

## Assessment Handbook 2015/16 What's New?

The Assessment Handbook contains QMUL's assessment policies, giving guidance and instruction on the implementation of the Academic Regulations. This covering document details changes of note since 2014/15.

Minor changes to wording and terminology that do not affect meaning are not included in this cover document. The electronic version of this document includes the full Assessment Handbook as an appendix, with amendments shown as track changes.

### **Item: 3.20-25 – Assessment for resitting students**

3.20 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).

3.21 Where a student has resit attempts (in or out of attendance) these must be taken at the next normally available assessment opportunity.

3.22 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 and cease to be a student.

3.23 Resitting students are only permitted to attempt the assessment again; they are not entitled to attend teaching for the modules.

3.24 Undergraduate students not on the LLB, MBBS or BDS programmes shall be advised that taking resits while studying a full load in attendance should be carefully considered. This can affect performance in other modules. Resits are capped at the pass marks (for the module mark); they may have only limited impact upon final degree classifications and so may be thought inadvisable.

3.25 Resitting students shall always be assessed on the curricula from when they first attempted the module in attendance (except LLB and LLM). Examiners must consider the specific needs of resitting students when setting formal assessment.

#### **Change and reason**

Entire section rewritten to take account of standard late summer resits and automatic resit registration (affecting actions that students no longer need to take, and the timing of the next available attempt).

### **3.41 – Preparing students for summative assessments**

3.41 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.

#### **Change and reason**

Policy statement developed through the Assessment Governance Review 2014/15. Contingent on Senate approval of this policy. Intended to better prepare students for particular assessment formats.

### **5.35-43 – Scaling and standard-setting**

5.35 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.

5.36 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.

5.37 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*

5.38 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.

5.39 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.

5.40 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.

5.41 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.

5.42 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*

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

#### **Change and reason**

New policy approved by Senate in March 2015 to better regulate the use of scaling, following discussions at the 2013/14 DEBs and consultation with schools/institutes.

#### **Item: 5.46-48 – Students who exceed or do not meet a specified word limit**

5.46 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

5.47 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.

5.48 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.

**Change and reason**

Intended to regulate more clearly the policies in use, following consultation with schools/institutes. Inclusion conditional upon Senate's approval.

**Item: 5.49-52 - Late submission of coursework and other in-course assessment**

5.49 Where an assignment is submitted late (and there are no extenuating circumstances) a mark of zero (OFL – zero, fail, late) shall be applied immediately, unless the School/Institute has made it explicit that the alternative penalty of graduated deductions applies.

5.50 Where the penalty of graduated deductions applies, five per cent of the total marks available (i.e. five marks for an assignment marked out of one hundred) shall be deducted for each 24 hour period or part thereof after the submission date and time, including weekends and bank holidays. An assignment submitted more than 120 hours late shall be awarded a mark of zero (OFL).

5.51 Where the penalty of graduated deductions applies, a school/institute must make students aware of the penalty in advance, or else the default penalty (an immediate mark of 0 FL) will apply. This may be published in the programme handbook and/or - where a school/institute does not use the same policy for all assessments - in module handbooks.

5.52 Where a student fails a module as a consequence of one of these penalties in an assessment, normal resit provision shall apply (where attempts remain).

**Change and reason**

Intended to harmonise the diverse policies currently in use. Follows extensive consultation across QMUL. Contingent upon specific approval by Senate in June 2015.

**Item: 7.20-26 – Timing of resits**

**Change and reason**

The entire section has been re-written to accommodate the adoption of late summer resits for all students (UG, PG and finalists) from 2015/16. The MBBS, BDS, and certain PG programmes are noted as exceptions. This is replicated at 9.41 in relation to first sits.

The Assessment Handbook 2015/16 also removes any reference to discretion in progression (using extenuating circumstances to permit progression on less than the standard number of credits) and updates mentions of award rules and condoned failure to be compatible with the changes approved at the end of the 2013/14 academic year. These mentions appear throughout the document. Please refer to the 'What's new?' guide to the Academic Regulations for more detail on those changes.