A3 ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

A3.1 Programme assessment strategies

A3.1.1 The purpose of assessment is to enable students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the objectives of the programme of study and achieved the standard required for the award on which they are registered. The assessment strategy must be described in the programme and module specifications and handbooks, providing details of how the assessment requirements are aligned with the programme aims and learning outcomes, and with the programme strategy for teaching and learning. The principles underpinning the University’s approach to assessment are set out in the Brookes Assessment Compact, available at http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/documents/BrookesAssessmentCompact09.pdf

A3.1.2 Students should experience a variety of modes of assessment over the course of their programme of study, as appropriate to the nature of the programme and the learning outcomes being tested. Assessment strategies should be designed for inclusivity, but arrangements must also be in place to allow for reasonable adjustments where necessary in order to enable disabled students to demonstrate the achievement of the learning outcomes (see 3.4 below).

A3.1.3 Assessment must reflect the achievement of the individual student in fulfilling module and programme objectives, and at the same time relate that achievement to a consistent national standard of awards, as articulated in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, subject benchmark statements, and relevant professional standards. It must therefore be carried out by competent and impartial examiners, and by methods which enable them to assess students fairly. In order to achieve this end, the University requires external examiners to be involved in the approval of all assignment briefs and examination papers, and in the sampling of assessed work, which contribute to the calculation of a University award. Their particular role is to ensure that the assessment process is carried out fairly, and that the academic standards of the University's awards are maintained.

A3.1.4 The programme specification must state the basis on which students will be assessed for an award, including rules for progression to subsequent stages of within the programme, criteria for the recommendation of each award to which the programme may lead and the rules governing the calculation of final award classifications, and any special assessment requirements in order to qualify for professional accreditation.

A3.1.5 Students must be provided with information on the assessment regulations which apply to their programme of study. Regulations on assessment for an award must be articulated in the Programme Handbook and should:

i. identify all the elements that will be assessed, including any assessed supervised work experience;
ii. specify when and how each of these elements will be assessed by internal and external examiners (see also section A3.6: Marking and moderation);
iii. specify which or how many elements must be passed to obtain an award and what weighting each carries in the assessments;
iv. identify any elements that may in no circumstances be the subject of compensation for failure;
v. specify the minimum and maximum number of elements to be attempted;
vi. state the criteria for the recommendation of each award or level of award to which the programme may lead;
vii. specify what provisions will be made to enable students to make good an initial failure.
A3.1.6 Programme assessment regulations must cover all summative assessments, at whatever point in the programme they are undertaken. Students and examiners on the programme must abide by the approved regulations.

A3.2 Module assessment strategies

A3.2.1 Credit is awarded for successful achievement of learning outcomes, verified through the successful completion of individual module assignments; and the descriptors of the modules making up the programme must therefore provide details of how the module contributes to the achievement of the overall objectives of the programme of which it is an element. In order to be eligible for the award of academic credit for a completed module, students must submit the required pieces of work for assessment and meet the requirements of the assessment regulations governing the module or programme of study.

A3.2.2 Assessments for a particular module must be designed to enable students to demonstrate that they have achieved the intended learning outcomes, and the methods of assessment must be appropriate to the type of study (e.g. practice-based tasks, written assignments, portfolios of work, presentations, laboratory reports, etc). The decision on the number and weighting of assessment components for a module is a matter for the programme team, subject to approval at validation and thereafter subject to minor change. The minimum weighting for an assessment task should be 10%, however some modules include pass/fail components which are designed to meet professional body requirements and which may be weighted as 0%.

A3.2.3 Students must be provided with full details of how they will be assessed on each module, including the assessment criteria against which their performance will be judged in order to provide guidance on the expected approach to the task and the standard required to pass the assessment. Assessment requirements must be set out in the module handbook provided for students, showing the relative weightings of individual assessment components and indicating whether all elements must be passed in order to gain an overall pass for the module. Students are also entitled to feedback on their assessed work, and the mechanisms for accessing this feedback should be clearly stated in programme or module handbooks.

A3.3 Students’ responsibilities

General responsibilities

A3.3.1 All assessments are intended to determine the skills, abilities, understanding and knowledge of each individual student undertaking the assessment. Students are expected to actively engage with the assessment activities provided on their programmes, and to act on feedback provided by their tutors, as articulated in the Brookes Assessment Compact: www.brookes.ac.uk/ask/documents/BrookesAssessmentCompact09.pdf Students must ensure that they familiarise themselves with the assessment criteria and learning outcomes against which their work will be assessed, which must be given in programme and module handbooks.

A3.3.2 It is the responsibility of students to attend examinations and submit work for assessment as required. Students are required to observe all instructions given to them by examiners, invigilators and any member of the staff responsible for the assessment. If a student fails to attend examinations or at the right time to submit work for assessment without good cause, the examiners have authority to deem the student to have failed the assessments concerned.

A3.3.3 It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that their work submitted for assessment is legible and, if necessary, to seek appropriate support and guidance. Where a disability or medical condition impedes the legibility of the work, it is the student’s responsibility, in the first instance, to request an alternative assessment provision (see 3.4 below).

A3.3.4 It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that all assessment deadlines are met or that approval for an extension has been granted in advance of the original deadline. Any assessment submitted after the deadline, or the approved extended deadline, will be deemed late and awarded zero marks. See Mitigating Circumstances in 3.5 below for details.

A3.3.5 Students must ensure they understand what constitutes academic misconduct (see Cheating in 3.13 below), and ensure they do not commit such offences in preparing for assessments. If a student is
found to have cheated or attempted to gain an unfair advantage, the appropriate Disciplinary Officer or a Misconduct Committee, as the case may be, have authority to deem the student to have failed part or all of the assessments, or to require some other penalty.

A3.3.6 Any student who attends an examination or other part of an assessment process on behalf of or pretending to be another student, or who allows another person to attend any part of an assessment process on their behalf or pretending to be them, is committing, or colluding in, impersonation and may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedure.

A3.3.7 Examinations

These Regulations are enforced strictly to ensure that every student is able to perform to the best of their ability during an examination. Students arriving late, causing a disturbance or leaving early may disrupt the work of other students and so these regulations will be enforced without exception.

i. Students may enter an examination room only when instructed to do so by an invigilator. It is advised that all students are seated 10 minutes before the scheduled start of the examination. Students should be present in the examination room and seated at the correct desk before the examination announcements are read by the invigilator.

ii. Students are under examination conditions as soon as they enter the examination room and must not communicate with anyone but an invigilator while in the examination room, including before and after an examination.

iii. Students are not permitted to open the examination paper or make any notes until instructed to do so by an invigilator.

iv. Students arriving late, i.e. once the examination has begun, will be granted admission into the examination room up to 1 hour after the start time of the examination. Students arriving more than 1 hour after the start time of the examination will not be allowed entry regardless of the circumstances for the late arrival.

v. Students granted late admission into the examination room will not be entitled to extra time to compensate for time lost due to arriving late.

vi. Students are not permitted to leave the examination room in the first hour or the last fifteen minutes of an examination. Students may only leave an examination once the necessary attendance and identification checks have been completed, which may be after the scheduled end time for the examination.

vii. Students who wish to attract the attention of an invigilator should raise their hand. Students may not leave their seats without permission.

viii. Students are permitted only the following items at the examination desk:

- Current Brookes student card as identification
- Writing implements, either loose or in a clear plastic pencil case
- One clear bottle of still water, with the label removed
- Materials which are stated on the front page of the examination paper
- Medication which has been approved by the Examination and Pooled Space Utilisation Office

All other items are unauthorised material and are not permitted at the examination desk or in their pockets.

ix. Personal belongings should not normally be brought into the examination room and if brought must be deposited, at the student’s own risk, in the designated area within the examination room. Students leaving mobile phones or other electronic devices in the designated area must ensure that alarms are cancelled and the device is switched off. An electronic device which rings or whose alarm sounds in the examination room is considered to be causing a disturbance. The University accepts no responsibility for the safe-keeping of items deposited in the designated area.
x. Taking unauthorised materials to an examination desk is regarded as an act preparatory to an attempt to cheat. Consequently, anyone found with unauthorised material in their possession, or on or about their person or on or about the examination desk, will be reported and will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the University's Student Disciplinary Procedure. Any notes or unauthorised material may be retained by the University at its discretion. The same consequences will follow for anyone found using any form of cheating or attempting to cheat or assisting someone else to cheat in examinations.

xi. Students who have a medical condition which may require medication or which may require them to leave the examination room during an examination must contact the Examination and Pooled Space Utilisation Office before the examination.

xii. Students whose examination involves arithmetical calculation that requires the use of electronic calculators will have a University approved calculator placed on the examination desk by the invigilator before the start of the examination. Students must not use any other calculator in the examination, unless instructions state otherwise. A watch or other device capable of operating as a calculator counts as an unauthorised calculator for the purpose of this regulation.

xiii. Language dictionaries are not allowed in an examination room.

xiv. Students must sit only at the desk on which there is a card showing their name, and leave it visible throughout the examination.

xv. Students must write their student name and number and any other information requested on every answer book. At the end of the examination, before handing the answer book(s) to the invigilator, students must fold and seal the section containing their name and number.

xvi. Scrap paper is not permitted; unless specified in the examination rubric. All rough work should be written in the answer book and crossed through. Supplementary answer sheets, even if they contain rough work only, should be attached to the back of the main answer book.

xvii. Answer books, used or unused, must not be removed from the examination room. Students must not damage or deface any paper or material supplied.

xviii. Students should write in ink or use a ballpoint pen, other than when completing a multiple choice answer sheet or when the instructions state otherwise.

xix. Except with the permission of the invigilator, students must not communicate with anyone but an invigilator while the examination is in progress.

xx. Students must not leave the examination room and re-enter, except in an emergency and with the permission of an invigilator. A student who has to leave the room in an emergency will not normally be allowed to re-enter and continue unless it has been possible to obtain an escort.

A3.3.8 In-class tests
This section relates to those assessments in 'class time' with a similar structure to an examination where the following regulations would be deemed appropriate. For other forms of assessments in 'class time' where the following regulations would be inappropriate the General Regulations will apply and any additional regulations and/or guidelines specific to the module.

