



# Quality and Standards Manual

Handbook F: The Assessment of Students at Levels  
3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 and Taught Provision at Level 8

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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University of Chester has adopted a modular structure for the delivery of academic programmes, pathways and courses of study. The assessment of students registered for any module of study approved by University of Chester shall be conducted in accordance with the Principles and Regulations of University of Chester. In order to ensure that these Principles and Regulations are observed, the requirements set out below shall be adhered to in the assessment of all modules.

These requirements derive their force from the said Principles and Regulations of University of Chester and shall be read in association with those Principles and Regulations. There is an obligation on the part of all those staff of the University who may be charged with the conduct of assessment in its academic and administrative aspects to observe these requirements.

In order for these requirements to be applied with complete equity to all students, it is of paramount importance for examiners and assessors to discharge their duties disinterestedly. Consequently, it is a requirement of University of Chester that any member of staff, academic or administrative, whose ability to engage in the assessment of students may be influenced by a personal relationship relating to any student who is subject to assessment, shall declare such an interest in advance to the Chair of the Module or Awards Assessment Board as appropriate. When such a declaration has been made, it is incumbent upon that Chair, in conjunction with the Deputy Registrar and Head of Student Administration, to take such steps as are necessary to safeguard the integrity and equity of the assessment process. Measures available to the Chair of the Module or Awards Assessment Board shall include requiring the member of staff in question to absent himself or herself from and/or withhold himself or herself from participation in a stage or stages of the assessment process.

Students of University of Chester shall be required to adhere to the requirements set out below. They shall be given access to these requirements at the point of commencement of the academic sessions to which the rules shall apply.

**The requirements in this Handbook apply to all forms of summative assessment which contribute to the results of modules processed by Assessment Boards. They are not intended to apply to formative assessment which does not contribute to such module results, except as guidance on good practice which may be followed as appropriate.**

The requirements shall be reviewed annually and with due consideration given to the advice of External Examiners.



# Quality and Standards Manual

## Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy

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## CONTENTS

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**SECTION 2: ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING (APL).....2**

*Appendices*

2A APL Form  
2B Academic Assessor Role Descriptor  
2C Faculty Credit Coordinator Role Descriptor

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## SECTION 2: ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING (APL)

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1. The University recognises, in partial fulfilment of its own requirements, qualification and experience gained elsewhere. Students wishing to apply for accreditation of prior credited/ certified or prior experiential learning (APCL/ APEL) may apply for exemption from parts of a programme for up to the maximum credit value allowed. Application for recognition of credit already achieved shall normally be made immediately upon registration for the student's programme of study. In all cases where entry to a full time undergraduate programme incorporating study across levels is sought at anything other than the lowest level (eg in cases where entry to a Bachelors Degree is sought at level 5 or 6) the APL must be approved before the student is allowed to enrol or commence their studies.
2. APCL and APEL are defined as follows:
  - **APCL** is demonstrated on an academic record (certificate or transcript) and there is no charge for it, provided its 'age' is within the stated time limits.
  - **APEL** is non-certificated, has to be assessed by the University and carries a charge.
3. The accreditation of credited or certified (APCL) and uncertified (APEL) learning may only be awarded where evidence of achievement is provided and it has been assessed in relation to module and level equivalence.
4. There are no limits on the use of credit previously awarded by University of Chester for either a lower level qualification, or on a free-standing basis, which corresponds to modules within the new award. With regard to 'external' credit, accreditation may be granted for up to two-thirds (66.67%) of the amount required for an award, providing that a minimum of 40 credits are awarded by the University of Chester

Where an award consists of credits from across different levels, a minimum of 80 new University of Chester credits must be studied at the highest level of the award

The marks gained for any University of Chester modules undertaken within five years of the date of registration on the new award shall be included in the calculation of the final award classification. Students granted Accreditation of Prior Learning cannot, under any circumstances, use these module marks to replace marks for modules for which they were previously registered on an award-bearing programme. Module marks attained as part of a Foundation Degree shall not be included in the calculation of the final award classification of an Honours Degree.

5. The maximum age of credit shall be five years, unless:
  - (a) The application to use 'older' credit is accompanied by a demonstration that the learning has been brought up to date in the workplace, via continuing

professional development which is shown to be directly relevant to the new award

OR

- (b) The 'older' credit is accompanied by some form of assessment e.g. a reflective portfolio.

The maximum age of credit brought into a programme, added to a student's maximum registration period, gives the total time span of credit on an award. The maximum registration period will vary according to the amount of credit brought into the award, as detailed below:

### *Master's Degree*

Amount of APCL or previous University of Chester free standing or lower award credit	Maximum 'age' of credit	Maximum Registration Period	Total Time Span of Credit
120	5 years	3 years	8 years
60	5 years	5 years	10 years
<60	5 years	6 years	11 years

### *Bachelor's Degree*

Amount of APCL or previous University of Chester free standing or lower award credit	Maximum 'age' of credit	Maximum Registration Period	Total Time Span of Credit
240	5 years	3 years	8 years
120	5 years	5 years	10 years
60	5 years	6 years	11 years
<60	5 years	7 years	12 years

### Foundation Degree

Amount of APCL or previous University of Chester free standing or lower award credit	Maximum 'age' of credit	Maximum Registration Period	Total Time Span of Credit
120	5 years	3 years	8 years
60	5 years	5 years	10 years

6. An applicant seeking to make a claim for APCL should complete the form 'Application for Accreditation of Prior Credited/Certified Learning' (Appendix 2A) in consultation with the relevant Admissions Section and/or the Faculty Academic Assessor. All such claims should be supported by transcripts or certificates. An applicant or student seeking to make a claim for APEL should seek to complete the form 'Application for Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning' (also Appendix 2A) in consultation with the Faculty Academic Assessor. The Faculty Academic Assessor is a member of faculty staff with knowledge of the programme of study for which the candidate is applying. Once completed all forms must be ratified by the Faculty Credit Co-ordinator. The Faculty Credit Co-ordinator has delegated authority to act on behalf of both the Module Assessment Board and the Awards Assessment Board. If approved, the claim is forwarded to Registry Services and the Finance Department. The Faculty Credit Co-ordinator will inform the Faculty Academic Assessor of the outcome of the application, along with the candidate.
7. In cases where a student produces a piece of work in support of a claim for Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning this work must be submitted electronically and put through the Turnitin system.



