and will investigate it in accordance with the [Academic Misconduct Policy](#). Penalties for academic misconduct can be severe, including failure with no right of resit, and expulsion from Queen Mary.

10.17 Please read the [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) for full details of what constitutes academic misconduct and the processes and possible outcomes of investigations. Additional points specific to the marking and assessment processes are outlined below.

10.18 Some schools and institutes require students to sign plagiarism statements, which confirm that the work submitted is that of the student. This is good practice, but not absolutely necessary. Students may be accused and found guilty of assessment offences even where a plagiarism statement is not submitted.

10.19 Most examination offences are discovered in the exam itself, and immediately reported to ARCS for investigation. Where an examiner suspects a student of having committed an examination offence on receipt of the answer script, the script shall be marked as normal but then forwarded to the Academic Secretariat with a full report. Investigations into offences discovered in this manner may remain unresolved at the time of SEB meetings due to the timescales involved.

10.20 Students with unresolved allegations of assessment offences cannot be formally considered by SEBs. Consideration shall be delayed until the cases are resolved. Results and recommended awards shall not be disclosed to students in this situation.

10.21 SEBs shall authorise their chairs and one named external examiner to act on their behalf in order to consider these students upon resolution of alleged assessment offence cases. ARCS will inform the SEB Chair of the case outcome.

10.22 The SEB Chair will then submit a [Chair's action memorandum](#), detailing the necessary actions, to the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance). If the action is a recommendation for award then the Assistant Academic Registrar will seek approval from the DEB Chair.

### Debtors

#### Terminated students

10.23 Individuals who have had their registration and enrolment terminated due to debts under Ordinance D3 (non-payment of fees) are not students, and are not entitled to attend Queen Mary, or to attempt an examination or any other form of assessment. Should such students attempt an examination or assessment regardless, the submission or script shall be passed to the Academic Registrar, unmarked.

10.24 Individuals terminated under Ordinance D3 may clear their debts and, upon payment of an administrative charge of £250.00, have their enrolment and registration reinstated. Students reinstated in this manner shall not normally recommence their studies until the appropriate point in the following year.

## Non-terminated students

- 10.25 Formal results shall be withheld from students who have tuition fee debts but who are still enrolled at Queen Mary.
- 10.26 These students shall be assessed, and decisions on progression and award shall be made. However, formal notification of their results shall be withheld until clearance has been received.
- 10.27 Where these debtors request information on their marks under the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation, the SEB shall refer them to: [data-protection@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@qmul.ac.uk). Further information on data protection and freedom of information issues may be found [online](#).
- 10.28 Results cannot be withheld from students with debts that do not relate directly to their tuition fees. These debts include accommodation charges, nursery fees, wheel clamping fees, failure to repay hardship loans, and library debts. These students shall not appear on debtor lists, and the appropriate administrative departments shall take action to recover the funds in other ways.

## Aegrotat provisions

- 10.29 An aegrotat is an honours degree classified 'aegrotat'. Full details on aegrotat provisions may be found in the Academic Regulations (Section 2)
- 10.30 SEBs may recommend the award of an aegrotat where students have taken the full complement of modules required for award, but missed the final examinations for the programme due to illness or other medical cause judged sufficient by the SEB. Exceptionally, this may also apply to a student who was present at the examinations, considers that their performances were adversely affected by serious illness or other cause judged sufficient by the SEB, or where a student has died. An aegrotat award shall only be made where there is no reasonable prospect of the student being able to return to complete the programme of study.
- 10.31 Where a student has not taken the full quota of academic credit, the SEB shall consider the evidence available from other assessments. Where SEBs agree that the students would have achieved the required standards for award, a recommendation for the award of an aegrotat may be made.
- 10.32 Where students are offered aegrotat awards, they may accept the offer, upon which the award shall be conferred, or decline the offer and take the missed or failed assessments as first sits (where applicable). A student who chooses to take the missed or failed assessments shall cease to be eligible for the aegrotat award. A student who chooses to accept the aegrotat award shall cease to be eligible to take the missed or failed assessments.

## Academic appeals

- 10.33 Academic appeals are formal requests from students to review the decisions of examination boards. All taught students may submit academic appeals, but this shall only be done in accordance with the Appeal Policy. Please refer to the [Appeal Policy](#) for full details on the grounds, process, and possible outcomes of the appeal process. Additional points specific to the marking and assessment processes are outlined below.
- 10.34 Students cannot appeal against academic judgement, and it is important that students are made aware of this. In particular, it should be noted that assessments shall not be remarked. The following also constitute invalid grounds for appeal, and appeals founded exclusively on one or more of these bases shall be rejected automatically:
- i. appeals against the academic judgment of internal or external examiners;

- ii. appeals based on the informal assessment of students' work by members of academic staff;
- iii. retrospective reporting of extenuating circumstances that might reasonably have been made known at the time;
- iv. marginal failure to attain a higher class of degree;
- v. lack of awareness by the student of the relevant procedure or regulations;
- vi. vexatious appeals.