The following regulations should be read in conjunction with the general assessment regulations contained in this section, and the course/module guidelines:

i. Articles of clothing not being worn, bags, brief cases, pencil cases, papers, mobile phones etc must not be taken to a student's desk in the in-class test room. Such items should not normally be brought into the room and if brought must be deposited, at the student's own risk, in the area within the room designated by the invigilator. Students may take to their desks loose writing instruments only. In certain instances specifically permitted books, papers, calculators or instruments will be allowed.
ii. Students whose course involves arithmetical calculation that requires the use of electronic calculators or similar aids are required to provide their own for inclass tests. They should be independently powered and be silent. If they have memories these must be capable of being easily cleared. They must not be capable of text storage or manipulation or graphic display. Students are required to state on their scripts the make and model number of the calculator used. A student who has any doubt about the suitability of a particular calculator for use in the in-class test must seek approval well in advance from the lecturer responsible for the in-class test. A watch or other device capable of operating as a calculator counts as a calculator for the purpose of this regulation.

iii. Students must only take authorised materials into an in-class test room. The taking of notes or unauthorised material, including mobile phones, into an inclass test room by students is regarded as an act preparatory to an attempt to cheat. Consequently, anyone found with such material in their possession, or on or about their person, will be reported and may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the University's Student Disciplinary Procedure. Any notes or unauthorised material may be retained by the University at its discretion. The same consequences will follow for anyone found using any form of cheating or attempting to cheat or assisting someone else to cheat in an in-class test.

iv. Language dictionaries are not allowed in an in-class test room, unless instructions state otherwise.

v. Students must display their current University enrolment card on their desks during the in-class test, unless instructions state otherwise.

vi. Scrap paper is not permitted, unless instructions state otherwise; all rough work should be crossed through and handed in at the end of the in-class test with the answer sheets.

vii. Students must not damage or deface any paper or material supplied and under no circumstances may answer books (if supplied), used or unused, be removed from the in-class test room.

viii. Students must write in ink or use a ballpoint pen, other than when completing an multiple choice answer sheet (for example Edpac) or when the instructions state otherwise.

ix. Students who wish to attract the attention of an invigilator should raise their hand. Students may not leave their seats without permission.

x. Except with the permission of the invigilator, students must not communicate with anyone but an invigilator while the in-class test is in progress.

xi. Students must not leave the room in which the in-class test is being held and re-enter, except in an emergency and with the permission of an invigilator. A student who has to leave the room in an emergency will not normally be allowed to re-enter and continue unless it has been possible to obtain an escort. Students knowing of medical conditions likely to require them to leave the room during an in-class test should notify the Module Leader in advance.

A3.3.9 Coursework

The following regulations should be read in conjunction with the general assessment regulations contained in this section, and the course/module guidelines:

i. Except where written instructions specify otherwise, students must ensure that all work submitted for assessment in fulfilment of course requirements was produced by them. Any student who submits work for assessment that was not wholly produced by them, except where specifically authorised to do so, may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedure.

ii. Students must ensure that they do not plagiarise (i.e. take and use another person's thoughts, writings, inventions as their own) any part of any work submitted for assessment in fulfilment of course requirements. Quotations from whatever source must be clearly identified and attributed at the point where they occur in the text of the work by use of one of the standard conventions for referencing. Any student whose work submitted for assessment is plagiarised, in whole or in part,
may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the University's Student Disciplinary Procedure.

iii. Except where written instructions specify that work for assessment may be produced jointly and submitted as the work of more than one student, students must not collude with others to produce a piece of work jointly, copy or share another student's work or lend their work to another student in the reasonable knowledge that some or all of it will be copied. Such collusion is cheating and any student who participates in collusion may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the University's Student Disciplinary Procedure.

iv. Students must ensure that work submitted for assessment in fulfilment of course requirements is not duplicated (the same as, or broadly similar to, work submitted earlier for academic credit, without acknowledgement of the previous submission). Such duplication is cheating and any student whose work submitted for assessment is duplicated, in whole or in part may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the University's Student Disciplinary Procedure.

v. Except where written instructions specify that investigations may be carried out jointly and the results submitted as the work of more than one student, students must ensure that all data included in work submitted in fulfilment of course requirements were obtained through work carried out by them. The invention of data, its alteration, its copying from any other source, or otherwise obtaining it by unfair means is falsification, as is the invention of quotes and/or references. Any student whose work submitted for assessment contains material that is falsified may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the University's Student Disciplinary Procedure.

A3.4 Changes to assessment arrangements

Reasonable adjustments on the grounds of disability
A3.4.1 If a student has a disability which may affect their academic performance, they should contact the Student Disability & Dyslexia Service: [http://disability-dyslexia.brookes.ac.uk/default.aspx](http://disability-dyslexia.brookes.ac.uk/default.aspx) to discuss whether any alternative arrangements are required in order to enable them to engage fully with the assessment on their programme of study. Disabled students are encouraged to disclose their disability on admission to the University (or the partner organisation at which they are studying for a Brookes award), in order that appropriate support may be put in place as early as possible, including the consideration of reasonable adjustments that may be required to particular learning and assessment activities.

A3.4.2 If a student is unable, through disability, to be assessed by the assessment tasks approved for a module, examiners may vary the methods as appropriate and in accordance with the University's procedure on the matter, bearing in mind the objectives of the programme and the need to assess the student on equal terms with other students. Reasonable adjustments may only be made to individual assessment tasks on the recommendation of the University’s Disabled Student Advisers.

Other changes to assessment arrangements
A3.4.3 All students are expected to be present for their examinations and timed assessments (including in-class tests) and are responsible for meeting set deadlines for coursework submission. Changed assessment arrangements, including extensions to coursework deadlines, will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

A3.4.4 A student wishing to request a changed assessment arrangement must complete and submit the “Changed Assessment Arrangements, Request for Changed Examination Date” or “Changed Assessment Arrangements, Request for Changed Coursework Deadline” proforma, complete with appropriate evidence (see 3.4.6 below). These forms are available from the [Examinations & Pooled Space Utilisation Office](http://disability-dyslexia.brookes.ac.uk/default.aspx).

A3.4.5 Students affected by mitigating circumstances should submit an application for consideration of those circumstances through the mitigating circumstances procedure (see regulation A3.5). The procedure for Changed Assessment Arrangements is not intended to cover students wishing to request consideration of mitigating circumstances.
A3.4.6 The University will normally only agree to a Changed Assessment Arrangement in the following circumstances:

i. Religious observance or belief, including festival observance, prayer times etc.  
   *Documentary evidence:* letter from the head of church or equivalent faith/belief leader.

ii. Military training or Active Duty requirements.  
   *Documentary evidence:* letter from an official of the relevant authority.

iii. National or international activities where the University or country of origin is represented.  
   *Documentary evidence:* letter from an official of the organising body.

iv. Activities undertaken by a dependent of the student which fall into one of the accepted categories within the Changed Assessment Arrangements procedure and for which there is a demonstrable support requirement on the student.  
   *Documentary evidence:* see evidence requirements for i-iii above.

A3.4.7 The University has specifically excluded the following grounds for making a request for a Changed Assessment Arrangement:

i. Personal and family holidays;

ii. Weddings: either the student’s wedding or that of a family member or personal friend;

iii. Job interviews;

iv. Expeditions, unless the expedition relates to one of the acceptable circumstances listed in 3.4.6 above;

v. Work experience;

vi. Travel arrangements, including all flights, internal, abroad or to home;

vii. Sporting activities except when representing the University or country of origin as permitted by 3.4.6iii above.

A3.5 Mitigating circumstances

A3.5.1 Students who wish any form of mitigating circumstance to be taken into account in relation to their performance in an assessment must follow the Regulations for Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances.

A3.5.2

1 Introduction

1.1 These regulations apply to all students engaged in taught programmes that lead to an Oxford Brookes award at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Where there is a discrepancy between these regulations and other regulations or handbooks in respect of procedures for the consideration of mitigating circumstances relating to assessments, these regulations will take precedence.

1.2 The Academic Registrar is authorised to consider and make judgement in any cases of doubt or where clarification is needed concerning these regulations.

2 Definition of Mitigating Circumstances

2.1 The University defines mitigating circumstance as:

*Mitigating circumstances are circumstances which are beyond the control of the student and which could not be reasonably accommodated by the student and which seriously impair performance in assessment.*

2.2 This definition covers all mitigating circumstances. All three elements of the definition must be met in order to substantiate a claim for mitigating circumstances.

2.3 On-going conditions and other disabilities that affect students do not fall within this definition of mitigating circumstances. A mechanism exists within the University for considering the impact on individuals of such on-going conditions. Where an allowance has been made for a continuing condition, a further allowance should not be made through the consideration of mitigating circumstances except as described in 2.4.
2.4 Some students affected by ‘on-going’ conditions may encounter specific difficulties related to their condition that impacts upon an assessment. Such circumstances may be legitimately considered as meeting the definition of mitigating circumstances in 2.1. For example, a student who suffers from MS, rheumatoid arthritis, or Crohn's disease, may or may not need constant ‘reasonable adjustments’ in exam or coursework situations, but if they had a ‘flare-up’ around the time of an assessment they may also need to be considered under these mitigating circumstances procedures. In such situations the decision-making body considering the claim for mitigating circumstances will need to receive information concerning any ‘reasonable adjustments’ that are in place. The important principle is that no student should receive a double compensation through both an on-going ‘reasonable adjustment’ and an allowance through mitigating circumstances.

2.5 It should be noted that a student's performance in an assessment may have been affected by circumstances which occurred during their study, not simply during the assessment itself, e.g. on the day of an examination.

3 Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances

3.1 The process for considering mitigating circumstances is carried out separately from the process by which allowances are made for the impact of mitigating circumstances. This two stage process involves:

a) a process for considering the submission of evidence concerning mitigating circumstances and deciding whether or not that evidence is sufficient to satisfy the University’s definition of mitigating circumstances (see 2.1); and

b) a process for making suitable allowances for those students whose performance in an assessment has been confirmed to have been affected by mitigating circumstances.

3.2 The responsible group charged with the review of evidence concerning mitigating circumstance (see section 5) may only reach one of two conclusions either that the evidence as presented represents a substantial impact on the student’s performance (as defined in 2.1) or that the evidence does not present evidence of such impact (see 5.6).

3.3 Where the responsible group does not support a submission for mitigating circumstances this does not necessarily imply that the student was not affected at all by the situation for which evidence has been provided, simply that the situation did not satisfy the University’s definition of mitigating circumstances. This may be because the circumstances were within the student’s control or could have been foreseen and appropriate adjustments made in advance or that they did not seriously impair performance in assessment.