University of  
Chester

# Quality and Standards Manual

## Transfer to Chester Scheme

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## CONTENTS

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<b>PART A: OVERVIEW OF THE SCHEME .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1. INTRODUCTION .....	2
2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....	2
3. STAGES OF THE TRANSFER PROCESS.....	3
<b>PART B: ADMISSIONS STAGE .....</b>	<b>4</b>
4. ADMISSIONS PRINCIPLES .....	4
5. APPLICATIONS .....	5
<b>PART C: PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS STAGE .....</b>	<b>6</b>
6. ACCOMMODATION REQUIREMENTS.....	6
7. WELFARE AND DISABILITY SUPPORT.....	6
8. INDUCTION REQUIREMENTS.....	6
<b>PART D: ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT STAGE .....</b>	<b>8</b>
9. ACADEMIC PRINCIPLES .....	8
10. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE .....	8
11. ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING .....	9
12. LEARNING REFLECTION CREDIT .....	9
13. CREDIT ACCUMULATION BLOCK .....	10
14. INDIVIDUAL LEARNING AGREEMENT.....	11

### ***Appendices***

CTS-(1) Individual Learning Agreement Template – *to follow*

## SECTION 2a – Transfer to Chester Scheme

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The University of Chester welcomes students who have the aptitude and ability to succeed in higher education. We recognise that some students, already registered for a degree programme at another institution may, for a variety of reasons, choose to move to another institution to complete their studies. In these circumstances, our aim is that the University of Chester is viewed as a welcoming and facilitative institution, enabling students to join us, at any point in the year, through a smooth and supported transition process.

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### PART A: OVERVIEW OF THE SCHEME

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#### 1. Introduction

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- 1.1. The Transfer to Chester Scheme (the Scheme) is designed to enable a smooth transition for prospective students entering the University outside of the standard entry points, whilst rigorously maintaining our academic standards and the credibility of our awards. The Scheme is available to prospective students who:
  - 1.1.1. Are currently registered with another higher education provider, regardless of whether or not they have had academic credit awarded;
  - 1.1.2. Wish to transfer to the University of Chester outside of a standard entry point (normally 4 weeks from the commencement of teaching at any given level);
  - 1.1.3. Can demonstrate reasonable engagement with study at the FHEQ level that they seek to transfer into;
  - 1.1.4. Wish to transfer into a University of Chester programme that broadly maps onto their studies at their current higher education provider; and
  - 1.1.5. In the academic opinion of the University have a reasonable opportunity to successfully complete the programme in a timely way.
- 1.2. The University will start from the position that it wishes to facilitate the transfer in of any prospective student who matches the eligibility criteria listed above. The criteria will be applied sympathetically, considering each prospective student's individual circumstances and their academic record to date.

#### 2. Roles and Responsibilities

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- 2.1. In order to meet the University's aim of facilitating a smooth and swift transfer into the institution, enquiries and initial applications will be coordinated by a member of staff from Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions (MRA). They will be responsible liaising with the University's Transfer Team to consider each application to the Scheme, to be comprised as follows:
  - 2.1.1. **Academic Transfer Coordinator:** each Academic Department is to appoint

one member of staff to act as the nominee of the Head of Department with responsibility for making academic judgements about the suitability of an applicant and, upon acceptance, managing the development of the student's academic programme in accordance with the procedures set out in this document.

- 2.1.2. **Wellbeing Coordinator:** Student Services is to appoint one member of staff to act as the nominee of the Director of Student Services with responsibility for providing induction support to students admitted under this scheme. They will also act as a liaison with relevant colleagues should the student have any welfare or disability support needs.
  - 2.1.3. **Accommodation Coordinator:** the Accommodation Office is to appoint one member of staff to help if the prospective student requires University accommodation to facilitate their transfer.
  - 2.1.4. **Finance Coordinator:** the Finance Department is to appoint one member of staff to assist with any student finance matters relating to their transfer.
- 2.2. In addition, the Academic Transfer Coordinator may obtain additional support to assist in the discharge of their duties from:
- 2.2.1. **Head of Academic Services (or nominee):** to advise on the mapping of the prospective student's current programme of study and/or on the development of a bespoke package of studies for the remainder of the level that the prospective student is transferring into.
  - 2.2.2. **Deputy Registrar and Head of Student Administration:** to advise on the structure and assessment records requirements following admission of the student.

### 3. Stages of the Transfer Process

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- 3.1. Whilst, from the point of view of the prospective student, the aim is for the transfer process to be swift and seamless there are, necessarily, a number of stages to be completed for it to be successful. These are:
  - 3.1.1. **Admissions stage:** this encompasses receipt and academic consideration of the application and the decision on whether or not to permit the student to transfer into the University; thereafter, if the decision is to admit the student:
  - 3.1.2. **Practical arrangements stage:** make the necessary practical arrangements, such as accommodation, individual induction, finance, welfare and disability support etc. so that the student is equipped to begin studying as soon as possible and;
  - 3.1.3. **Academic development stage:** formulate the bespoke programme of study that the student will complete during the remainder of the academic year.
- 3.2. In practice, the transfer process is not linear and elements of these stages may need to be conducted in tandem with others. For example, the availability of accommodation may be central to the application proceeding or not. Therefore, it will be for the coordinating officer in MRA to manage the team outlined in 2.1. as they see fit.

