**ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK FRAMEWORK: POSTGRADUATE**

(Revised August 2022)

**Introduction**

This framework should be used in the design and development of all new postgraduate programmes, including with collaborative partners, as well as in the review and revalidation of existing programmes. It should be read in conjunction with the university’s other resources regarding assessment and feedback, accessible via the [LTEU Moodle](https://moodle.roehampton.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=7179) site and the Academic Office’s [Quality and Standards](https://www.roehampton.ac.uk/corporate-information/quality-and-standards/) website. The term ‘assessment’ is understood to include eAssessment.

The aims of the framework take into account the B4 condition of the Office for Students:

1. To underpin consistency and fairness across the Roehampton academic offer (wherever and however the programme is delivered)
2. To ensure clarity and transparency for students and staff in all aspects of assessment, including the setting of assessments, the marking and moderation process and the delivery of feedback
3. To drive improvements in the quality of teaching, in particular around assessment and feedback
4. To promote assessment for learning and high levels of student engagement
5. To reduce assessment loads, where applicable, and avoid unnecessary duplication of assessment-related activities
6. To support all students at Roehampton and at collaborative partners to achieve to the best of their abilities
7. To ensure that assessment is authentic and relevant to the wider world wherever possible.
8. To ensure that assessment promotes digital literacy where possible.
9. To ensure that assessment is flexible by using a variety of accessible and inclusive approaches and tools and a carefully designed range of authentic assessment tasks that enable all students to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do.

Programme teams are responsible for designing and assessment methods, and changes to assessment will be overseen by School or Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Groups (LTQGs). Any variations from the framework will be subject to the approval of the Learning Teaching and Quality Committee (LTQC). For programmes subject to external professional accreditation, the assessment requirements of the external body will take precedence over the assessment equivalences set out in this framework.

### Assessment Literacy

Assessment literacy enables students to progress in their learning by having a clear understanding of what is needed in assessment and how to achieve high outcomes, i.e., the *process* of assessment. Assessment literate academic staff are able to design high quality assessments and to model good assessment practices to learners. Those practices include the development, communication, and application of clear assessment criteria; a focus on feedforward to maximise learning development; and well-designed assessment scheduling. More specifically:

1. Led by the programme convenor, programme teams should ensure that all staff teaching on a programme, including visiting lecturers and postgraduate research students, share a common understanding of the purpose of assessment tasks set and the associated marking criteria. Clear information should also be shared with collaborative partners (to ensure consistency between sites). Teams should engage in calibration activity each year to enable this.
2. Preparing students for assessment tasks is critical at all levels and across all modules. At the beginning of each semester, clear information on assessment must be provided to students via module and programme Moodle sites. This should include the type and weighting of assessments on each module; the assessment criteria that will be applied; and what is expected from students on any particular piece of assessment. Programmes should further share with students all assignment briefs, submission deadline date and time, and the date and time of provisional feedback and grades. To ensure that wording is clear and unambiguous and expectations understood, this should take place face-to-face in class, where possible, and as a podcast/screencast on Moodle. If this is not possible in a face-to-face situation, alternative arrangements, such as interactive webinars, should take place.
3. Students should have the opportunity to engage in a range of assessments during their programme of study. Colleagues should be aware that students need the opportunity to gain mastery of assessment modes, so a balance must be struck between including different modes of assessment and iterations of the same assessment mode.
4. Exemplars should be available for students, as should a resource bank of past papers. The most effective way to use exemplars is as a tool for discussion, and programme teams should endeavour to build opportunity to discuss anonymised pieces of assessment in students’ first year to develop an awareness and appreciation of standards.
5. Programme teams should engage in SPiA (Student Partnerships in Assessment), to enhance student assessment literacy and allow student input into assessment where possible.
6. Wherever possible, assessment should be authentic: the performance of real-world tasks, demonstrating the student’s ability to apply knowledge and skills.