3.4 In order to reach a decision that a student has been affected by mitigating circumstances, the responsible group must be satisfied that all three elements of the definition have been proven. In addition, sufficient evidence must be provided, including documentary evidence, to support a claim for mitigating circumstances.

4 Evidential Standards

4.1 To support academic standards, procedural fairness and ensure sufficient evidential standards are met all claims for mitigating circumstances must be supported by documentary evidence from a relevant objective third party, for example, a Doctor’s certificate, counsellor’s statement or death certificate (except as described in 4.2).

4.2 The expectation is that documentary evidence should be provided in all circumstances. However, in some situations there may be clear and legitimate reasons why it is not possible to submit documentary evidence, in which case the claim for mitigating circumstances must set out the reason why no documentary evidence can be submitted. Where no documentary evidence has been provided the responsible group has discretion to decide whether or not to accept the reasons stated for the lack of documentary evidence and, hence, whether or not to accept self-certification of the mitigating circumstances. These situations are expected to be extremely rare and exceptional. The main situation where documentation may not be available or appropriate, and so self-certification may be acceptable, is to extend an assessment deadline by up to one calendar week (see also section 5).
Where no evidence has been provided the responsible group has discretion to decide whether to accept the reasons stated for the lack of evidence.

4.3 At all times it is the student’s responsibility to provide sufficient documentary evidence to support a claim for mitigating circumstances.

4.4 All requests for the consideration of mitigating circumstances should be submitted using the appropriate University form.

5 **Roles and Responsibilities**

5.1 Mitigating circumstances, whether for events during a period of study (for example, when seeking an extension to a submission deadline), leading up to an examination or after an examination, should be submitted to the relevant individual before being forwarded to the relevant group (or individual) for consideration and then the outcome communicated back to the student.

5.2 In most circumstances a student’s evidence of mitigating circumstances will be considered by a Mitigating Circumstances Panel (MCP) or a Sub-group of the MCP. The purpose of the MCP is to ensure independence of decision making from the assessment process and to support procedural fairness. The MCP also ensures that any highly personal details contained in the evidence submitted for mitigating circumstances are not communicated beyond a larger group than strictly necessary.

5.3 The specific roles and responsibilities are as follows:

(a) **Home provision**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence Submitted To…</th>
<th>Evidence Considered By…</th>
<th>Allowance Determined By…</th>
<th>Outcome Relayed By…</th>
<th>Evidence Held By…</th>
<th>Self-certification accepted?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>During study (to extend a deadline by up to 1 week)</strong></td>
<td>Module Leader</td>
<td>Module Leader</td>
<td>Module Leader</td>
<td>Module Leader: verbal and confirmed by e-mail or letter</td>
<td>AMO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>During study (for extensions of more than 1 week up to 5 weeks)</strong></td>
<td>AMO</td>
<td>MCP Sub-group (at least two people drawn from the MCP)</td>
<td>MCP Sub-group (at least two people drawn from the MCP)</td>
<td>Faculty (as identified by the Faculty): e-mail or letter</td>
<td>AMO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By the MCP deadline</strong></td>
<td>AMO</td>
<td>MCP*</td>
<td>Exam Committee</td>
<td>Faculty (as identified by the Faculty): e-mail or letter</td>
<td>AMO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>After an Examination Committee (late submissions)</strong></td>
<td>AMO</td>
<td>ACCO then MCP Chair</td>
<td>Chair on behalf of the Exam Committee</td>
<td>ACCO</td>
<td>ACCO</td>
</tr>
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</table>

* see 5.4 below for constitution of MCP
(b) Collaborative provision

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence Submitted To...</th>
<th>Evidence Considered By...</th>
<th>Allowance Determined By...</th>
<th>Outcome Relayed By...</th>
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<td>Module Leader</td>
<td>Module Leader</td>
<td>Module Leader: verbal and confirmed by e-mail or letter</td>
<td>Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During study (for extensions of more than 1 week up to 5 weeks)</td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>MCP Sub-group (at least two people drawn from the MCP)</td>
<td>MCP Sub-group (at least two people drawn from the MCP)</td>
<td>Partner (as identified by the School): e-mail or letter</td>
<td>Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By the MCP deadline</td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>MCP*</td>
<td>Exam Committee</td>
<td>Partner (as identified by the School): e-mail or letter</td>
<td>Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After an Examination Committee (late submissions)**</td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>ACCO then MCP Chair</td>
<td>Chair on behalf of the Exam Committee</td>
<td>ACCO</td>
<td>Partner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* see 5.5 below for constitution of MCP
** for University-enrolled students. Registered students must use the partner’s appeal process.

5.4 The MCP should contain staff from the Faculty concerned (including academic and support staff as appropriate) and at least one of the individuals should not be responsible for teaching the student whose position is under consideration. The MCP should consist of at least three individuals plus a secretary, but may include others up to a maximum of nine plus a secretary. The MCP should include at least one staff member with involvement in undergraduate programmes and one staff member with involvement in taught postgraduate programmes. A Student Support Coordinator cannot become a member of the MCP.

5.5 For a collaborative partner, the MCP should be made up of at least three named individuals up to a maximum of nine, plus a secretary (as in 5.4 above). This membership must include two staff members from the collaborative partner involved in the delivery of academic programmes, at least one of whom must not be responsible for teaching the student who is being considered, and one representative from the University (nominated by the PVC/Dean).

5.6 One of the members of the MCP should be appointed the Chair of the MCP. The Chair of the MCP should not be the Chair of an Examination Committee. The Chair of an Examination Committee may be a member of the MCP. The MCP should also appoint a Vice-Chair on the same terms as the Chair who is able to act in the same manner as the Chair in their absence. There should also be a Secretary to the MCP who shall not be one of the members.

5.7 The quorum for a meeting of an MCP is any three members, to include either the Chair or Vice-Chair.

5.8 The Module Leader, an MCP Sub-group or the MCP itself should consider the evidence presented by the student and conclude either that there is evidence of mitigating circumstances or that there is not (see 3.2).

5.9 In respect of evidence considered by a Module Leader. The evidence is received by and considered by the Module Leader. The Module Leader considers the evidence presented by the student and...
concludes either that there is evidence of mitigating circumstances or that there is not (see 3.2). If the evidence is accepted, the Module Leader is authorised to and will grant an extension of up to one week.

5.10 In respect of evidence considered by an MCP Sub-group. The evidence is forwarded to the MCP Sub-group. The MCP Sub-group considers the evidence presented by the student and concludes either that there is evidence of mitigating circumstances or that there is not (see 3.2). If the evidence is accepted, the MCP Sub-group is authorised to and will grant an extension of up to five weeks.

5.11 If a student fails to submit evidence in support of a claim for mitigating circumstances for assessed coursework by a relevant deadline, as notified by AMO or their Faculty, their claim is considered to be late. The student should proceed with their assessment and submit evidence as soon as possible to be considered by the MCP Sub-group. The MCP Sub-group will first consider if there were circumstances beyond the student’s control which prevented them from requesting an extension prior to the deadline for submission of coursework. If the MCP Sub-group accepts that there was a valid reason for not requesting an extension the evidence is then considered and the MCP Sub-group will conclude either that there is evidence of mitigating circumstances or that there is not (see 3.2). If the evidence is accepted, the MCP Sub-group is authorised to and will grant an extension of up to five weeks from the original deadline.

5.12 Where an MCP agrees a claim for mitigating circumstances this decision will be reported to the relevant Examination Committee. Only the decision will be reported to the Examination Committee: no details of the student's circumstances will be forwarded.

5.13 Where an MCP does not agree a claim for mitigating circumstances the Examination Committee will not be notified that a request was made, considered and refused. The Examination Committee will, therefore, normally be unaware that a claim was submitted.

5.14 Notwithstanding the guidance in 5.12 and 5.13, the Chair of the Examination Committee will be presented with a list of all the students that were considered at the MCP including the outcome, i.e. whether mitigating circumstances were agreed or not. The details of students’ situations will not be forwarded to the Chair. This list is to be used by the Chair only to clarify any queries that members of the Examination Committee may have concerning whether or not a student’s situation has been considered. An Examination Committee may not question the decision of an MCP.

5.15 When a student submits evidence of mitigating circumstances after the MCP has met, the evidence is forwarded to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office (ACCO). The ACCO will first consider if there were circumstances beyond the student’s control which prevented them from submitting the evidence by the relevant deadline. If the ACCO accepts that there was a valid reason for late submission, then the ACCO will also consider the evidence against the criteria for mitigating circumstances and conclude either that there is evidence of mitigating circumstances or that there is not (see 3.2). If the ACCO concludes that there is valid evidence of mitigating circumstances then the decision to approve mitigating circumstances will be forwarded to the Chair of the Examination Committee.

5.16 For students studying on the UMP, there is a common timetable for meetings of the MCP. The MCP will be held the working day before the meeting of the SEC. The deadline for receipt of evidence in AMO will be 4.30pm two days prior to the MCP, i.e. there is one clear working day between the deadline for receipt of evidence and the MCP.

5.17 For students studying on programmes outside of the UMP, the relevant Faculty is responsible for ensuring that clear deadlines for the submission of evidence have been communicated in advance to students.

6 Allowances for Students with Mitigating Circumstances affecting Coursework

6.1 Where a student is unable to hand in summatively assessed coursework due to mitigating circumstances, the student should normally be allowed an extension equal to the period during which they were affected, up to a maximum period of five calendar weeks where five calendar weeks is practical within relevant programme constraints, such as feedback and progression requirements.
Extensions cannot be granted beyond the practical limits of consideration of the assessed work at the relevant Examination Committee.

7 Allowances for Students with Mitigating Circumstances considered at an Examination Committee

7.1 Where it is determined by an MCP that a student has been affected by mitigating circumstances, the Examination Committee (or, in certain circumstances, the Chair acting on behalf of the Examination Committee) must offer the student a re-sit opportunity in the affected module(s) or, in relevant circumstances, an opportunity to re-take the module (see 7.7). A re-sit or re-take must be offered irrespective of the original mark obtained, i.e. even when a student has already obtained a pass mark for the affected module. No other allowance is permissible (except in limited circumstances as described in 7.8).

7.2 A re-sit may mean either re-examination or the re-submission of coursework or a combination of both. The affected examination or submission of coursework will be disregarded (except as described in 7.6).