10.35 All schools/institutes are required to offer 'results surgeries' or similar to enable students to discuss concerns about assessment outcomes with members of academic staff. Schools and institutes may vary their mechanisms for providing this opportunity for students, but the process should be publicised at key points in the assessment process. Results surgeries (or equivalent) should be made available to students as soon as results are released and students should be able to obtain feedback within 14 days of receiving their results in order to comply with the deadline for the submission of an academic appeal. The provision of some detailed feedback to students who are unhappy with their results, both in these surgeries and elsewhere, is often sufficient to prevent further actions such as academic appeals. This should include information on assessment performances, and where students went wrong.

10.36 Where students submit academic appeals, there is no automatic change to the agreed decisions of examination boards; there is no such status as 'pending appeal outcome'. The status, marks, and classifications of students remain unchanged until and unless appeals are found to have *prima facie* grounds and are referred to the examination board for reconsideration.

### Revocation of degrees

10.37 The revocation of degrees is rare, and shall occur only in instances of administrative errors, successful academic appeals, and where former students are found to have committed assessment offences. Revoked awards shall generally be replaced with reclassified awards, rather than alternative awards.

10.38 Revocations are managed by ARCS, with (in some cases) the University of London, and cannot be processed until the original degree certificates are returned. Further information on the revocation of degrees may be sought from ARCS.

### Data protection and release of information

10.39 The General Data Protection Regulation prevents Queen Mary from divulging personal details on students without their express permission.

10.40 Relatives may occasionally contact schools and institutes to enquire about students' progress or whereabouts; even in these circumstances, absolutely no information can be provided. The standard response to such queries shall be along the lines of, "*I'm sorry, but under data protection legislation I cannot give any information on this individual.*" This is a legal obligation, and therefore should make the response clear, if no less difficult upon occasion.

10.41 Requests for transcripts must be forwarded to Academic Registry together with information release forms signed by the students concerned. Similarly, requests for references must be made directly by students, or with students' acknowledgement.

10.42 Further information on data protection and freedom of information issues may be found online: [www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/governance/information-governance](http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/governance/information-governance)

# Appendices

## Glossary of Terms

**Academic credit:** An indicator of the amount and level of learning.

**Academic level:** The relative complexity, depth of study, and learner autonomy required in relation to a module in the context of its discipline. Each module shall be assigned a level from the following scale:

Level 3: Foundation or pre-degree

Level 4: Introductory

Level 5: Intermediate

Level 6: Final

Level 7: Masters

Level 8: Research

**Academic year:** A period running from 1 August to 31 July. The developmental years of most undergraduate programmes follow academic years, and policies and regulations are normally written by academic year. See also *developmental year*, and *calendar year*.

**Advanced standing:** Prior, certificated study from another institution deemed equivalent to Queen Mary modules from which exemption is sought.

**Award:** Undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate certificates, diplomas, bachelors degrees, undergraduate and postgraduate masters degrees, and postgraduate research degrees. The awards offered by Queen Mary are detailed in the *Ordinances* and the *Academic Regulations*.

**Calendar year:** A twelve-month period. Many masters programmes run for a full calendar year, which may cross two academic years. See also *academic year*; *developmental year*.

**Classification Mark:** The weighted average of a student's performance, calculated in accordance with the regulations for the award, on which the classification of the award is based. It is held to one decimal place.

**Compulsory module:** A module that must be taken to meet requirements for progression or award.

**Core module:** A module that must be taken and passed to meet requirements for progression or award. Core modules cannot be condoned.

**Co-requisite module:** A module that must be taken at the same time as another, specified, module.

**Delegated authority:** Where the authority invested in an individual or body is delegated to another individual or body for a specified purpose.

**Developmental year:** A year of a programme. Normally one academic year of full time study, during which a student is normally required to be registered for 120 credits of modules. Developmental years for part time students normally last two years. See also *academic year* and *calendar year*.

**Dissertation, project:** An extended piece of independent study assessed by an output report or extended essay. Comprises a significant part of most masters programmes.

**Elective module:** A module that a student may select from a specified list of options.

**Element of assessment:** An individual item of assessment. The assessment for a module may comprise several elements of assessment.

**Enrolment:** A process by which individuals with offers of places to study become students of Queen Mary. New students must pre-enrol before enrolment, and returning students must re-enrol each year.

**Extenuating circumstances:** Circumstances that are outside a student's control which may have a negative impact on a student's ability to undertake or complete any assessment so as to cast doubt on the likely validity of the assessment as a measure of the student's achievement.

**External examiner:** A senior professional academic from outside Queen Mary who monitors the assessment process for fairness and academic standards.

**Field of study:** The description of the modules passed by a student. Represented in the title of the award conferred upon a student.

**First sit:** The repeat of all or part of a module's assessment following a certified absence at the first attempt due to extenuating circumstances acceptable to the examination board. A first sit replaces the first attempt and does not count towards the value of academic credit for which a student must normally be registered in an academic or developmental year. First sit module marks are not capped.