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## PART B: ADMISSIONS STAGE

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### 4. Admissions Principles

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- 4.1. The provisions of this scheme will only apply where a prospective student seeks to transfer into the University beyond the point at which it would be impossible make up the time lost since the beginning of teaching for the given level of study (normally four weeks after the start). Prior to this point, a transfer under the standing APL arrangements (Handbook F, Section 2) can be completed, thus enabling the prospective student to follow the programme in the same way as others in their cohort.
- 4.2. Where this scheme is to be used, the University aims to complete the process of assessing their eligibility to transfer, using the eligibility criteria at 1.1. normally within 3 working days. From the point of application to the point of offer. Where appropriate, an offer may be made to a student without first going through UCAS.
- 4.3. When applying the eligibility criteria, the Academic Transfer Coordinator must be mindful of the following:
  - 4.3.1. Where a prospective student seeks to transfer into Level 4, less emphasis may be placed on subject and course-specific content than is the case at higher levels of study and greater flexibility should be shown in respect of cases where a student's current programme does not directly map onto the University's programme<sup>1</sup>. Such flexibility may extend to cases where a student is seeking to transfer into a different subject area entirely.
  - 4.3.2. Where a prospective student seeks to transfer into any level, the assessment of their previous studies must be mapped against programme learning outcomes rather than individual module learning outcomes. This is because students admitted under this scheme will have a bespoke academic programme for the remainder of the year in which they are admitted.
- 4.4. Where a prospective student is seeking to transfer in at Level 5 or Level 6, the credits obtained from the lower level(s) of study will be considered for APCL in the normal way in accordance with Handbook F, Section 2. However, the rules in relation to conditional progression will apply:
  - 4.4.1. The prospective student may transfer into Level 5 or Level 6 with the equivalent of no more than 20 credits outstanding from the preceding level.
  - 4.4.2. Where a student has credit at a lower level outstanding at the point of admission, this must be accounted for in the academic development stage. This will normally require additional tutorial support as attainment of such credit is essential to the completion of the programme.

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<sup>1</sup> It is recognised that the ability to do this in respect of professionally regulated or accredited programmes may be constrained.

## 5. Applications

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- 5.1 Full-time undergraduate students wishing to transfer into the University at the start of Level 5 or Level 6 (from other universities or colleges) will be required to apply through UCAS.
- 5.2 Prospective students wishing to transfer outside of the normal arrangements (and after the end of the UCAS admissions cycle) should contact the Undergraduate Admissions Team for an application form (Transfer Approval Form). All applications to transfer must include information on the course/module title, the credit value and level of each module taken, the date each module was taken, and the results of each module.
- 5.3 Once all essential information has been received, applications and supporting papers will be referred to the relevant Academic Content Co-ordinator for consideration. For combined courses, two Co-ordinators may be involved.
- 5.4 Following approval to transfer the MRA Co-ordinator will provide written confirmation to the applicant.
- 5.5 Applicants will be required to provide an original transcript or evidence of results and a suitable reference from their previous university or college prior to enrolment.

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## PART C: PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS STAGE

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### 6. Accommodation requirements

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- 6.1. At the point of application to the scheme, a prospective student may indicate that they require University accommodation for the remainder of the academic year. In these circumstances, the MRA Coordinator will alert the Accommodation Office as soon as is practical.
- 6.2. Confirmation of the availability of University accommodation must be provided to the MRA Coordinator within 3 working days of the application being received. This is to coincide with the academic decision on admittance.
- 6.3. In order to provide the prospective student with comprehensive details upon which to base their decision to accept an offer, the following must also be provided:
  - 6.3.1. Details of the type of accommodation available;
  - 6.3.2. The cost of the different accommodation types (where applicable);
  - 6.3.3. Any date restrictions on the availability of accommodation;
  - 6.3.4. Other relevant pre-contractual information in relation to the accommodation offer.

### 7. Welfare and disability support

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- 7.1. At the point of application to the scheme, a prospective student may indicate that they have additional welfare and or disability support needs. In these circumstances, the MRA Coordinator will alert Student Services as soon as is practical.
- 7.2. Where a prospective student indicates that they require specific support, further discussions may be required, but this should not delay the offer making process which is predominately concerned with academic considerations and the eligibility criteria set out in section 1.1.
- 7.3. In the event that a prospective student discloses a disability, at an appropriate point following admission, the Wellbeing Coordinator will liaise with colleagues on the process for supporting the student to obtain an inclusion plan. Where a student had similar support arrangements at their previous institution, it would be helpful to match these as far as possible.

### 8. Induction requirements

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- 8.1. Students admitted to the University under this scheme are entitled to a bespoke induction process. This will consist in two parts:

- 8.1.1. Part one will be a general induction to the University, delivered in person or online as requirements dictate and will be coordinated by Student Services. The Wellbeing Coordinator identified as part of the formation of the transfer team is responsible for ensuring that the student has access to such an induction.
  
- 8.1.2. Part two will be an academic induction to the Faculty and Department. This should be overseen by the student's Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) and cover the same topics that feature in the normal induction programme delivered to students at the beginning of each academic session. The Academic Transfer Coordinator is responsible for ensuring the allocation of an appropriate PAT and that the academic induction takes place.

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## PART D: ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT STAGE

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### 9. Academic principles

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- 9.1. The scheme is designed to facilitate student transfer into the University beyond the point when it is feasible for them to be registered and complete the standard suite of modules for a given programme. Consequently, a student admitted in this way will require a bespoke schedule of work that considers:
- 9.1.1. The previous academic experience of the student, including any work that they have completed and for which academic credit has already been awarded;
  - 9.1.2. The amount of work, assessed or otherwise, that the student has completed at their previous institution and the extent to which this aligns with the programme learning outcomes; and
  - 9.1.3. The time available to verify the learning that the student has already done and complete additional teaching and assessment activities at the level that they are transferring into.
- 9.2. The development of a bespoke schedule of work will necessarily be a detailed exercise, best conducted in partnership with the student. Consequently, this stage is separate from the point at which a decision is made on the student's eligibility to transfer under the Scheme based on the criteria outlined in section 1.1.