7.3 The rationale for allowing only a re-assessment opportunity in response to mitigating circumstances reflects the purpose of assessment, as defined in the University’s Academic Regulations (see C1.1), which is to enable students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the objectives of the programme of study and achieved the standard required for the award they seek. By presenting students with an opportunity for re-assessment, this ensures that a student’s award is always based on actual work submitted without hindrance.

7.4 A student should not be put in a position of unfair advantage over other candidates; the aim in considering mitigating circumstance is to enable every student to be assessed on equal terms. Normally, a re-assessment arising from the consideration of mitigating circumstances should be the same form of assessment taken at the next available opportunity or after a period of time that will compensate for the disadvantage suffered by the student but not unfairly advantage them. If it is not possible or it is not appropriate to offer the same form of assessment the Examination Committee may exercise discretion in deciding on the particular form any reassessment should take, options include viva voce examination and additional assessment tasks designed to show whether the student has satisfied the learning outcomes.

7.5 Students may decline a re-assessment opportunity but their current mark will stand and no other allowance will be made.

7.6 If a student obtains a lower mark in their re-sit or in a module which is re-taken than in the affected attempt at the assessment, then the mark awarded in the affected assessment will stand (i.e. the student will be awarded the higher of the two marks).

7.7 If, through mitigating circumstances, a student is or will be unable to take a re-sit or their performance in a re-sit is affected, whatever the reason for the re-sit, then the consideration of their mitigating circumstances will be identical to students affected in a first-sit assessment. Where it is determined that a student has been affected by mitigating circumstances in their re-sit (or will be unable to take a re-sit), then the Examination Committee will agree a DR (disregard) grade for the affected module and the student’s continuing programme will be determined at the discretion of the Examination Committee. The DR grade will not be considered as part of the student’s programme for meeting the requirements of the award. Where a student re-takes a module which has been disregarded they will be required to re-take all elements of the assessment for that module irrespective of which elements of assessment were originally affected by mitigating circumstances.

7.8 Where a student re-takes a dissertation, project or independent study module through accepted mitigating circumstances then they are permitted to carry forward their existing topic and title. In this situation students may still opt to select a new title should they wish to do so or should that for some reason be necessary, e.g. because a specific supervisor is no longer available to supervise a specific topic.

7.9 Where an Examination Committee is considering a student who would otherwise be able to graduate were it not for the impact of agreed mitigating circumstances then an Examination Committee may award a limited number of MS grades. An MS grade is an ungraded ‘medical pass’, it carries no mark
and is not considered in the determination of degree classifications. In order to award an MS grade, an Examination Committee must be satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the student has achieved a pass mark in the learning outcomes for the affected module(s). The maximum value of any modules awarded an MS grade must not exceed 30 credits for awards with a total credit value in excess of 180 credits or 20 credits for awards with a total credit value up to and including 180 credits. For example, 20 credits (normally one single module) for a Masters degree and 30 credits (normally two single modules) for a Bachelors degree. An MS grade may only be awarded for a whole module.

7.10 MS grades cannot be used at any stage of a student’s programme other than at the point at which they would otherwise be able to graduate. Prior to this point, a student should be given the opportunity for re-assessment or (as described in 7.7) to have the affected module disregarded.

8 Communication of Outcomes

8.1 The outcome of any claim for mitigating circumstances will be communicated to the student, as outlined above (5.3).

8.2 This communication of the outcome of the claim for mitigating circumstances (i.e. whether or not the claim was supported) will include:

- The factors that were taken into account when the circumstances were considered; and
- The decision; and
- The reason(s) for the decisions.

8.3 All decisions will be recorded as appropriate.

9 Review Process

9.1 Students may seek a review of a decision concerning their mitigating circumstance but may not appeal that decision, i.e. the reviewing body shall not normally substitute their own judgement but would only overturn the previous decision either if it was improperly made (e.g. it did not take account of all the matters that it should or took account of things that it should not have done) or if it was one that no fair or reasonable person/body could have come to. This review request should be submitted in writing to the Academic Management Office (AMO), (an e-mail will suffice). AMO will forward all requests to the relevant review body.

9.2 If a student wishes to review an overarching decision on the grounds of mitigating circumstances, for example, a decision to exclude a student on grounds of academic failure, or a restriction to an Ordinary degree, this should be done by seeking a review of the decision relevant to the individual underlying modules.

9.3 The review body for decisions made by Module Leaders should be three members of the MCP, as far as possible none of whom shall have decided a mitigating circumstances request from the student in the previous 12 months and normally including the Chair of the Panel, using the normal administrative processes of the Panel and with the student allowed 5 working days to request a review from the date that the decision of the Module Leader was sent to the student.

9.4 The review body for decisions of an MCP (including MCP Sub-groups) should be a University Panel consisting of three members of MCPs from other Faculties, administered by the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office (ACCO) and with the student allowed 10 working days to request a review from the date that the decision of the MCP was sent to the student.

9.5 If a review request is submitted past these deadlines, it shall be deemed out of time and be dismissed. The responsibility for determining whether a request is in time rests with the MCP Secretary for decisions made by Module Leaders, and with the ACCO for decisions of an MCP (including MCP Sub-groups).

9.6 If a review request is dismissed as out of time the student may appeal that decision by writing to the Academic Registrar within 10 working days of the decision to dismiss the request being sent to the student. The student shall set out the reasons why they were unable to submit their review request in
time, with evidence as appropriate. The Academic Registrar shall then make a final decision whether the review request should be considered or whether it should be dismissed. If the Academic Registrar dismisses the request finally then the student shall be issued with a Completion of Procedures letters as required by the OIA.

9.7 All the reviews will be carried out on the basis of documentation only.

Matthew Andrews, Academic Registrar
Last updated: June 2012

Authorised break from studies
A3.5.3 If the extent of disruption caused by admissible mitigating circumstances means that it is not practical for a student to continue on the programme in the current academic year, they may be advised to take a break from study. The student may be advised to suspend their studies until such time as the circumstances affecting performance have passed, provided that the maximum period of registration for the programme is not exceeded. It is assumed that the student will return to the same programme and stage of study: if a student wishes to return to a different programme, a programme transfer must be requested. See also: Regulations on aegrotat awards in section A1.1.

A3.6 Marking and moderation
A3.6.1 Introduction
i. Higher education institutions are expected to have in place transparent and fair systems for marking and moderation (UK Quality Code, chapter B6). The University needs to be assured that robust, effective and consistent internal moderation processes are being applied in all Departments across all Faculties. The details of these processes are likely to vary according to local circumstances and professional body requirements, but all Faculties should work to the definitions and minimum requirements set out below in developing their own internal moderation processes.

A3.6.2 Definitions
i. **Internal moderation** of assessed work is the process of ensuring that assessment criteria are applied consistently by examiners, that students are being treated fairly through the assessment process, and that there is a shared understanding of the academic standards students are expected to achieve. Moderation is the process of ensuring that the marks awarded for an assessment task across a module are within reasonable limits, in the context of the criteria against which students' work is being assessed.

ii. Moderation may be limited to *sampling* and second marking a representative number of pieces of assessed work across the marking range from a cohort of students; or it may involve second marking the work of the whole cohort (*double marking*).

iii. **Second marking** is the process in which a second allocation of marks is given to a piece of work by a second internal examiner. This process may either be carried out blind (where the second examiner does not have access to the marks and comments of the first marker) or sighted (where the second examiner can view the marks and comments of the first marker, and adds their own). Dissertations should always be blind second marked.

A3.6.3 Principles
i. All assessed work submitted for the award of University credit must be subject to a process of internal moderation, consistent with the Faculty moderation policy. This applies to all modes of assessment in all delivery locations. Where assessment is not in written form, every effort should be made to apply an appropriate form of moderation. Practice-based assessments must also be subject to an appropriate process of internal moderation.

ii. The marking and moderation procedures to be followed for a programme and individual modules should be agreed by the relevant Subject Committee, with reference to the Faculty policy for internal moderation, and reported to the Faculty Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee for endorsement.
iii. The process by which marks for assessed work will be allocated, including details of the internal moderation process to which it will be subject, should be clearly communicated to students via programme and module handbooks, along with the criteria for assessment.

iv. Evidence that an internal moderation process has taken place must be available for scrutiny by external examiners and other interested parties.

Collaborative Provision

v. The requirement for establishing robust internal moderation procedures applies equally to collaborative programmes leading to Oxford Brookes awards. Arrangements for internal moderation, which must involve at least one member of University staff (usually the Liaison Manager), should be agreed with the partner organisation and clearly set out in the Operations Manual.

A3.6.4 Timing

i. Moderation of coursework marks should be completed within an appropriate timescale in order to allow for the timely return of agreed marks and feedback to students, consistent with the terms of the Assessment Compact.

ii. The internal moderation process must be completed prior to the upload of marks onto the system for Examination Committees. Unmoderated marks should not be entered onto eCSIS except in exceptional circumstances, and where permission has been granted by the Chair of the Faculty AESC.

iii. Marks that have not been confirmed by an Examination Committee should not be issued to students. However, in exceptional circumstances – for example, in which a delay in returning work will compromise the formative value of the feedback - and with the permission of the Programme Lead, assessed work that has been through the internal moderation process may be returned to students prior to the Examination Committee, on condition that the feedback sheet clearly informs them that the mark given remains subject to confirmation.

A3.6.5 Procedure

First marking

i. All completed assessments should be first marked independently by appropriately experienced members of the module delivery team. Evidence of marking and an indication of how the marks have been allocated should be shown on all assessments.

ii. For non-written forms of assessment, e.g. oral examinations, presentations, or recitals, at least two internal examiners should normally be involved in first marking the assessment and agreeing the final mark for each piece of work. The external examiner should have access to the agreed comments of the assessors, which should be provided as feedback to the student.

Second marking

iii. If the internal moderation process for the module is based on double marking, all assessments should then be second marked.

iv. For modules employing a sampling approach to moderation, the internal moderator for the module (a member of academic staff other than the first marker/s) should then second mark a sample of completed assessments. Samples should:
- be representative of every delivery location, and every mode of study;
- be drawn from, and reflect, the full range of marks, including borderline cases and fail grades;
- be of an appropriate size with respect to the size of the cohort (10%, minimum of 5);
- include all components of the assessment for the module.

v. If there is clear evidence from the sample selected that there are serious discrepancies in the marks being awarded, the Subject Coordinator or Programme Lead should arrange for all the assignments affected (either within a specified grade band, or the whole cohort) to be re-marked.
vi. Internal moderation policies must be clear about the procedure to be followed in order to resolve any disagreement between first and second markers and assign a final mark for a piece of work.

vii. Students should be provided with a single mark on their assessed work, as agreed by the internal examiners, and the feedback given on their performance in the assignment must be consistent with the final assigned mark.