**Assessment Design**

1. Assessment should be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely) and focus on the assessment of programme learning outcomes. Module learning outcomes must be mapped to these programme learning outcomes to ensure that all of the latter are assessed during the course of the programme. Colleagues should avoid assessing programme learning outcomes more often than is necessary.
2. Teams should take a programme-level approach to assessment to achieve appropriate variety in assessment tasks and reflect intellectual progression through the programme. Assessment deadlines should be sequenced appropriately and distributed effectively for students and staff.
3. Modules should not rely solely on one piece of summative assessment. At least two lower stakes pieces of assessment should be set, the timings of which should be carefully considered. These may be broken down into a series of smaller sub-component parts, for example, in a portfolio assessment form. As standard practice, students are only required to achieve a pass mark overall, regardless of the number of assessment components in a module.
4. Guidelines for assessment loads for summative assessments are set out in Appendix 1. These provide a benchmark for assessments across all programmes and should be read in conjunction with the assessment equivalences set out in Appendix 2.
5. Clear scaffolding of assessment should be provided via formative or low-stakes summative opportunities in the early stages of undergraduate study, such as through use of eportfolios, regular in-class and online quizzes, and/or self and peer-evaluation frameworks.
6. Peer and self-assessment should be used, especially formatively, to provide rapid feedback and promote understanding of assessment criteria and marking scales
7. Assessments should be designed to minimise the risk of plagiarism, the unethical use of AI and contract cheating. Students will be less tempted and able to cheat if assessments draw on individual knowledge and experience. Authentic, future-focussed assessments, those that require application of knowledge, and those that have a local component or require reflection on personal experience are also more difficult to obtain from internet sources, AI or essay mills.

**Inclusive Assessment**

In line with QAA guidance (2018)[[1]](#footnote-1), assessment tasks should provide all students with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their learning through inclusive design wherever possible and through individual reasonable adjustments if required. Inclusive design necessitates a more strategic approach to reduce the need to make one-off, individual modifications. At times, individual modifications will be necessary and appropriate, but these should be reduced to a minimum by considering inclusive assessment design. Engaging in SPiA will help programmes to design inclusive assessments. Programmes may wish to have more open assessment design to give students greater choice. This would be in close consultation with module tutors to ensure that the mode chosen is in line with expectations and requirements and will allow students to demonstrate a high standard of learning and achievement.

Where programme teams consider that eAssessment is to be used, care must be taken to ensure that this is accessible to all students. Undue reliance on technological knowledge and proficiency must not be determining factors of success unless these are explicit in the programme learning outcomes. Wherever possible, assessment should be completed and submitted electronically using Turnitin or other university-approved platforms.

Further information about inclusive assessment can be found on the [Inclusive Practice Moodle page](https://moodle.roehampton.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=8393).

**Marking**

It is important that students understand how our processes and practices lead to reliable, consistent judgments. Marking is partly dependent upon professional judgement; however, in order to demonstrate confidence in such judgement we must have ways to develop and share standards within and between disciplinary and professional communities. This involves the following:

1. Holding regular conversations among academics and students to discuss assessment standards, ensuring shared understanding and agreement.
2. Annual engagement of programme teams in calibration exercises.
3. Mentoring of new lecturers by more experienced colleagues.
4. Using well-developed marking guidance and schemes that are shared with students before they complete the assessment.
5. Ensuring that the categorical marking framework is shared with academic staff and that staff are able to explain categorical marking to students.
6. Consulting the university guidance on word count, adapting as appropriate the information on penalties for work that is significantly over or under length. That information should be shared with students early in the semester.
7. Wherever practicable, concealing the student's name and personal identity from the marker(s) and ensuring that all examination scripts are marked anonymously. (Further details of marking and moderation requirements can be found in Assessment Procedures, available from the [Quality and Standards](https://www.roehampton.ac.uk/corporate-information/quality-and-standards/) website.)

### Feedback and feedforward

1. Feedback on assessments must be timely, clear and constructive. It should clearly explain why a mark was given against the published criteria and should provide guidance to help the student improve their future performance. Feedback, in the form of feedforward, should encourage self-reflection and be motivational. It is more beneficial to students to have feedback in advance of summative submissions to allow them to take advice into account in their final assignments. Feedback on summative assessment can be minimal.
2. Feedback on summative assessments (including the provisional release of marks) should be given within a maximum of 15 working days. The only exception to this is for dissertations. These should be marked within a reasonable time to meet Registry deadlines for the submission of marks.
3. Where possible, colleagues are encouraged to release marks and feedback to students within a shorter period, in particular for formative and mid- term assessments, recognising that timely feedback is helpful for students ahead of final summative assessments.
4. Provisional marks (with internal moderation) should be released to students by or within these limits ahead of external moderation and final agreement at module exam boards.
5. Colleagues are encouraged to use a variety of approaches to feedback, including immediate feedback from online tests, verbal feedback, group feedback to whole classes and peer-to-peer.
6. The opportunity for dialogic feedback with tutors should be available to all students.
7. Programme teams should consider the value of developmental formal and informal feedback, embedded into learning and teaching opportunities.