### 10. Programme structure

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- 10.1. In order to develop a coherent academic programme for a student transferring into the University under this scheme, there are four elements that will be combined in differing proportions:
- 10.1.1. **Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) credits:** recognition of academic credit awarded by another Higher Education Institution, applied to the student record on a 1:1 basis and which does not require any further assessment.
  - 10.1.2. **Learning Reflection Credit (LRC):** University of Chester credits awarded for academic reflections, of an appropriate length, in relation to learning and assessment that a student has completed at their former institution, but for which no formal academic credit has been awarded. Such credits can be awarded in multiples of 5.
  - 10.1.3. **Credit Accumulation Block (CAB):** University of Chester credits awarded for successful achievement of a prescribed schedule of learning and assessment, appropriately aligned to the programme learning outcomes for the course of study that the student has been admitted into. Such credits can be awarded in multiples of 5.
  - 10.1.4. **Individual Learning Agreement (ILA):** The detailed underpinning of the student's admission to the University. This consists in two parts; part one describes the learning that the student has completed prior to admission (APL and LRC). Part two describes the learning and assessment that the student will complete in order to achieve University of Chester credits.



- 10.2. The APL credits and Learning Reflection Credits relate to learning and assessment that has been completed at another institution and consequently demonstrate only threshold achievement. In the case of APL, the award of these credits reduces the volume of learning, teaching and assessment that must be completed by the student. In the case of LRC, the award of these credits is based on the verification of prior learning that has not been certified by the student's previous institution.
- 10.3. APL credits carry no mark and LRC is awarded on a pass/fail basis only. Consequently, these mechanisms do not enable the student to demonstrate achievement beyond the threshold standard. For this reason, the maximum amount of APL/LRC available for the level of study into which the student has been admitted is capped at 80. This does not preclude students from bringing in full years of APL (e.g. a student admitting part-way through Level 5 may still import 120 credits at Level 4).
- 10.4. The credits awarded by successful completion of one or more Credit Accumulation Blocks, described in an Individual Learning Agreement, are based wholly on learning and assessment completed at the University and consequently are capable of demonstrating achievement beyond the threshold standard. The marks awarded in relation to these credits will therefore determine a student's overall award classification in accordance with the mechanism set out in the University's Principles and Regulations.

## 11. Accreditation of Prior Learning

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- 11.1. Where a student provides evidence of certificated learning which has resulted in the conferment of academic credit, this can be imported, in whole, to the University's student record. The admitting department will conduct a mapping exercise against the relevant programme learning outcomes. APL may be awarded for full and/or partially completed levels.
- 11.2. The process for the award of APL and the maximum number of APL credits that are permitted for each award are described in Handbook F, Section 2.
- 11.3. APL credits are awarded without a mark.

## 12. Learning Reflection Credit

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- 12.1. A student being admitted to the University via the Scheme is likely to have completed some learning and assessment at the level that they are being admitted into, but this may not necessarily have led to the conferment of academic credit at the point of transfer. Learning Reflection Credit (LRC) aims to take account of this prior exposure to level-appropriate learning in a way that is fair to the student and allows the University to meet its Quality Code obligations.
- 12.2. Following the admission decision, when developing the bespoke schedule of work, the Academic Transfer Coordinator should work with the student to obtain as much

evidence as possible of the learning and assessment that they have successfully completed. This may include, for example:

- 12.2.1. Interim transcript of results.
  - 12.2.2. Copies of marked work with feedback showing any provision or indicative marks.
  - 12.2.3. Copies of relevant module descriptors and/or programme specifications.
  - 12.2.4. Copies of relevant module handbooks.
  - 12.2.5. Copies of relevant assignment briefs.
- 12.3. On the basis of this evidence, the Academic Transfer Coordinator will make a reasonable interpretation of those programme learning outcomes that the student has already successfully completed and the volume of their engagement in terms of academic credit. They will then set an appropriate learning reflection task, the length of which will be related to the number of credits being applied for. This will be recorded in part one of the Individual Learning Agreement.
- 12.4. The precise nature of the task set for the student to obtain the LRC will be at the discretion of the Academic Transfer Coordinator but, as a minimum, it must enable the student to demonstrate level-appropriate reflection of the learning that they undertook at their previous institution in relation to the programme learning outcomes being claimed.
- 12.5. The outcome of an assessment task set for LRC will be pass/fail only.

### 13. Credit Accumulation Block

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- 13.1. For the remaining credits that cannot be awarded via either APL or LRC, the Academic Transfer Coordinator will complete part two of the Individual Learning Agreement with details of the Credit Accumulation Blocks (CAB) that the student will be registered for.
- 13.2. CABs have a minimum credit value of 5 and are available in multiples of 5 credits. This is to enable close tailoring of a programme depending on the factors outlined in 9.1.
- 13.3. CABs take the place of modules for the remainder of the level of study into which the student has been admitted. They must be aligned to the relevant programme learning outcomes in such a way as to enable engagement with those that the student has not demonstrated threshold achievement of via another method. In addition, the assessment activity undertaken in a CAB must be sufficient to allow the student to demonstrate achievement beyond the threshold of those programme learning outcomes, even where these have already been mapped against APL/LRC.
- 13.4. The learning, teaching and assessment activities assigned to each CAB are at the discretion of the Academic Transfer Coordinator, but normally will, in combination:
- 13.4.1. Overlap with one or more module being studied by the rest of the cohort in such a way as to facilitate the student's broad engagement with their peers;

- 13.4.2. Recognise the need for additional tutorial support that may be required, the volume of which will depend on the point that the transfer takes place;
- 13.4.3. Enable the student to engage with appropriate learning and teaching activities to support their successful completion of assessment;
- 13.4.4. Broadly replicate the assessment activities that the rest of the cohort are completing.