Reporting
viii. The Faculty moderation policy should set out the requirements for reporting on the conduct and outcomes of the internal moderation process, including those applying to collaborative provision (which should be set out in individual Operations Manuals).

A3.6.6 External moderation
i. Where a sampling approach to internal moderation is adopted, the sample of work that is moderated may be the same sample sent to the external examiner. If the sample that is sent to the external examiner does not include any of the work that has been sampled through the internal moderation process (for example, where a random sample is selected from across the grade bands), they should be provided with additional information about the internal moderation process that has been followed.

ii. The role of the external examiner is described in section A3.5 of the Regulations.

Approved by:
Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee, 27th June 2012
Academic Board 18th July 2012

A3.7 External Examining
A3.7.1 Introduction
i. Universities and other institutions with degree awarding powers are responsible for the quality of their programmes of study and for the standards of the awards to which they lead. The external examining system at Oxford Brookes University is a key element of the University’s arrangements for setting, maintaining and assuring academic and professional standards, which include the programme approval, annual review and periodic review processes, and the University’s assessment policies and regulations. The University is accountable for the standards of its awards to the funding council, through QAA institutional review, and to a range of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. The University’s approach to external examining is informed by the expectation, articulated in Chapter B7 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (QAA, 2011), that scrupulous use should be made of external examiners in assuring the academic standards of the University’s awards.

ii. This policy provides guidance on:
   • the nomination and appointment of external examiners;
   • the role of the external examiner;
   • the production of the external examiner’s annual report;
   • the consideration of external examiners’ reports and responses to recommendations made by external examiners;
   • the relationship between external examining arrangements and other quality management processes at Oxford Brookes University.

A3.7.2 Principles
i. External examiners provide evidence about how the University sets and assures the academic and professional standards of its awards, through their direct observation of student performance (assessed work) and assessment practices. On the basis of this, they may also make inferences about the quality of teaching and learning resources but they rarely directly observe these.

ii. A confidence judgement in QAA institutional audit is crucially dependent on an institution’s “strong and scrupulous use of independent external examiners in summative assessment practices”. According to the QAA Code of Practice (section 4), the main purposes of external examining are:
   • to verify that academic standards are appropriate for award/s or parts of awards which the examiner has been appointed to examine;
• to help institutions to assure and maintain academic standards across their higher education awards;
• to help institutions ensure that their assessment processes are sound, fairly conducted and in line with the institution’s policies and regulations.

iii. The quality of the evidence produced by external examiners is dependent on their ‘externality’, i.e. their independence and their expertise. External examiners should be ‘independent witnesses’, who are not compromised by prior association with the programme team, or by any reciprocal arrangement that exists between the Oxford Brookes subject team and that of the external examiner. They should also be ‘expert witnesses’, whose authority is derived from their knowledge of the discipline they are examining and their experience of assessment. The appointment criteria for external examiners at Oxford Brookes are therefore designed to ensure that nominees are able to exercise impartial, independent and expert judgement, and they are consistent with the criteria recommended in the 2011 UUK/GuildHE review of external examining arrangements.

iv. The UK Quality Code (chapter B7) expects higher education institutions to ask their external examiners to comment on:
   a) whether the University is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its awards, in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable subject benchmark statements;
   b) whether the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended learning outcomes of the programme/s and is conducted in accordance with the University’s policies and regulations;
   c) the comparability of the academic standards and achievement of students with those in other higher education institutions with which they are familiar;
   d) good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment which they have observed;
   e) opportunities to enhance the quality of learning opportunities offered to students.

v. The template for external examiners’ reports at Oxford Brookes has therefore been designed to ensure that these areas are addressed. External examiners’ reports are an important source of direct evidence on the academic standards of awards and of indirect evidence on the quality of the University’s programmes of study leading to its awards. These reports inform the annual reports at programme and Faculty level, and provide evidence, together with responses from programme teams, which is used in the annual programme review process and considered by periodic review and revalidation panels.

vi. In line with the requirements of HEFCE 06/45, and with indicator 14 of the UK Quality Code (section B7), external examiners’ reports are made available to all staff and students through the Personal Information Portal. This policy, and other information about the University’s external examining system, is freely available on the University’s website, and a brief outline of the role of the external examiner is required in all programme handbooks. The name and institution of the external examiner on their programme is also made available to students via PIP.

vii. An annual overview of the institutional issues raised in external examiners’ reports forms part of the Annual Quality Review prepared by the Head of the Academic Policy & Quality Office for consideration by the University’s Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee.

A3.7.3 Nomination and Appointment of External Examiners

i. The responsibility for nominating potential external examiners lies with the programme leader. The nomination form is available from the APQO, and link Quality Assurance Officers can provide advice on the suitability of potential nominees prior to completion of the form. The Faculty AESC is responsible for considering all nominations and ensuring that they meet the University’s criteria (set out in 3.2 below). The Faculty should also verify a nominee’s right to work in the UK, prior to submission of documentation to the APQO (through the Faculty’s liaison QAO), for approval by the Chair of AESC.

ii. The University’s criteria for appointment are designed to ensure that external examiners are able to exercise an impartial, independent and expert judgement on the academic standard of the University’s
awards; and are based on the person specification set out in the UK Quality Code (section B7). Faculties must therefore take into account the following points in their consideration of external examiner nominations (professional body requirements must also be taken into account, where applicable):

- **Seniority**
  External examiners must demonstrate appropriate levels of experience within the discipline, including academic or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification they are appointed to examine. They should have sufficient standing and breadth of experience in the discipline (as a practitioner, where appropriate) to be able to command the respect of colleagues within the sector.

Nominees from outside the HE sector should be appointed as part of a team of external examiners, since they are expected to be able to comment on standards in the context of the Academic Infrastructure, as well as in the context of industry/professional requirements.

- **Experience**
  External examiners must have a good understanding of the standard to be expected of students studying on the programme they are appointed to examine. Nominees should therefore have experience of curriculum design, teaching and internal examining in the discipline area and at the level for which they are being appointed. Examiners should also have an awareness of current developments in teaching and learning in the discipline, therefore retirees may only be considered for appointment if they are able to provide evidence of their continuing involvement in the academic/professional area concerned.

Those being nominated to cover collaborative programmes and professional doctorates should always be experienced external examiners. Nominees for other programme with no previous external examining experience must be appointed as part of a team. Their lack of experience should be balanced against the composition of the rest of the external examining team, and the proposing Department must provide additional information to support such nominations, including an outline of the arrangements that will be put in place to ensure they are mentored by an appropriately experienced external examiner within the established team.

- **Workload**
  External examiners should not be appointed if they already hold two or more current examinerships, and such nominations should not be approved by the Faculty AESC. If a team of external examiners is large, a chief external examiner may be appointed: the chief external examiner must have sufficient expertise to be able to make a judgement of the standards achieved across the programme as a whole, and will be paid an additional fee for the production of an overview report.

- **Previous involvement with the programme**
  Nominees should not have been involved in the delivery of the programme at Oxford Brookes - as lecturer, consultant, or placement provider - nor should they have been an external adviser through the programme approval process (i.e. a member of the PDT). The Faculty AESC should not approve such nominations.

To avoid potential conflicts of interest, nominees should not be appointed as external examiners if they are:
- closely associated with the sponsorship of students on the programme;
- in a position to significantly influence the future of students on the programme;
- involved in collaborative research activities with a member of staff in the Department.
- are a near relation of a member of staff or student associated with the programme

External members of programme approval panels are required to meet criteria to ensure their objectivity and independence from the design of the programme, and their appointment as external examiners at a later stage is therefore not considered to present a conflict of interest.

- **Reciprocity**
  No member of the proposing academic department should be an external examiner in the same institution as the nominee. The Faculty AESC should not approve such nominations.
• **Colleagues**
The external examining team must not contain two external examiners who are or who were recently colleagues, nor should colleagues from the same department in the same institution be appointed to take over from each other.

• **Association with the University**
A nominee who has been a student or member of staff at Oxford Brookes University within the previous five years is not eligible for appointment as an external examiner, and such nominations should not be approved by the Faculty AESC. They may, however, be considered for appointment after a period of at least five years has elapsed.

Members of the Board of Governors are not eligible for appointment as external examiners.

• **Right to work in the UK**
To meet UK Border Agency requirements on the prevention of illegal working, nomination forms must be accompanied by a photocopy of the nominee’s passport page showing their photograph and passport number. Any subsequent appointment will be conditional upon the Faculty or APQO having sight of the original document.

• **Collaborative provision**
External examiners have a key role to play in assuring the University of the academic standards of awards delivered through collaborative arrangements, either in the UK or overseas. The University retains responsibility for the academic standards of any awards made in its name and is therefore responsible for the appointment of external examiners for collaborative provision, who must meet the criteria above. Additional notes and requirements relating to examiners appointed to collaborative programmes are set out below:

The university retains responsibility for the appointment of external examiners for collaborative provision, although the partner may nominate appropriate candidates. The examiner must be independent of both the partner and the University, and is primarily acting on behalf of the University in enabling it to maintain oversight of the standards of its awards. For programmes of study leading to joint awards, the arrangements for external examining should be agreed and specified at the point of approval.

In order to enable the University to make a comparison of the standards of its awards delivered at home and through collaborative arrangements, the same external examiner should be appointed to oversee both the on-campus and the collaborative programmes. If, for logistical reasons, an examiner only examines on a collaborative programme, efforts should be made to provide a sample of work by home students to enable them to make a comparison of standards of achievement. Where there is no matching home programme, an external examiner for a programme within a cognate discipline area should be asked to examine the collaborative programme, if possible.

For provision delivered and/or assessed in a language other than English, the external examiner must be able to work fluently in both English and the language of delivery/assessment.