**First take:** The repeat of a module following failure at a previous attempt. This involves attendance and completion of all elements of the module, and submission of all assignments, whether assessed or not. First takes count towards the value of academic credit for which a student must normally be registered in an academic or developmental year. Module marks for first takes are not capped. First takes incur *pro rata* tuition fees.

**Invigilated examination:** A timetabled summative examination that contributes in whole or in part to the module mark.

**Level:** See *Academic level*.

**Module assessment:** Assessment of the performance of a student on a module. This may include a variety of elements and forms of assessment.

**Module:** An approved block of teaching and learning leading to the award of academic credit and forming part of a programme of study.

**Module mark:** The overall module result. This may be a weighted aggregate of marks from several elements of assessment. It is held to one decimal place.

**Notional study hours:** The number of hours required to complete an academic credit, module, or programme.

**Pathway:** A specific combination of modules within a programme leading to a named award.

**Prerequisite module:** A specified module that must be taken before a second specified module can be taken.

**Programme regulations:** The regulations for an individual programme of study, approved by the Senate, or its delegated authority.

**Programme of study (programme):** A package of modules approved by the Senate, or its delegated authority, and leading to an award of Queen Mary or the University of London.

**Progression:** The process of moving from one developmental year to the next, or from the taught element to the dissertation or project element of a programme.

**Project:** See *Dissertation*

**QMACF:** Queen Mary Academic Credit Framework. The structure of academic credits and levels applied to all modules and programmes leading to awards of Queen Mary or the University of London.

**QMUL Model:** an innovative and unique credit-bearing teaching and learning initiative integrated into undergraduate degree programmes that will broaden student opportunities within and beyond higher education by enhancing students' levels of social capital. Applicable to undergraduate programmes from 2017/18 entry onwards.

**Qualifying mark:** A specified minimum mark that must be obtained in one or more elements of assessment in order to pass a module. This is in addition to, and distinct from, the requirement to achieve a pass in the module mark to pass the module. For example: ‘Students must obtain a minimum aggregated and weighted coursework average of 30.0, and a minimum module mark of 40.0, in order to pass the module.’

**Registration:** A process by which a student signs up for modules of a programme of study.

**Research students:** Students registered for a programme of study specifically designated as a research programme. Research programmes have separate *Academic Regulations*.

**Resit:** The repeat of all or part of a module’s assessments, following failure at a previous attempt. Resits do not involve the repeat of attendance for the module. They do not count towards the value of academic credit for which students must normally be registered in an academic or developmental year.

**Retake:** The repeat of a module following failure at a previous attempt. Retakes involve attendance and completion of all elements of the module, and the submission of all assessments (summative and formative). They count towards the value of academic credit for which students must normally be registered in an academic or developmental year. Retakes incur *pro rata* tuition fees.

**Special regulations:** Programme or module regulations that diverge from the general *Academic Regulations* for good reason, approved by the Senate or its delegated authority. Special programme regulations are detailed in Sections 6-7 of the *Academic Regulations*.

**Students:** Students of Queen Mary. Ordinance C1 describes, ‘those persons who are students of QMUL and associate students of QMUL’. The *Academic Regulations* apply to all students undertaking undergraduate or postgraduate study at Queen Mary, and to any persons whom the Senate declares to be students of Queen Mary.

**Taught component:** The parts of a programme delivered as taught modules, as opposed to dissertations or projects. The term is generally used in relation to postgraduate programmes.

**Total credit value:** The total amount of academic credit required for an award.

**Threshold requirement:** A progression requirement for certain programmes. Students must achieve a year - or aggregate - average (threshold) to progress to the next developmental year. This is in addition to the credit requirements for progression.

**University:** The University of London, unless otherwise specified.



## Queen Mary Assessment Strategy

Good assessment and feedback are central to the success of a university's offer to students, to ensure effective student learning, maximising their achievement, fostering retention, and assuring positive outcomes, and yet many HEIs are encountering both low levels of satisfaction in this area and problems in designing and delivering effective assessment systems. This strategy, building on the QMUL 'Good practice Guide' of 2008, is designed to bring about a significant step change in practices and orientation at QMUL. It lays out eight key scholarly-informed principles and three areas for focus.

It is proposed that in 2019-21 QMUL should concentrate on changing assessment and feedback practices using the following key **principles**:

1. **Programme-level assessment approaches**<sup>1</sup> (and, where applicable, year-level assessment approaches) should be adopted, so that programme and year level learning outcomes are not multiply assessed. Module learning outcomes are considered in the context of programmes and developmental years, to make it clear to students what is being developed at module level and how this contributes to the overall programme. Assessment and feedback are thereby designed to **align constructively**<sup>2</sup> with stated learning outcomes on programmes and developmental years across the university, ensuring clarity, coherence and efficiency;
2. An **Assessment for Learning**<sup>3</sup> approach should be adopted, to ensure that all assignments contribute positively to student learning by being integrated with, rather than separate from, curriculum delivery, and incorporate a range of appropriate assessment types and methods that are fit for purpose, discipline and level; in this approach, summative assessment should be used rigorously but sparingly and formative assessment frequently and positively<sup>4</sup>;
3. A **Students as Partners approach** should be adopted in assessment wherever possible, so that students see assessment and feedback as an engaging and **dialogic**<sup>5</sup> process to which they can contribute actively;
4. Assessment and feedback should be:
  - **authentic**<sup>6</sup>, that is, assessing knowledge, skills and capabilities that are relevant to the professional practices of the discipline and that staff and students see as relevant and useful to students' future careers, research and lives;
  - actively contributing to students' **understanding**<sup>7</sup> of what they need to do to remediate errors for future work, enhance current achievements (including for high-achieving students) and maximise their individual outcomes;
  - **inclusive**<sup>8</sup>, to enable diverse students to maximise their individual outcomes;

---

<sup>1</sup> McDowell, L. (2012) Programme focussed assessment Bradford: Bradford University <http://www.pass.brad.ac.uk/short-guide.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Biggs, J. and Tang, C. (2011) *Teaching for Quality Learning at University: 4<sup>th</sup> edition*, Maidenhead: SRHE/Open University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Sambell, K., McDowell, L. and Montgomery, C. (2012) *Assessment for Learning in Higher Education* Abingdon, Routledge

<sup>4</sup> Assessment for Learning: [http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/ar/academy/cetl\\_afl/](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/ar/academy/cetl_afl/)

<sup>5</sup> Sadler, D. R. (2013). Opening up feedback: Teaching learners to see. In Merry, S., Price, M., Carless, D., & Taras, M. (Eds.) *Reconceptualising feedback in higher education: Developing dialogue with students*. (Ch. 5, 54-63). London: Routledge.

<sup>6</sup> Sambell, K., Brown, S. and Graham, L. (2017) *Professionalism in Practice: key directions in higher education learning, teaching and assessment*. London, New York, Palgrave Macmillan p144

<sup>7</sup> Nicol, D. J. and Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006) Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice, *Studies in Higher Education* Vol 31(2), 199-218. Winstone, N. E., & Nash, R. A. (2016). *The Developing Engagement with Feedback Toolkit*. York, UK: Higher Education Academy. <http://tinyurl.com/hea-deft>

<sup>8</sup> Waterfield, Judith and West, Bob (2008) Towards Inclusive Assessments in Higher Education: Case Study. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* (3). pp. 97-102. ISSN 1742-240X [http://eprints.glos.ac.uk/3858/2/Lathe\\_3\\_Waterfield\\_West.pdf](http://eprints.glos.ac.uk/3858/2/Lathe_3_Waterfield_West.pdf). Morgan, H. and Houghton, A. (2011) Inclusive curriculum design in higher education. The Higher Education Academy. Available from

- **streamlined** to ensure systems are efficient and viable for assessors, pragmatically useful and valuable to students and manageable<sup>9</sup> for both, avoiding having learning outcomes being multiply assessed and reducing over-assessment;
  - **trustworthy**: so that assessors can be sure that the work they are reviewing is that of the student submitting it, with a strong focus on fostering academic integrity.
5. **The feedback literacy<sup>10</sup> of students** should be enhanced through a range of in-module activities, so they can get the most out of the experience of being assessed, and use the feedback to improve their academic outcomes;
  6. **The feedback literacy of staff** should be enhanced by staff development and training<sup>11</sup> opportunities so that **all** who assess students in whatever role are competent to assess and provide high quality feedback; experienced academic and professional staff should identify and share the best assessment and feedback practices within and across Schools at QMUL, and share it in dialogues with new and less experienced colleagues;
  7. Those who assess student work should be supported in the establishment of explicit and shared standards that are to be achieved by students, by **building communities of practice<sup>12</sup>**, assuring thereby that assessment is consistent between markers, reliable and valid.
  8. **Relevant technologies<sup>13</sup>** should be incorporated to support the design and management of assessment and feedback where these can make a positive difference to staff and student experiences of assessment and feedback, making it time-neutral or better for staff and more accessible to student.

This document was prepared by Prof Henri Huijberts, Deputy Dean for Education, Faculty of Science and Engineering, in collaboration with Prof Sally Brown and Prof Phil Race.

---

[https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/inclusion/Disability/Inclusive\\_curriculum\\_design\\_in\\_higher\\_education](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/inclusion/Disability/Inclusive_curriculum_design_in_higher_education) [accessed May 2016]. Plymouth University (2014-2020) Teaching & Learning at Plymouth University. *Inclusive assessment: Good practice guide*. Available from: <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/your-university/teaching-and-learning/inclusivity/inclusive-assessment> [accessed May 2016].

<sup>9</sup> Brown, S. (2015) *Learning, teaching and assessment in higher education: global perspectives*, London: Palgrave-MacMillan. P132-142 and QAA Code of practice (2018) <file:///C:/Users/Sally/Downloads/revised-uk-quality-code-for-higher-education.pdf> (accessed December 2018).