### Quality and Standards

1. Wherever practicable, assessments should be submitted and marked, and feedback given online.
2. Programme teams are responsible for ensuring that students understand the importance of academic integrity and the consequences of academic dishonesty. Assessments submitted online must be checked by TurnItIn, and students are required to tick the Honesty Declaration on Moodle. Resources are available via the LTEU to support programme teams in this.
3. Categorical marking should be applied in accordance with the university’s PG Categorical Marking Frameworks.
4. The marking and moderation process should be clearly communicated to students, both face to face and on the Moodle site.

### Appendix 1: Guidelines for summative assessment loads per 20 credit module

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|  | HE7 |
| Coursework only | 5000 |
| Exam only | 3 hours |
| C/W and exam | 3000 + 1.5 hour |
| Dissertation or project (40 credits) | 15000 |

Please note:

1. The table sets out guideline benchmarks for summative assessment loads on a 20-credit module. Lesser assessment loads should be considered. Assessment equivalences for other assessment types are set out in Appendix 2 below. The assessment loads reflect the growing complexity and demands of a programme; and the building of independent learning skills that for many students will culminate in a substantial 40 credit dissertation or project.
2. To avoid over-assessment, programmes should ensure that programme learning outcomes are not tested on numerous occasions across the programme.
3. Where word lengths are an inherent part of the learning outcomes of a programme or module (e.g. the ability to write a piece of creative writing of a certain length), these assessment loads may be exceeded. The rationale for any such variation must be set out in the programme validation documentation and agreed as part of the validation process.
4. Portfolio assessments should not exceed the maximum load in total.

### Appendix 2: Assessment Equivalencies Framework Based on 20-Credit Modules at Postgraduate Level – SUMMATIVE only

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|  | **Assessment examples (indicative)** | **Weighting** | **Level** | | | |
| 7 |  |  |  |
| Coursework: Written | Essay  Literature review  Report  Creative Writing Research proposal  Portfolio  Lab report  Case Study  Reflective journal Field Work Report  Position paper  Bid  Policy Review  Annotated bibliography Take-home tests  Class Test | 100%  50%  25% | 5000 words  3000 words  2000 words |  |  | Dissertation lengths should be pro-rated accordingly e.g. a 60-credit Dissertation contributing 100 % to the overall module mark should normally be no more than 15000 words |
| Coursework: Practical | Micro Teaching Student-led session  Lab task  Dance  Drama production  Blog  Wiki/website Film  Performance Exhibition  Curation  Clinical assessment  Coding  Crit |  |  | No set tariff is proposed for practical assessments because of the discipline-specific nature of these tasks. Colleagues are asked, however, to consider both the time required to prepare for and complete the task to ensure equity with other assessment in the programme. This mode of assessment should not be more onerous than a piece of written work. | | |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Coursework: Presentation | Oral Poster Group Individual  Debate  Viva  Poster  Pecha Kucha  Oral presentation | 100%  50%  25% | 12 mins  10 mins  7 mins |  |  |  |
| Examination: – an examination is organised and supervised by Registry. All other examination-type assessment comes under ‘coursework’ | Disclosed Open Book Closed Book  MCQ | 100%  50%  25% | 3 hours  2 hours  1.5 hours |  |  |  |
|  | Colleagues are asked to consider using heavily weighted examinations sparingly. Please take into account that students with additional needs may be eligible for extra time (usually 25% but occasionally 50%) | | |

3 100% weightings should be avoided. Smaller units of assessment should be used wherever possible.

1. <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/assessment>, [accessed 31 May 2022] [↑](#footnote-ref-1)