Non-UK based external examiners must have experience of delivering and assessing in a UK HEI and be familiar with the standards required of a UK award in the discipline concerned, but a non-UK subject specialist may be paired with an examiner from a UK HEI where a nominee lacks such experience.

iii. External examiner nominees who meet the stated criteria are appointed for a period of four years, after which they cannot be re-appointed until a period of at least five years has elapsed. Re-appointment of a previous external examiner should only be considered in exceptional circumstances - where it can be shown that it is not possible to secure the services of any other suitable examiner - and an external examiner should never be re-appointed more than once. Similarly, an extension to an examiner’s period of office will only be granted in exceptional circumstances: for example, if the programme is due to terminate within the next year, or if an extension is required to enable them to assess four successive cohorts of students. Such extensions will never be granted for longer than one year. Applications for extension either to the period of office or to an external examiner's duties must be completed on the relevant forms available from the APQO. Advice should be sought from the APQO (via the Faculty link QAO) on the eligibility of an examiner for an extension.
iv. The Faculty AESC is responsible for monitoring external examining arrangements within the Faculty and for ensuring that appropriate external examiners are appointed for all provision in good time to enable them to carry out their duties effectively. External examiners must be nominated for all new programmes as soon as possible after approval.

v. Once the Chair of AESC has approved a nomination, the APQO sends out a letter of appointment (copied to the programme leader) with an acceptance form which must be signed and returned by the external examiner. They will then be provided with a staff number so they can access PIP. Once approved, the Faculty will arrange to provide the external examiner with relevant programme and module information, marking schemes, examination committee dates and a copy of the previous external examiner’s report.

vi. From 2011/12, the APQO will coordinate an annual external examiners' briefing/induction day to ensure examiners are fully prepared to take on their duties within the context of Oxford Brookes University.

vii. External examiners may resign from their post for a number of reasons. The University reserves the right to terminate an examiner’s contract where the examiner is unable or unwilling to fulfil their duties (set out in section 4 below) to a satisfactory level, including the non-submission of an annual report within the specified timescale or failure to attend examination committees without good reason.

A3.7.4 Role of the External Examiner

i. The external examiner’s principal role is to provide a judgement on the rigour of the University’s processes for maintaining academic standards, and on the comparability of the standards achieved by students on Oxford Brookes awards with those on similar programmes in other UK higher education institutions. The external examiner may also provide advice on other aspects of the provision, such as course content or teaching and learning strategies.

ii. The primary formal roles of external examiners are to:

- Assure academic rigour and equity of treatment in assessment which contributes to final awards;
- Monitor and provide assurance that the agreed assessment process has taken place, in accordance with the approved regulations governing the programme, and see evidence that the requisite internal moderation procedures have been complied with;
- Monitor and provide assurance that students have fulfilled the stated programme learning outcomes in their submission for conferment of the award;
- Approve proposed examination papers and draft coursework assessment briefs which count towards final awards, to ensure that students will be assessed fairly in relation to approved syllabuses and regulations, and in such a way that external examiners will be able to judge whether they have fulfilled the objectives of the programme and reached the required standard;
- See and agree samples of work from all students proposed for both the highest category of the award and for failure, and samples of the work of other students in order to satisfy themselves that each student is fairly classified;
- Provide advisory comments on the standard of marking for the internal examiners to act upon during the following year.

Approval of draft examination papers and other assessment material

iii. The form of assessment for each module or programme component is specified in the definitive programme documentation as agreed through the programme approval process and modified from time to time with the approval of AESC. Drafts of final examination papers and other assessment material that counts towards the final award must be sent to external examiners for their approval. External examiners on collaborative programmes must approve the assignment briefs and examination papers in the same way as for home provision, and an explanation for any variation in assessment for the home and collaborative programmes should be provided by the Liaison Manager.

External moderation of standards of assessment

iv. External examiners maintain an oversight of the processes for the assessment of all work that counts towards the final award by sampling assessed work. Normally, unless the number of assessment items is sufficiently small for all to be scrutinised, subject or programme teams will reach an agreement with external examiners on the size and scope of the sample of assessed work to be
submitted for inspection. This should include representative samples of each grade or class of degree, borderline cases, cases of failure, malpractice or those affected by illness etc. External examiners should be sent copies of the relevant grading schemes and assessment criteria together with a record of marks for each assessment item. It is expected that any significant differences between first and second markers should have been resolved through the internal moderation process before submission to the external examiner. However, in exceptional circumstances external examiners may also be asked to:

- contribute to decisions on borderline cases;
- comment on the marking standards of internal examiners and, if a problem is identified, recommend changes to marks, taking due account of the effect of any changes on the rest of the cohort.

Attendance at examination committees

v. At least one external examiner for the provision under consideration must be present at every examination committee, either in person or via telephone/video-conference. An examination committee which does not include an approved external examiner is not authorised to recommend the conferment of awards. Failure to attend such meetings without good reason will be seen as a breach of contract for which the University has the right to terminate the examiner’s appointment. In order to facilitate attendance, the Faculty Academic Administration Office should provide the external examiners with the dates of the relevant examination committee meetings at the start of each academic year. Within the Undergraduate Modular Programme, a Chief Examiner must always be present at the MEC which agrees awards. The responsibility for confirming marks and awards is the collective responsibility of the examination committee, but the external examiner must endorse the recommendations of the committee. In the event of a dispute between internal and external examiners which cannot be resolved, the matter should be referred to the Chair of Academic Board or their nominee.

Involvement in oral and viva voce examinations.

vi. Where an oral examination is compulsory for all students, this will be stated in the approved assessment strategy for a programme or module. If a viva voce examination is required, the external examiner should be present.

Meeting students

vii. This is not a requirement of the external examiner’s role, but they may, by arrangement with the Faculty, meet students in order to assist them to judge the overall quality and standards of the programme/s. These meetings should be conducted in accordance with the definition of the external examiner’s role.

viii. The secondary roles of external examiners are to:

- Be consulted about and agree to any proposed changes in the approved progression and assessment requirements which will directly affect students currently on the programme;
- Comment and give advice on the content and structure of the curriculum, assessment practices, and on teaching and learning strategies on the programme;

Involvement in modification of provision

ix. External examiners will also be consulted on changes to programmes where these lead to alterations to learning outcomes and assessment. The external examiner may be requested to act on occasion as a ‘critical friend’ giving advice on curriculum development to ensure the maintenance of quality and standards in new and revised programmes. The external examiner must be informed of major changes to programme(s) and may be consulted in advance about proposed changes, particularly where they affect programme titles, learning outcomes, assessment criteria or the assessment process.

x. External examiners’ powers may extend to:

- obtaining reasonable access to any assessed parts of the programme/s offered by the University - it will be normal practice for the external examiner to review scripts and other assessed work for the whole academic year at the time of the final exam committee meeting at the end of the academic year. However, the external examiner may agree with the Head of Department to
receive assessed work at other appropriate times throughout the year, as appropriate to the nature of the provision.
- commenting on work other than that submitted towards final awards.
- requesting additional sampling of students’ work where an equity issue is highlighted by the normal external examining procedures;
- assisting in the selection of candidates for individual interview.

**UMP Chief External Examiner**
xi. The appointment of Chief External Examiner to the Undergraduate Modular Programme carries the following particular duties and responsibilities:
- to ensure fair and consistent application of assessment processes across all programmes within the UMP;
- to confirm awards at the Modular Examination Committee;
- to act as a ‘critical friend’ in developing guidelines and regulations for the Undergraduate Modular Programme.

**A3.7.5 External Examiners’ Reports**

i. As the annual reports are key documents in assuring the academic standards of the University’s awards, it is essential that external examiners' reports are comprehensive and that they cite the evidence upon which their judgements and comments are based. Reports for collaborative programmes are, where appropriate, expected to distinguish between issues that relate to the home programme and those that relate to the provision delivered by different partners. If, in the judgement of the University, a report is inadequate the external examiner may be asked by the APQO to resubmit it. Failure to submit reports in a timely fashion, or to provide them to an adequate standard in the required format, will be regarded as grounds upon which to terminate an external examiner’s contract.

ii. An external examiner has the right to report directly to the Vice Chancellor on matters which they consider to pose a serious risk to the academic standards of an Oxford Brookes award. They are provided with guidance on how to do this in the External Examiner’s Handbook, along with information about how to make use of the QAA’s causes for concern procedure in the event that an issue cannot be satisfactorily addressed through internal procedures.

**Processing of external examiners’ reports**

iii. Annual reports should be submitted by email on an electronic template to the External Examiners Administrator (via the registry-externals@brookes.ac.uk email address). Receipt will be acknowledged by the Academic Policy and Quality Office, who will then make arrangements for payment of the examiner’s fee. The APQO will also identify late reports and send out reminders to external examiners.

iv. Once received, the report is sent to the Subject Coordinator or Programme Lead, and/or the Liaison Manager (for collaborative provision) and Faculty staff responsible for academic quality and standards: namely, the Associate Dean (Student Experience), the Principal Lecturer for QA, and the Quality Administrator. The report will then be reviewed by the Faculty link Quality Assurance Officer, in order to ensure that no student or staff names are mentioned, and then published on PIP to enable access by other members of the programme team and students on the programme. For collaborative provision, the Liaison Manager is responsible for ensuring that reports are copied to the programme manager at the partner organisation.

v. Responses are prepared by the Subject Coordinator or Programme Lead, liaising as necessary with the Associate Dean (Student Experience) and Directorates to incorporate responses to any institutional issues that have been raised. Responses should be approved by the Faculty AESC Chair and sent out to the external examiner within six weeks of the report, copied to the APQO through the liaison QAO.

vi. The report will also form part of the evidence considered during the annual review process at both programme and Faculty level. Any issues identified for action by the external examiner should be included in the annual review action plan at the appropriate level. An annual summary of institutional issues, identified good practice and areas of concern (that are serious, or common across a number of reports) is prepared by APQO for AESC. External examiners’ reports, together with responses
from programme teams, also provide direct evidence on the quality and standards of provision which is considered by periodic review panels and revalidation panels.

**Freedom of Information**

vii. The University does not place the full reports received from external examiners in the public domain, but under the Freedom of Information Act it may be asked to release them on request. The information released in response to requests for the personal details of external examiners will be limited to name, job title and the name and address of the examiner’s employer as this concerns an examiner’s professional and working life and such information is considered to be already in the public domain. If an examiner is retired, they will be described as ‘independent’.

**A3.7.6 Players**

i. **Academic staff**

It is the responsibility of academic teams to nominate external examiners for their provision, ensuring nominees meet the University’s criteria for appointment and providing additional information to support nominations where necessary.