<sup>10</sup> Carless, D & Boud, D. (2018). The development of student feedback literacy: enabling uptake of feedback. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, pp.1315–1325. Price, M., Rust, C., O'Donovan, B., Handley, K. and Bryant, R. (2012) *Assessment literacy: The foundation for improving student learning*. Aske, Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development.

<sup>11</sup> Quality Assurance Agency (2013) UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Chapter B6: Assessment of students and recognition of prior learning. <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/quality-code-b6.aspx>

<sup>12</sup> HEA (2012) *A Marked Improvement: transforming assessment in higher education*, York: Higher Education Academy. ([http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/assessment/A\\_Marked\\_Improvement.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/assessment/A_Marked_Improvement.pdf))

<sup>13</sup> JISC (2010) *Effective Assessment in a Digital Age: A guide to technology-enhanced assessment and feedback*, <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/>

## Notes on the Use of Amanuenses: Guidelines for Schools and Tutors

An amanuensis is a scribe who, in an examination, writes down or word processes a candidate's dictated answers to questions.

### 1. Procedure for application

- 1.1 Students diagnosed as dyslexic by an educational psychologist should be assessed for the provision of an amanuensis by the Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS) to ensure that this is the most appropriate method of assessing the student under examination/timed conditions.
- 1.2 Examples of where a dyslexic student may be recommended the use of an amanuensis in an examination are where a student has very poor handwriting – to the point of illegibility – allied with a slow typing speed. There are other exceptional circumstances where such an arrangement could be recommended, but for the vast majority of dyslexic students the use of an amanuensis would be neither necessary nor desirable.

**NB: if there is a recommendation in the student's dyslexia/dyspraxia diagnostic report, produced by an educational psychologist, that they should have access to an amanuensis in examinations, this does not guarantee that they will be recommended access to one in examinations by DDS.**

- 1.3 Students with other categories of disability should be assessed for this procedure by the DDS to ensure that this is the most appropriate method of assessing the student under examination/timed conditions.
- 1.4 Recommendations from the DDS will be sent to the student's tutor and the examination officer for the department for departmental approval.
- 1.5 It will be the responsibility of the department to organise the special arrangements for the student, in liaison with the Examinations Office.