## 14. Individual Learning Agreement

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- 14.1. The Individual Learning Agreement (ILA) is created by the Academic Transfer Coordinator in close collaboration with the student. A template for the ILA is provided and is comprised of two parts:
  - 14.1.1. Part two records details of the APL credits that the admitting department is accepting in lieu of further assessment in relation to one or more of the programme learning outcomes. It also provides details of any LRC credits being applied for and the assessment task that has been set; and
  - 14.1.2. Part two is the definitive description of the learning and assessment with which the student is required to engage for the remainder of the level of study into which they have been admitted.
- 14.2. There will be a single ILA, unless the student is admitting onto a combined honours route, when there will be one per subject.
- 14.3. The second part of the ILA must detail the following:
  - 14.3.1. The learning outcomes (mapped in relation to the programme learning outcomes) that the student is expected to achieve on successful completion of the schedule of work in relation to each CAB;
  - 14.3.2. The timetabled learning events that the student is required to attend. These may align with one or more timetabled sessions being delivered by the admitting department in the current academic year;
  - 14.3.3. Any individual tutorials, online learning or other teaching events with which the student is required to engage;
  - 14.3.4. The assessments that the student will be required to complete and the deadlines for these; and
  - 14.3.5. Details of the student's PAT and other key contacts to support them through their learning.
- 14.4. The University expects that a completed ILA will be provided to the student and Registry Services within no more than 14 days following receipt of the student's acceptance of the offer made at the admissions stage.



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## Requirements for Reasonable Adjustments to Assessment Policy

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## CONTENTS

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<b>SECTION 3: REQUIREMENTS FOR REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS TO ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>2</b>
PROCEDURES FOR APPROVAL OF REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS FOR ASSESSMENT.....	2
ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION DURING THE ACADEMIC SESSION IN WHICH THE STUDENT PRESENTS THEMSELVES FOR SCREENING FOR SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES.....	3
ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF ASSESSMENT .....	3

### *Appendices*

- 3A Examples of Options Available to Students with Specific Needs
- 3B Standard Assessment Feedback

We use the Equality Act definition of disability, this is any condition which has significant, adverse and long term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities please see a Disability & Inclusion Officer to discuss further.

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## SECTION 3: REQUIREMENTS FOR REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS TO ASSESSMENT

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1. All candidates should, as far as possible, undertake assessments under equal conditions. The purpose of reasonable adjustments to assessment is therefore to enable a student to demonstrate their ability and address the barriers they experience as a result of their disability, specific learning difficulty or medical condition, but not to otherwise advantage the candidate. This will entail individual assessment of the nature and degree of the barriers a student experiences, and provision being made according to the individual's needs. No improvement in the standard of answers should be expected as a result of any reasonable adjustment given.

### Procedures for Approval of Reasonable Adjustments for Assessment

2. A student who wishes to access reasonable adjustments for assessments will be required to contact Disability & Inclusion. They will need to provide written evidence of their disability or medical condition by an appropriate professional; where evidence is unclear the student may be asked for further evidence. Students with specific learning difficulties (SpLD e.g. dyslexia) must provide a statement from an educational psychologist/suitably qualified specialist teacher confirming their condition and indicating their requirements.
3. The likely requirements of the student will then be assessed by the Disability & Inclusion Officer, students with non-standard requirements will have a discussion and agree requirements with a Disability Support Officer. These will depend on the student's disability or condition, on the format and duration of the assessment and on recommendations made by educational psychologists/suitably qualified specialist teacher or similar advisers. Guidance may also be sought from RNIB, Action On Hearing Loss, Occupational Health or one of the National Federation of Access Centres. A decision will then be made by the Disability & Inclusion Officer on what reasonable adjustments are appropriate to meet the student's needs.
4. Having identified the student's requirements as either standard or non-standard (with standard being 25% extra time in the main examination venue, and non-standard being anything additional to this such as the provision of a reader) the Disability & Inclusion Officer will complete an Inclusion Plan (IP) & Specific Needs form (SN1) and process these documents, the latter of which is provided to our Registry Services (Assessment Team). The student receives a copy of the IP and a summary of their appointment confirming agreed exam arrangements. The student shall be informed, in writing, by Registry Services (Assessment Team) of the agreed specific assessment arrangements.

## Arrangements for implementation during the academic session in which the student presents themselves for screening for Specific Learning Difficulties

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5. In recognition of the significant timeframes involved in the process outlined above, students who, as an outcome of screening (such as a Dyslexia Assessment Screening Tool DAST, Form 8 or equivalent) and have been referred for a psychological assessment will be granted 25% additional time in both formal examinations and in- class tests. This measure seeks to minimise disruption to their studies and avoid a backlog of assessments. However, this arrangement will only remain in place for one set of examinations (or in-class tests until the first set of examinations). Students shall not be entitled to additional time in any further examinations until the educational psychologist's/suitably qualified specialist teachers report has been received and approved. In exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible to obtain an educational psychologist's/suitably qualified specialist teacher's assessment, the Disability Services Manager (or nominee) will confirm to Registry Services that additional time may be granted for further assessment periods.
6. Students receiving the additional time shall not be eligible to appeal on the grounds of mitigating circumstances unless the educational psychologist's/suitably qualified teachers report subsequently recommends that modifications in addition to 25% extra time are appropriate. In such cases the appeal shall only be considered in relation to assessment undertaken in the current academic session; under no circumstances will appeals be considered in relation to assessment undertaken in previous academic sessions.
7. For practical reasons, students screened 2 weeks or less in advance of an assessment period shall not be offered the additional time. They shall be eligible to seek deferral of assessment pending the outcome of their educational psychology assessment.
8. Once a student is referred for a psychological assessment, Disability & Inclusion will send a temporary SN1 form to the student's academic department(s) and Registry in order to alert them that the student is entitled to additional time.