Academic teams are also responsible for providing external examiners with sufficient evidence to enable them to make their judgements. They should send, on an annual basis, information about the programme, including the aims, intended learning outcomes, curriculum content, teaching, learning and assessment strategies, and assessment modes and weighting (these details will be held in programme and module handbooks). They should also provide information about the regulations that apply to the programme and the assessment processes, including dates of examination committees.

Academic teams are also responsible for agreeing the sample size for moderation by the external examiner, and for sending scripts, marksheets, and documentation relating to the marking and internal moderation process in good time to enable the external examiner to carry out their duties effectively.

Academic teams are also responsible for preparing timely responses to comments made by external examiners in their annual reports, and for putting in place action to address any shortcomings or to build on good practice identified.

ii. **Academic Policy & Quality Office**

The APQO is responsible for maintaining an overview of the University’s external examining arrangements. The Office maintains a database of all external examiners across the University and provides Faculties with regular updates on the status of external examiners for their provision. Information relating to external examiner arrangements is maintained on the APQO website.

The APQO is responsible for receiving external examiner nominations following consideration by the relevant Faculty AESC, and submitting them to the Chair of AESC for approval. The APQO issues appointment letters on completion of the appropriate approval process.

The APQO receives external examiners’ reports and processes the payment of fees and expenses. The APQO is also responsible for analysing reports for the production of an annual report to AESC on institutional issues and good practice identified by external examiners across the University.

Link to APQO external examiners’ pages:
http://www.brookes.ac.uk/asa/apqu/externalexaminers/home.html

iii. **Faculty Academic Enhancement & Standards Committees**

The Faculty AESCs are responsible for considering nominations for external examiners, ensuring that the University’s criteria for appointment are upheld and that nominations are rigorously and consistently assessed. The committees should also monitor nominations to ensure that University guidelines on equality and diversity are adhered to. The Faculty AESCs make recommendations for approval to the University AESC, via the APQO.

The Faculty AESCs are also responsible for ensuring that timely responses are made to external examiners’ comments in their reports, and for monitoring action taken by programme teams to address any issues identified.
iv. **Faculty Academic Administration Offices**

Faculty Academic Administration teams are responsible, together with the Associate Deans (Student Experience), Principal Lecturers (Quality Assurance) and the APQO, for managing the faculty’s external examining arrangements; for example, coordinating nominations and responses to reports, and ensuring external examiners are provided with the information they require.

v. **University Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee**

The Chair of AESC is responsible for conferring final approval on external examiner nominations submitted by Faculty AESCs, on the advice of the APQO. The Chair’s decisions are reported to the Committee for ratification.

The University AESC is responsible for monitoring institutional themes arising from external examiners’ reports, and for ensuring that appropriate action is taken at institutional level to address any issues and/or to disseminate good practice.

vi. **Examination Committees**

The academic regulations relating to the operation of examination committees can be found at (A3.8)

Date of approval: Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee 15th September 2010

Last updated: June 2012

**A3.8 Examination Committees**

1. These regulations govern requests for the review of and appeals against decisions of an Examination Committee.

2. Throughout this procedure the Academic Registrar may nominate a senior member of their staff to act on their behalf in relation to any request for a review or appeal. Similarly, the Chair of an Examination Committee may nominate the Vice-Chair or another member of the Examination Committee to act on their behalf.

3. Each year the Academic Registrar shall analyse the key features and outcomes of the review requests and appeals that have been submitted during the previous year. They shall present a report based on this information to the Academic Board.

**Requests for reviews**

4. All requests for a review of a decision of an Examination Committee shall be made in writing to the Academic Registrar and shall include:

   a) which of the grounds set out in paragraph 10 below the request is based on;
   b) a statement of the facts that constitute the basis for the review;
   c) copies of the evidence supporting the case being made.

   It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they raise all relevant issues and provide all relevant information and documentation at this point.

5. If the Academic Registrar considers that the grounds are unclear and/or the facts are not adequately stated and/or the evidence is insufficient, they may require the student to submit a further statement and/or evidence and may prescribe a time limit within which any such material shall be submitted. A decision by the Academic Registrar not to seek further information or documentation will not be grounds for the student to submit further material at a later point.

6. All review requests must be received in full within one month of the publication of the decision. A student who is unable to comply with that timescale shall, within that period, submit a written declaration of intent to do so with the Academic Registrar, who may impose a time limit for the submission of the full request. Any request submitted beyond these limits must include reasons and evidence showing why, through no fault on the part of the student, the request could not have been made within the time limit. If, in the opinion of the Academic Registrar, these reasons are not valid, they shall reject the request summarily and shall inform the student in writing of their reasons for so doing.
7. If, in the opinion of the Academic Registrar, a request does not fall within one of the permitted grounds, or is wholly without substance or merit, or is frivolous or vexatious, or is unsupported by evidence, they shall reject it summarily and shall inform the student in writing of their reasons for so doing. Otherwise the Academic Registrar shall forward the request to the Chair of the relevant Examination Committee who shall conduct the review in consultation with such members of the Examination Committee as they deem appropriate.

8. The Academic Registrar shall write to the student setting out the decision of the Chair of the Examination Committee and the reasons for it. The letter to the student shall also set out their options if they are dissatisfied with the decision and the relevant time limits.

9. Requests for review will normally be acknowledged within 10 working days and students will normally receive a substantive response from the Academic Registrar within 20 working days. Students will normally be informed of the decision of the Chair of the Examination Committee within 15 working days of their request being referred.

Grounds for review and issues excluded from the regulations

10. A student may only request that a decision is reviewed on the ground that:

   a) the assessment was not conducted in accordance with the regulations for the programme; and/or
   b) the judgement of an examiner or examiners was improperly affected by personal bias; and/or
   c) there was a material administrative error or some other material irregularity in the conduct of the assessment, such that the assessment decision would have been materially different had the error or irregularity not occurred.

11. A student may not seek a review under these regulations on the ground that mitigating circumstances adversely affected their performance in an assessment and/or that they believe an inappropriate allowance was made for such circumstances; these issues are the subject of the Mitigating Circumstances Regulations.

12. A student may not seek a review under these regulations on the ground that poor teaching, supervision, academic advice or guidance affected their performance; in such circumstances a student may submit a complaint under the Student Complaint Procedure.

13. Disagreement with the academic judgement of an examiner or of the Examination Committee in assessing the merits of an individual piece of work or in reaching any decision about the assessment, progression and/or exclusion of a student based on the marks, grades and other information relating to the student’s performance, cannot in itself constitute grounds for a request for review.

14. These regulations do not apply to students enrolled with another institution on a programme leading to an award of the University, unless the student is also enrolled with the University. Students on such programmes who wish to request a review or make an appeal should do so under the procedures of the institution concerned.

Advice and Guidance

15. Written guidance on the operation of this procedure, including where to submit review requests are available at:

   http://www.brookes.ac.uk/about/directorates/asa/registry/acco/index.html/

16. The Academic Registrar and staff in the Appeals, Complaints & Conduct Office can provide authoritative advice on the application and operation of these regulations.

17. The Students’ Union Advice Centre can provide advice independent of the University and assistance in compiling a case.
Appeals

18. If a review under these regulations does not lead to a changed decision or if the decision, though changed entirely or in part, is not satisfactory to the student or if, after the lapse of a reasonable time, there has been no outcome from the review, the student may appeal in writing to the Academic Registrar. Any such appeal must be received within ten working days of the despatch of the outcome of the review or, if unreasonable delay is alleged, within three months of the lodging of the original request for a review.

19. Any appeal shall include a statement of the facts that constitute the basis for the appeal and any relevant evidence. If the Academic Registrar considers that these grounds are not adequately stated and/or the evidence submitted is insufficient, they may require the student to submit a further statement and/or evidence and may prescribe a time limit within which any such material shall be submitted.

20. The Academic Registrar shall consider the response from the Chair of the Examination Committee to the review request and the statement on which the appeal is based. If, in their opinion, the appeal is wholly without substance or merit, or is frivolous or vexatious, or is unsupported by evidence, they shall reject it summarily and shall inform the student in writing of their reasons for so doing. Otherwise the Academic Registrar shall convene an Appeal Committee.

The Appeal Committee

21. The Appeal Committee shall consist of a Dean, Associate Dean, Deputy Dean, or Assistant Dean as Chair, two members of the academic staff and two students (drawn from a panel nominated by the President or principal officer of the Students’ Union). The Academic Registrar shall be the Secretary of the Committee.

22. No one who, in the judgement of the Academic Registrar, has too close a personal or professional association with the appellant or the subject of the appeal shall be eligible to serve as a member of the Committee. For example, members of the same Faculty as the appellant or of any other Faculty or Directorate concerned should not normally serve.

Conducting the Appeal

23. The Academic Registrar shall normally obtain and circulate written statements of case and evidence in advance of the hearing.

24. The conduct of the appeal is at the discretion of the Chair but the appellant and the Chair of the Examination Committee concerned shall each have the right to submit written representations, to attend the hearing, to hear all the evidence, to call witnesses and to examine any witnesses called. The appellant also has the right to be accompanied by a friend who shall not be a lawyer acting in a professional capacity. The friend may speak on behalf of or otherwise represent the interests of the appellant but may not give evidence except on matters of which they have direct knowledge.

25. Appeals considered by an Appeal Committee may only be heard by proxy representation in very exceptional circumstances and at the sole discretion of the Chair of the Appeal Committee.

Outcomes of an Appeal

26. The Appeal Committee may:

   a) require the Examination Committee to reconsider its decision and may make recommendations for the Examination Committee to consider when it does so;
   b) annul the previous decision of the Examination Committee if it is not possible to reconvene the Examination Committee;
   c) make recommendations to prevent a recurrence.

27. The Secretary shall write to the appellant, the Chair of the Examination Committee and any other relevant staff setting out the decisions of the Committee and the reasons for them. The letter to the appellant shall clearly state that they have now completed the University’s internal appeal procedure as described in paragraph 32.
28. When a decision has been annulled the Academic Board will take action, including if necessary the appointment of new examiners or the imposition of its own decision, to ensure that decisions are made by an approved Examination Committee in respect of the student concerned.

29. If one or more recommendations are made to an Examination Committee and they are not implemented, this shall be reported to the Academic Board, which will decide what action, if any, to take. If one or more recommendations are made to a Faculty or Directorate and they are not implemented, this shall be reported to the appropriate member of the Senior Management Team.