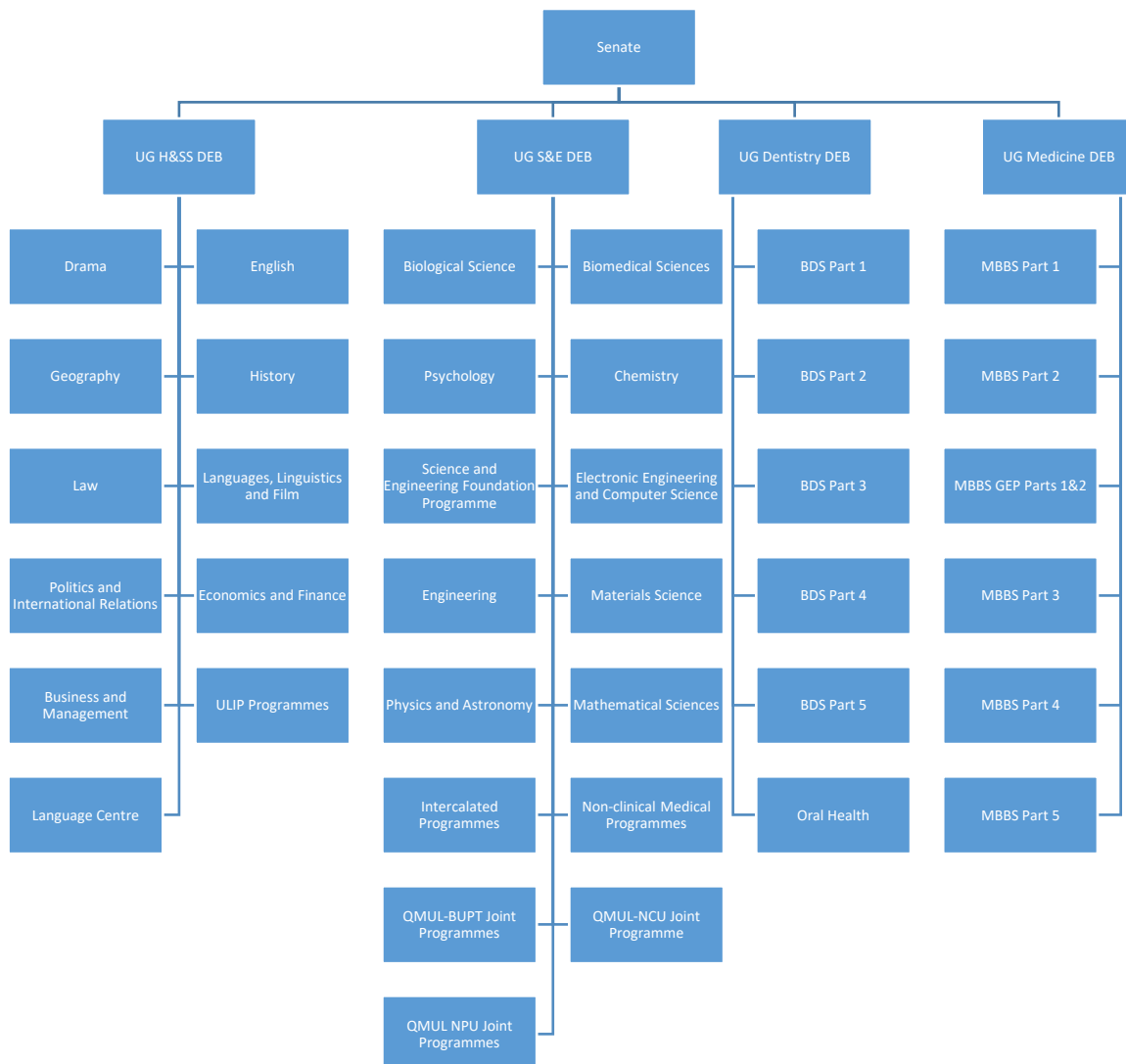
### 2. Guidelines for Operation

- 2.1 The use of an amanuensis should neither give the student an unfair advantage nor should it disadvantage the student.
- 2.2 Additional time should be permitted for the use of an amanuensis. This will normally be an extra 10 minutes per examination to allow for printing out of typed scripts for checking by the students.
- 2.3 An amanuensis should be an adult, ideally a postgraduate research student, who is able to produce an accurate record of the student's answers; who can write legibly, type or word process at a reasonable speed; and, should ideally, have a working knowledge of the subject and the terminology.
- 2.4 Some students using an amanuensis may prefer to draw their own diagrams / charts when the examination paper requires one. In such instances the student should draw the diagram in a separate answer book and indicate in the main answer book that the diagram has been produced by the student as an appendix. In the main answer book the amanuensis should clearly label the number of appendix, the question number being answered and a title. For those students who have poor co-ordination or issues with upper body mobility, the amanuensis can be requested by the student to draw the diagrams to the student's dictation.
- 2.5 An amanuensis is responsible to the departmental examination officer, and the person appointed to act as the amanuensis must be acceptable to the departmental examination officer. The student cannot nominate the amanuensis but should be given the name of the amanuensis prior to the examination.
- 2.6 An amanuensis should not normally be someone that teaches the student, as they may feel overly sympathetic to the student and expand on what the student dictates using their interpretation rather than the exact words used by the candidate. On no account may a relative of the student be used as an amanuensis.
- 2.7 A student should, *wherever possible*, have adequate practice in the use of an amanuensis.

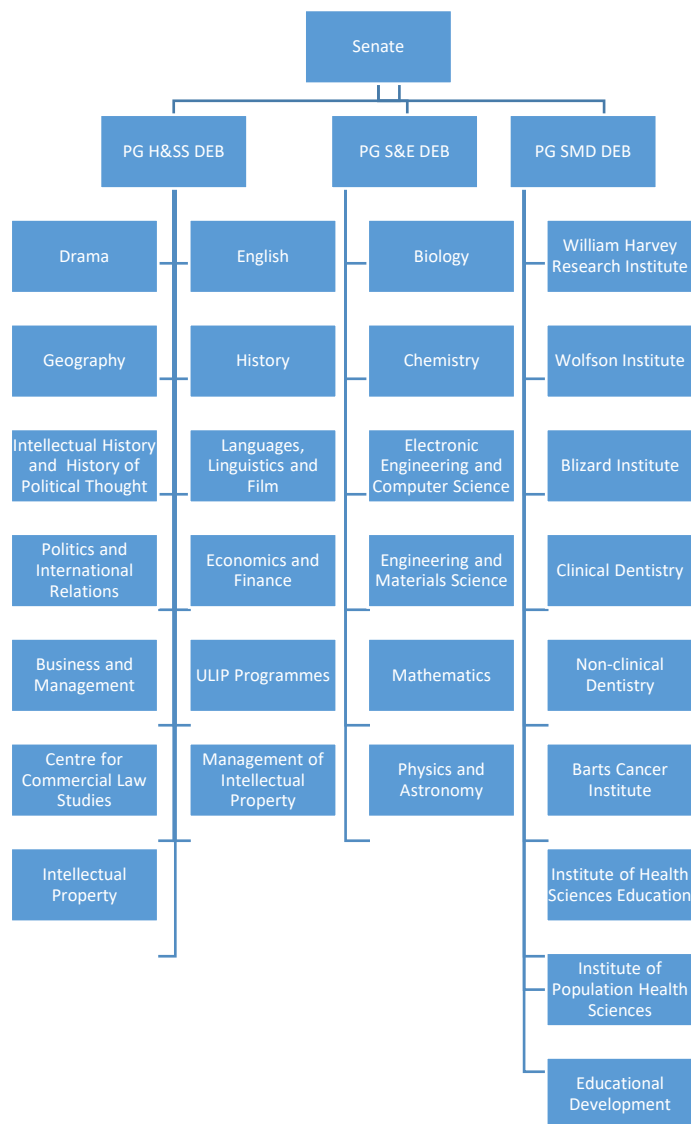
- 2.8 A student using an amanuensis must be accommodated in such a way that no other student is able to hear what is being dictated.
- 2.9 The amanuensis may also act as the invigilator.
- 2.10 It is the student's responsibility to direct the amanuensis regarding the physical layout of the answer to each question as it appears on the answer book.
- 2.11 During the examination an amanuensis:
- must neither give factual help to the student nor offer any suggestions;
  - must not advise the student regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, or the order in which the questions should be done;
  - must write down, type or word process answers exactly as they are dictated;
  - must write, type or word process a correction on a typescript or Braille sheet if requested to do so by the student;
  - may, at the student's request, read back what has been recorded;
  - must not expect to write throughout the examination because the student will be expected to carry out some form of planning for each response. This will be conducted by the student in the answer book provided by the departmental examination officer and any rough workings crossed through before it is handed in at the end of the examination;
  - must accompany a student to the lavatory if there are medical difficulties which would require frequent visits