## Alternative Forms of Assessment

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9. If a student is unable, for reasons relating to their disability, to be assessed by the normal methods specified in the module assessment requirements the Head of Department, in consultation with the External Examiner, may vary the assessment methods as appropriate, bearing in mind the objectives of the academic provision in question and the need to assess the student on equal terms with other students. The suitability of any such alternative assessment in meeting the needs of the student's disability shall be approved in advance by the University's Disability Services Manager or equivalent. Advice on alternative forms of assessment may be sought from Disability & Inclusion and the Head of Academic Services (or nominee).
10. Guidance on options available to students with specific needs appears in Appendix 3A.



University of  
Chester

# Quality and Standards Manual

## Examinations Policy

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## CONTENTS

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<b>SECTION 4: EXAMINATIONS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
4.1 WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS: RULES FOR EXAMINEES .....	2
<i>Guidelines for students unable to return to the University (or Partner) to undertake formal assessment.....</i>	<i>5</i>
4.2 WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS: PROCEDURES FOR EXAMINERS.....	6
4.3 ORAL ASSESSMENT AND PRESENTATIONS .....	10
4.4 OPEN BOOK ASSESSMENT AND ADVANCED PUBLICATION OF PAPERS .....	10

### *Appendices*

4A	Turnitin Policy
4B	Guidelines for Amanuenses
4C	Security of Examination Papers

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## SECTION 4: EXAMINATIONS

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### 4.1 Written Examinations: Rules for Examinees

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1. Except where prevented by illness or by other sufficient cause (please refer to mitigating circumstances procedures), a student who fails to present herself/himself for written examination in a module at the time and place indicated in the published timetable shall be deemed to have failed in that part of the assessment. Misreading of the timetable will not be regarded as 'sufficient cause'.
2. Students must not take unauthorised material into the examination venue. If a student is found with unauthorised material they will be deemed to have used it. If a student finds that they have inadvertently brought unauthorised material into the examination they must raise their hands and inform an invigilator immediately.

Unless specified in the rubric of the examination, the following are considered to be unauthorised material:

- Revision or course notes
- Books or dictionaries
- Calculators

Except on religious or medical grounds students are not permitted to wear headgear. Students are only permitted to wear ear plugs on medical grounds and with prior approval granted by the Deputy Registrar.

3. Wherever possible, students should avoid taking mobile phones or other electronic devices into the examination venue; where such devices are taken into the venue, students will be provided with a clear box or bag in which to place the items. The items must be switched off and the box/bag must be stored under the examination desk. All items are introduced into the venue at the owner's risk. Items which must be placed in the box/bag and which must not be found on the student's person or desk include:
  - mobile phones
  - tablets such as ipad
  - smart watches or any other device capable of storing information or accessing the internet or other external information source

4. All bags, cases and coats etc must be placed at the front of the examination room as instructed by the invigilator. Any such items found at the exam desk will be classed as unauthorised materials.
5. All gangways should remain clear of obstruction.
6. Strict silence must be observed at all times in the examination room. The examination is deemed to be in progress from the time students enter the room until all scripts have been collected. Students must not indulge in any behaviour which in the opinion of the invigilator may disturb other students or in any form of conduct which may disrupt the smooth progress of an examination. Any irregularities of conduct within the examination room shall be in breach of regulations and dealt with in accordance with section 6 of this Handbook (Academic Integrity).
7. Students are forbidden to communicate with each other in the examination room. All enquiries must be addressed to an invigilator by raising a hand.
8. No student shall be permitted to enter the examination room after the lapse of half an hour from the commencement of the written examination, and no student shall be allowed to leave the examination room until after the expiration of half-an-hour from the commencement of the examination, irrespective of the length of the examination paper.
9. No additional time shall be allowed to students who arrive at the examination room after the commencement of the examination.
10. Students should complete the assessment attendance slip before the commencement of the examination.
11. Students should place their student ID card on the desk so that it can be seen by an invigilator.
12. Identification checks on female students opting to cover their face will be conducted with discretion by a female member of staff. Female students who for reasons of faith require the presence of other females in the examination venue should alert both Registry Services and their academic department(s) at the beginning of the academic year.

13. The impersonation of assessment students is prohibited and students must not allow themselves to be impersonated.
14. Students should complete the front of the examination answer book and seal down the right hand section. A student who fails to do so will forfeit the right to have her/his paper marked anonymously.
15. Students are not permitted to write in the examination answer books during any allocated reading time.
16. Unless specified in the rubric of the examination paper, students are not permitted to use calculators. Where it is permitted, calculators should be silent in operation and not have an alphabetic keyboard. The calculator's memory must be cleared of all user-defined programmes and functions. Calculators that permit the symbolic manipulations of equations and formulae are forbidden. University of Chester shall not be responsible for the provision of (i) calculators in the event of a breakdown, (ii) power for their operation, or (iii) spare batteries.
17. The use of English Language and/or translation dictionaries is prohibited unless specified in the rubric of the examination. Other books may only be taken into the examination room if specified on the rubric of the paper.
18. The use of scrap paper is not permitted and all rough work must be done in the answer books provided.
19. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that any loose or separate sheets are securely fixed within the examination answer book using the tags provided.
20. When time is called at the conclusion to the examination all writing must cease immediately.
21. No student is normally permitted to leave the examination room in the last fifteen minutes of the written examination. Students who complete their work during the last fifteen minutes should remain quietly seated until an invigilator announces the end of the written examination.
22. Students must not leave the examination room until all their written work has been collected and they have been given permission by the chief invigilator to do so. Students must not remove from the examination room any answer books (whether used or unused), mathematical tables or other data provided for use or other items of stationery.