Other procedural matters

30. In the event of any uncertainty or dispute, the Academic Registrar shall interpret these regulations. Upon receipt of a written request, the Academic Registrar shall confirm their interpretation in writing. If the Academic Registrar believes it appropriate in relation to any specific review or appeal, they may set aside any provision of these regulations and/or require another provision not part of these regulations provided only that they inform all those involved in the review/appeal in writing of any such variations.

31. If a student is dissatisfied with a decision of the Academic Registrar made under paragraphs 6, 7 or 20, they may request that it be reviewed by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs. Such a request must be in writing to the Academic Registrar, must set out the full reasons why the student believes that the decision of the Academic Registrar is incorrect and must be received within 10 working days of the despatch of the decision. The Director of Academic and Student Affairs shall review the decision of the Academic Registrar and inform the student in writing of the outcome and the reasons for it. The decision of the Director of Academic and Student Affairs shall be final. If the Director of Academic and Student Affairs upholds the decision of the Academic Registrar, the letter to the student shall clearly state that the student has now completed the University’s internal review/appeal procedure as described in paragraph 32.

32. If a student has completed the University’s internal appeal procedure and they are still dissatisfied with the outcome, they may be able to make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provided that the complaint is eligible under the OIA’s Rules. A letter stating that an appellant has completed the University’s internal review/appeal procedure shall include information on the OIA and comply with the OIA’s guidance for a “Completion of Procedures” letter.

33. If a member of staff, being in possession of material that, by reason of its confidential nature, cannot be communicated to the student, wishes to request a review on behalf of the student, they may, with the written consent of the student, do so under these regulations with the substitution of “member of staff” for “student”, “candidate” or “appellant” as appropriate.

Approved by Academic Board: 14 July 2010
Updated by Academic Registrar: 16 February 2011

A3.9 Outcomes of assessment

A3.9.1 Assessment is a matter of judgement, not simply of computation. In assessing a student’s work, the examiner is required to judge the standard attained, in accordance with the approved assessment criteria. Marks, grades and percentages are not absolute values but symbols used by examiners to communicate their judgement of different aspects of a student’s work, in order to provide information on which the final decision on a student’s fulfilment of course objectives may be based. If the student’s work demonstrates that the learning outcomes have been achieved, a pass grade is assigned on the basis of the grade and level descriptors for the programme; and if the learning outcomes have not been met, an appropriate fail grade is given.

A3.9.2 It is particularly important for students to understand the nature of examiners’ discretion and judgement when details of individual marks are made available to them. However, it must be clear to students how their mark has been arrived at, and this should be indicated on the feedback sheet.

Passing modules

A3.9.3 The marks for each assessment task are recorded in the student record system with the appropriate weighting, and are used to calculate the overall grade for a module.
A3.9.4 If a student passes a module, by achieving an overall grade of at least the approved pass mark for the module, the credit is awarded by the Examination Committee. It is not possible to re-take a module that has been passed, unless there is an allowance made by a body associated with the programme, which should be explicitly stated in the Programme Specification and approved by the Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee.

A3.9.5 Pass marks for individual modules will be approved by a programme approval panel, and stated in the module handbook and in the module description on PIP. The standard pass marks are 40% for undergraduate modules and 50% for postgraduate modules; however, variations may be approved for modules which relate to professional competences as required by accrediting bodies.

A3.10 Failure and reassessment

A3.10.1 A module is failed if:
   i. the work submitted for assessment is not of a high enough standard to gain an overall pass mark for the module;
   ii. no work has been submitted by the module deadlines, and no application has been made for an extension on the basis of mitigating circumstances;
   iii. the student has committed academic offences and a penalty of failing the module has been imposed.

A3.10.2 The University believes that students should have opportunities to study at their own pace and to redeem an initial failure. However, the University also considers it necessary to limit these opportunities in order to protect the standard of its awards. Programmes of study should therefore be designed for students to complete their studies (including any resits) within a certain standard length of time. Where appropriate, further provision may then be made, in accordance with the regulations governing the programme, for individual students to complete their studies in a shorter time, or to suspend, transfer, or defer completion of their studies.

A3.10.3 Entitlements and regulations for re-sitting assessment tasks or re-taking modules, governing particular types of University awards, are set out in the specific regulations governing the award scheme (UMP, postgraduate taught programmes, postgraduate research programmes, foundation degrees, etc). If not specified in the award scheme regulations, or if a programme does not fall within the scope of one of the University’s specific award schemes, the programme regulations should specify:
   i. the number of re-sit opportunities to which students are entitled for failure on an individual assessment task, and the circumstances under which a re-sit will be permitted (e.g. attainment of a minimum grade at the first attempt);
   ii. the period of time within which work must be submitted for re-assessment (i.e. whether students must re-sit assessments at one level before progressing to the next level of the programme, or whether they are permitted to progress to the next stage of the programme carrying a failed module);
   iii. whether marks awarded for re-assessed work will be capped (e.g. at the minimum pass mark for students passing at re-sit);
   iv. whether students who fail the re-sit opportunity are permitted to re-take the failed module, and the maximum number of times students are permitted to attempt a module;
   v. the requirements to be satisfied when a student is to retake a failed module, including whether marks or grades for successfully completed assignments will be carried forward;
   vi. the maximum credit value for which failure may be condoned for the award (see also 3.11 below).

General requirements

A3.10.4 Programme assessment regulations must specify which or how many elements must be passed for the award and make provision for a student to make good an initial failure. Examination Committees have discretion to interpret these regulations flexibly in the case of individual candidates, subject to the requirements of the principle that an award should only be made when a candidate has fulfilled the objectives of the programme and achieved the required standard. The Examination Committee shall not unreasonably withhold permission for a student to be reassessed in accordance with course regulations.
A3.10.5 The reassessment of a candidate for an award shall normally take place within the maximum permitted length of the course. The Examination Committee shall specify, in accordance with the regulations applying to the programme, which elements of assessment must be retaken, the form of reassessment and when it is to take place. A student may be required to study certain course components again before reassessment.

A3.10.6 A candidate for reassessment may not demand reassessment in elements which are no longer current in the course. The Examination Committee may, at its discretion, make such special arrangements as it deems appropriate in cases where it is not practicable for students to be reassessed in the same elements and by the same methods as at the first attempt.

Reassessment for other awards

A3.10.7 Candidates who have failed in their first attempt to satisfy the Examination Committee in the assessment for any other award of the University may, where course regulations permit, be reassessed for the award at the discretion of the Board of Examiners on more than one occasion within the maximum planned length of the course. Where course regulations permit, the Examination Committee may alternatively determine that the candidate has achieved the level required for a lower award or permit reassessment for a lower award.

A3.11 Compensation for failure in assessment

A3.11.1 Course assessment regulations may provide for an Examination Committee, having due regard to the standard of the award and the course objectives exceptionally and at its discretion, to allow a student's overall performance to compensate for partial failure in the assessment for an award. Course regulations should not provide for the application of compensation to an element that forms a substantial proportion of the assessment for the award, nor to an element that is central to the fulfilment of course objectives.

A3.12 Results publication and notification

A3.12.1 Programme handbooks should describe the arrangements for marking and moderation of assessment tasks, and how marks will be confirmed. Results are published on PIP: they may be released prior to ratification by Examination Committees, and, where this is the case, it should be made clear to students that the marks are provisional. Students should make themselves aware of publication dates for results, as this may affect their rights in respect of making an appeal.

A3.13 Cheating

A3.13.1 All assessments are intended to determine the skills, abilities, understanding and knowledge of each of the individual students undertaking the assessment. Cheating is defined as conduct (whether successful or not) aimed at deceiving the University into acknowledging a false level of attainment by a student. Cheating including assisting someone else to cheat (including attempting to assist someone else to cheat) may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedure. The University takes this issue very seriously and students have been expelled or had their degrees withheld for cheating in assessments. It is important that students having difficulties with their work should seek help from their tutors rather than be tempted to use unfair means to gain marks. Students should not risk losing their degree and undermining all the work they have done towards it.

A3.13.2 Any form of cheating is strictly forbidden under this regulation but, in order to assist understanding, a number of specific forms of cheating are described. These include but are not limited to the following examples:

i. **Submitting other people's work as your own** – either with or without their knowledge. This includes copying in examinations; using notes or unauthorised materials in examinations; submitting work you have paid for as your own; impersonation – taking an assessment on behalf of or pretending to be another student, or allowing another person to take an assessment on your behalf or pretend to be you.

ii. **Plagiarism** – taking or using another person's thoughts, writings or inventions as your own. To avoid plagiarism you must make sure that quotations from whatever source are clearly identified and attributed at the point where they occur in the text of your work by using one of the standard
conventions for referencing. The Library has a leaflet about how to reference your work correctly and your tutor can also help you. It is not enough just to list sources in a bibliography at the end of your essay or dissertation if you do not acknowledge the actual quotations in the text. Neither is it acceptable to change some of the words or the order of sentences if, by failing to acknowledge the source properly, you give the impression that it is your own work.

iii. **Collusion** – except where written instructions specify that work for assessment may be produced jointly and submitted as the work of more than one student, you must not collude with others to produce a piece of work jointly, copy or share another student's work or lend your work to another student when it is likely that some or all of it will be copied.

iv. **Duplication** – submitting work for assessment that is the same as, or broadly similar to, work submitted earlier for academic credit, without acknowledgement of the previous submission.

v. **Falsification** – the invention of data, its alteration, its copying from any other source, or otherwise obtaining it by unfair means, or inventing quotations and/or references.

vi. **Custom Writing Services** – this includes the use of any service which produces custom materials. The University may consider any request placed with any form of custom writing service to be a form of cheating, whatever use is then made of the material produced, and therefore to be an offence under the Student Conduct Regulations. This extends to include any request for any piece of work (either formative or summative assessment or work which is not linked to any form of assessment or credit-bearing element of your programme) including, but not limited to, essays and dissertations (including outlines and guides), reports, exam notes, proposals, posters, presentations, the editing or improvement of existing work, statistical services and computing services including programme and code development.

vii. **Assisting Others to Cheat** – The University considers assisting others to cheat (including attempting to assist someone else to cheat) as a form of cheating for which the individual student providing assistance is culpable.

**Approved by:**
Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee, 27th June 2012
Academic Board 18th July 2012

**Revisions approved:**
Updates to sections 3.3.7 and 3.13 approved by Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee on 31st October 2012