## Examination Board Structure 2020-21

### Undergraduate examination boards 2020-21



## Postgraduate examination boards 2020-21



## Generating SEB Reports from MySIS

These reports will extract data from the Student Record System so that it can be presented and discussed at the relevant Exam Boards.

You will need to enter the following URL into your internet browser:

<https://webapps2.is.qmul.ac.uk/seb/>

You will then need to enter your usual username and password. Once logged in, you will see a number of options on the left hand side. Below are descriptions of each option.

The data used in the reports is taken directly from data in the SIS. Please note that this data is refreshed each hour on the hour. The refresh takes around 8 minutes to complete, but it means that any reports run during this time will return an error or no data. Therefore, you are advised not to run the SEB reports between the hour and 10 minutes past.

Refreshes will be run daily between 06.00 and 22.00 during the exam board period. If your board is taking place outside of the official exam board period, then you will need to request an ad-hoc refresh of the data.

### Student Detail Report

This is generated in XML format, to be opened with Word. It lists the profile of each student within a domain, including all modules studied, marks and grades achieved, the Classification Mark if the student is a finalist, and year means.

1. Click on the Student Detail tab on the left hand side
2. Select your Domain from the first drop down box
3. Select your programme/route from the dropdown box. Leave this as All Programme/Route if you wish to select all.
4. Enter in the date of your Exam Board
5. If you wish student names to be included in the report then select the No button next to Anonymous. If not, select the Yes button.
6. If you wish the student's advisor to not appear in the report, then you can select this option.
7. Select your sort order
8. Click the Create button

Your report will now begin to generate. This may take some time if this is the first time you're generating the report and/or if you've retrieved a large group of students.

Once it has generated, you can either choose to open or store your file. It is recommended that you initially save your file before opening it.

Status	This is the current enrolment status of the student.
Debtor	This field indicates whether the student is a debtor. This field is maintained by the Finance team, and will prevent the student from seeing final marks, appearing on pass lists, receiving transcripts, etc.
Advisor	This is the student's advisor.
Module Results	These are sorted by academic year and by mark/grade. If the TMR process (module lockdown run by the Academic Registry) has not yet run for this module, then only the actual marks will be displayed.
Results Summary	This provides a summary of the grades and the credits taken and passed. This is split into development year.
Year Mean calculations	These calculations do not take into account any modules which are Transcriptable Only or Study Only.

Recommendations	The Classification Mark and Recommended Award Class will only be displayed for Final year students if the Progression process has been run for the student. The Recommended Progress code will only be displayed if the Progression process has been run for the student.
Module Status: <i>new</i>	Module Status now added for each module. The possible values are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COM: student has completed the module, either through successful completion, or as they are now out of attempts.</li> <li>• RAS: student is currently in resit as they still have attempts remaining</li> <li>• SAS: module has not been TMR'd – this could be due to marks not yet entered, overall module mark not yet calculated, or just that the TMR process still needs to run for it.</li> </ul>
Attempt Number: <i>new</i>	This shows the number of attempts that the student has had for the module.
Cumulative Mean: <i>new</i>	This is the mean of all the marks to date.

#### Undergraduate Summary

This is generated in XML format, to be opened with Excel. It provides an overall summary of all your students and the number of credits they have passed per year and the yearly averages.