23. If the fire alarm sounds or if there is another reason why the venue needs to be evacuated during the assessment, students must follow the instructions of the chief invigilator. Students must leave the room in silence and must not take any papers or materials from the room. They must not communicate with each other, except in cases of urgent necessity, prior to their return to the examination room.
  
24. Students are expected to ensure the entire contents of their exam script are legible; in cases where anyone involved in the marking of the work is unable to read the full script, the department will offer the option of the formal transcription of the paper by a scribe designated by the University, with the student translating their original script. The student must pay the transcription fee directly to the service provider. In order to avoid delays with the processing of results, the student will be given seven days from original notification to make themselves available for the transcription session. Upon completion of the transcription, the student must sign a statement confirming that the transcription represents precisely the contents of the original script. Any alteration from the original may be considered academic misconduct. Should the student fail to make themselves available within the specified period, the illegible section of the script will not be marked and the final mark will be derived from the legible sections.
  
25. Except where a foreign language is the subject of the assessment, papers should normally be set and answered in English.
  
26. Formal examinations are always held in accessible locations. Department organised assessments should also take place in locations accessible to all students due to undertake the assessment.

### *Guidelines for students unable to return to the University (or Partner) to undertake formal assessment*

Students are expected to undertake examinations and other formal timed assessments at the University of Chester or Partner organisation as appropriate. However, there may be exceptional cases where this is not possible and where students may request permission to undertake assessment from overseas. The request will normally only be considered for students whose country of domicile is outside the United Kingdom (or the country in which the relevant partner organisation is based) and for examinations which take place outside the University's official term dates. Holidays are not considered legitimate grounds for failing to undertake assessment at the specified venue. Students must contact the Deputy Registrar in the first instance in order to discuss their request.

In addition to deciding whether a student may, in principle, undertake assessment from overseas, the University will also decide whether the proposed venue is acceptable.

The University will reject requests where either the student's circumstances and/or proposed venue are not deemed acceptable, or where insufficient notice is given (see below).

Wherever possible, assessments should be organised via the British Council. In cases where this is not possible (where the British Council does not offer this service in the country in question, for example), the University **may** agree to the student undertaking the assessment at an institution of higher education.

Following initial discussion with Registry Services, students seeking permission to undertake an examination overseas must first establish whether the British Council/proposed Higher Education Institution are able to provide the required service at the required time; upon receipt of this confirmation the student must then complete and return Form OE1 to Registry Services at least 4 weeks prior to the commencement of the examination period. This should provide details of the reasons for the request, the proposed venue at which the assessment will be taken, the relevant module codes and titles, as well as contact details of a named officer at the British Council/HE institution. The University of Chester will then decide whether the request is approved or rejected. Students will be notified of the decision in writing within 2 weeks of the receipt of Form OE1 by the University. In cases where the request is rejected, the student will be expected to return to the University or Partner to undertake the assessment.

Students must complete Form OE1 for every examination period in which they request permission to undertake assessment overseas.

In all cases, the assessment must take place at precisely the same time as at the specified venue, regardless of the impact of the time difference between the United Kingdom and the country in question.

It is the responsibility of the student to pay all fees incurred directly to the host organisation; in addition the University of Chester will charge an administration fee of £150 per assessment period, the fee for which must be paid within 7 days of notification that the request has been accepted.

## 4.2 Written Examinations: Procedures for Examiners

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1. In the case of undergraduate exams taking place in the formal assessment periods, Registry Services will be responsible for delivering the question papers and attendance sheets to the examination room.

2. Any examination run by both a Partner Organisation and the University, and any examination taken at different campuses or sites of the University, must take place simultaneously at all locations, unless separate papers are set.
3. At least one of the invigilators will normally be a member of academic staff who is knowledgeable about the contents of the question paper; where this isn't the case they must be present in the examination room for at least ten minutes before the examination is due to begin and for at least five minutes after the start of the examination, in order to check the content of the paper and to answer any queries from students. Before leaving the examination venue they should ensure the chief invigilator is made aware of their contact details during the duration of the examination.
4. All invigilators must be present in the examination room to which they have been appointed, from at least fifteen minutes before the commencement of the examination, until all answer books have been removed from the examination room after the conclusion of the examination.
5. Invigilators are responsible for the distribution of question papers before the commencement of each examination, for the collection of answer books from each student, for checking attendance sheets provided and noting absentees.
6. Identification checks on female students choosing to cover their face must be conducted with discretion by a female member of staff
7. Students may sit at any desk within the room/rows to which they have been allocated under the direction of the chief invigilator and should be seated in such a way that no student can overlook the papers of another student.
8. Under normal circumstances, at least two invigilators must remain in the examination room throughout the examination except when their invigilation duties require them to leave. No examination may be left without an invigilator.
9. At the time scheduled for the start of the examination the chief invigilator shall:
  - make an announcement to the effect that students must satisfy themselves that they are in possession of the correct paper;
  - ask students to study carefully the instructions at the head of the examination paper;
  - make all other necessary announcements.