Status	This is the current enrolment status of the student. Some of the more common ones are R-E-E (fully enrolled), R-R-R (Resitting out of attendance), R-I* (Interrupting studies).
Tutor	This is the student's personal tutor. If no tutor has been assigned, then N/A will appear.
Debtor	This field indicates whether the student is a debtor. This field is maintained by the Finance team, and will prevent the student from seeing final marks, appearing on pass lists, receiving transcripts, etc.
ADV	This field indicates whether the student has transferred in any advanced standing credits.
Y1 Average	This is the mean mark of all the modules taken in the first development year.
Y2 Average	This is the mean mark of all the modules taken in the second development year.
Y3 Average	This is the mean mark of all the modules taken in the third development year.
Crdts taken	This is the total sum of all credits taken by the student.
Crdts passed	This is the total sum of all credits passed by the student
Retake	This indicates whether any of the modules are retake modules.
EC	This indicates whether the student has submitted an EC claim. This is taken from the marks/grades entered.
Recommended Progress	This is the progress code that the system has calculated for the student.
Agreed Progress	This is left blank for the Board to decide.
Notes	This is left blank as a space for you to make any notes as necessary.
Recommended Award	This is the recommended award. If the student has been recommended for an exit award, the award code will begin with X.

#### Postgraduate Summary

This is generated in XML format, to be opened with Excel.

It provides an overall summary of students and the number of credits they have passed and taught and project averages.



It also includes the number of credits that have a mark of less than 40 and less than 30.

The first sit and resit students are divided out into 2 worksheets. The resit worksheet lists those students who currently have a status of resitting out of attendance.

Status	This is the current enrolment status of the student. Some of the more common ones are R-E-E (fully enrolled), R-R-R (Resitting out of attendance), R-I* (Interrupting studies).
Tutor	This is the student's personal tutor. If no tutor has been assigned, then this will be blank.
Debtor	This field indicates whether the student is a debtor. This field is maintained by the Finance team, and will prevent the student from seeing final marks, appearing on pass lists, receiving transcripts, etc.
ADV	This field indicates whether the student has transferred in any advanced standing credits.
Retake	This indicates whether any of the modules are retake modules.
Credits taken	This is the total sum of all credits taken by the student.
Credits passed	This is the total sum of all credits passed by the student
Credits < 40	This is the total sum of credits where the mark achieved is less than 40
Credits < 30	This is the total sum of credits where the mark achieved is less than 30
Taught Average	This is the mean of marks for taught modules.
Project Average	This is the mean of marks for modules that are classed as a Project.
Classification Mark	This will only be displayed for those students who are eligible for award.
Recommended Decision	This is the progress code that the system has calculated for the student.
Agreed Decision	This is left blank for the Board to decide.
Recommended Class	This is the calculated classification.
Actual Class	This is left blank for the Board to decide.
Notes	This is left blank as a space for you to make any notes as necessary.

#### Module Detail

This report provides the assessment and module marks for students on particular modules for the current academic year or a specific time period. It also provides some statistics; the failure rate, grade distribution, and average marks.

For each occurrence of the module, there are 3 worksheets:

1. Header page. This provides a summary of the module and its assessments.
2. Actual Report. This lists each student registered on the module, and the marks and grades achieved at assessment and overall module level.
3. Failure Rates & Grade Distribution. This provides analysis on the failure rates of the module and grade distribution.

#### Module Summary

This report provides an overview of module grade distribution and average marks by level for a specified number of academic years.

The first worksheet is an analysis of module results for those students who have completed at attempt 1. The next worksheet is an analysis of modules results for those students who have completed at resit.

Students who are yet to complete, eg. waiting to resit or held whilst extenuating circumstances or unfair practice are considered, will not be included in the report.

These statistics are not provided for approval by the Board but rather to enable comparison of the results for the modules for which they are responsible. The purpose of the report is to allow scrutiny of results for each module by internal, external and senior examiners as well as the Chair and the Examination Board.

#### Troubleshooting

**Q: I have entered marks in SIS but they're not appearing on my SEB report.**

**A:** This could be due to a number of reasons.

1. Check that the entered marks have been TMR'd. This means that the marks have been locked down which enables the report to pick them up. If you have run the Student Detail report and the marks are appearing under the Actual Marks section but not the Agreed marks section and the Module Status is still SAS, then this is certainly the case. You need to contact the Registry and ask them to TMR the marks for you.
2. The refresh of data may not yet have happened to pick up your marks. The data in the SEB reports is refreshed on an hourly basis each day between 06.00 and 22.00. If your data has only recently been TMR'd, then you will need to wait for the next refresh for this to be picked up in the SEB report.
3. You may have entered in the assessment marks without then calculating the overall module result. If this step hasn't been completed, then the TMR process cannot lock down the marks. You will need to run the Calculate module marks option on the Mark Entry screen and then contact Registry for the data to be TMR'd.

**Q: A student isn't appearing in the report**

**A:** Check that the student has an active status and is registered for the programme in MySIS. If they are no longer an active student, then they will not appear on the report. Only students with an active status (this includes resitting out of attendance students and students on an interruption) will be picked up in the report.

**Q: The marks have been updated and the results TMR'd but the progression status hasn't changed.**

**A:** Double check that the changes to the marks will actually lead to a new progress code. If yes, then it could be that the progression code has not been regenerated following TMR. Check with the Registry. If they need to re-run progression, then you will need to wait for the hourly refresh for this to be picked up in the report.