10. Invigilators shall check that all students listed on the relevant attendance sheets are present and note the names of any students who are absent. In the case of undergraduate examinations taking place during the formal assessment periods attendance sheets shall be collected by a member of Registry Services staff at the end of the examination. In all other cases the department must ensure that attendance slips are retained in order to allow queries relating to a student's attendance to be verified
11. An invigilator shall require a student to leave the examination if, in the opinion of the invigilator, her/his conduct is disturbing other students or is disrupting the smooth progress of the examination. Any irregularities of conduct within the examination room shall be reported to the Student and Programmes Administration Manager, who shall have the power to exclude the student from the examination room and shall report the matter to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board for investigation.
12. Invigilators who suspect that breaches of this policy have occurred shall inform the Chair of the relevant Module Assessment Board in writing. Invigilators shall warn a student that such a report will be made, but the student shall normally be permitted to complete the written examination. The Student and Programmes Administration Manager shall also be notified that such a breach has been observed.
13. Students wishing to make a temporary withdrawal from the examination room for personal reasons must be accompanied by an invigilator or by a person authorised by the chief invigilator to ensure against any possibility of academic misconduct.
14. In certain special cases, students shall be allowed additional time for completion of their examination. Such students will have been identified by Registry Services in advance of the paper and may be sitting separately. It is the responsibility of the invigilators to complete the full invigilation of all students assigned to them.
15. It is the responsibility of subject departments to provide any special requirements for specific examinations. Guidance for amanuenses appears in Appendix 4B.
16. Registry Services shall be responsible for providing examination answer books and graph paper for each examination room. Large envelopes for transporting completed scripts shall be available in each room. The chief invigilator shall be responsible for ensuring that a copy of the relevant question paper is placed in the appropriate envelope, together with the completed scripts for marking purposes.
17. Invigilators shall be responsible for ensuring that completed scripts are delivered to the relevant department(s) for marking purposes.



18. Any changes to the original invigilation list shall be notified to Registry Services in advance of the assessment date. It is the responsibility of the Departmental Assessment Contact to find replacement invigilators.
19. The invigilators shall inform the Student and Programmes Administration Manager (or her/his representative) immediately of any unsatisfactory conditions or activities which they consider detrimental to the conduct of examinations.
20. In the event of a fire alarm or other emergency requiring the evacuation of the examination venue the chief invigilator shall note the time the assessment was interrupted and shall instruct the students to cease writing and to leave all materials, including question papers and examination answer books, on their desk. Students must leave the room in silence and must not take any papers or materials from the room. They must not communicate with each other, except in cases of urgent necessity, prior to their return to the examination room. The invigilator shall check all names in order to ensure that all students are accounted for. On return to the examination room, students shall be allowed additional time to compensate for time lost .
21. In all cases of emergency, invigilators should contact Registry Services on extension 3582 (Chester); 4396 or 4234 (Warrington).
22. In cases where students complain of feeling unwell and leave the venue temporarily, they will be permitted to return to the examination room provided that they have been accompanied during their absence by a person authorised to do so by the chief invigilator. In cases where a student cannot continue the exam in the scheduled room, every effort will be made for the written examination to be continued in a separate room provided that the students has been accompanied during her/his absence by a person authorised to do so by the chief invigilator.
23. In all cases where a student reports an illness the invigilator should ensure this is noted on the exam incident report form. A statement from a member of University staff who witnesses the condition of the student in or on leaving the assessment, describing the circumstances as witnessed, may be considered by the University Mitigating Circumstances Board as evidence.
24. In cases described under (28), the chief invigilator will be required to enter in the student's answer book and on the attendance sheet the time of departure and, where appropriate, subsequent return and to sign against these entries.
25. Departmental Assessment Contacts will be asked to provide names of invigilators for each session at which a written paper is being offered by that department.

Taking into account the requirement for there to be at least two invigilators present in the venue, invigilation ratios per department are as follows:

Number of students sitting examination	Number of invigilators required
1-34	1
35-69	2
70-100	3
>100	1 additional invigilator per 34 additional students

### 4.3 Oral assessment and presentations

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***Students shall be given a minimum of four weeks notification, in writing, of the date of the assessment and a minimum of two weeks notification of its time and venue.***

1. Students shall be informed as to what materials, if any, they are permitted to use and the format of the assessment.
2. A student who does not attend an oral assessment or presentation within the time period allocated will be awarded a mark of 0 for that assessment, unless there are valid mitigating circumstances. (See section 7 of this Handbook) If a student arrives late, but within the period allocated for the oral assessment, s/he shall normally be allowed such time as remains, without any adjustment of marks.

### 4.4 Open book assessment and advanced publication of papers

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1. Methods of assessment are specified in the module descriptor as validated, but reference to an 'examination' without further qualification is taken to mean a 'closed' 'unseen' written examination, i.e. one in which students have not seen the paper in advance and are not permitted to take materials into the examination room except as in 4.1 above. Where an 'Open Book' assessment is specified, the Department concerned shall be required to inform the students in writing of the following:
  - the paper title of the 'Open Book' assessment;
  - the precise nature of the material which can be taken into the examination room;
  - that such material is for the student's personal use only;

- that, apart from the students being allowed the use of certain specified material, the assessment will be conducted in all other aspects in accordance with the Operational Requirements to be observed by examiners and examinees.
2. Where the module assessment requires a written paper to be published in advance of the date of an assessment, the Department concerned shall be required to inform the students in writing of the following:
- the title of the paper for advance publication;
  - the date on which the paper will be available to students;
  - the method by which the paper will be made available to the students.

***Further requirements relating to the marking of assessed work appear in Section 5.***



University of  
Chester

# Quality and Standards Manual

## Requirements for the Marking of Assessed Work Policy

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# CONTENTS

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<b>SECTION 5: REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MARKING OF ASSESSED WORK .....</b>	<b>3</b>
5.1 EXTERNAL APPROVAL OF EXAMINATION AND COURSEWORK QUESTIONS .....	4
5.2 COMPOSITION OF SAMPLES .....	4
5.3 CHANGES TO MARKS .....	5
5.4 MONITORING FORM .....	5
5.5 DOUBLE-MARKING .....	6
5.6 NEW FIRST-MARKERS .....	6
5.7 ORAL ASSESSMENTS .....	6
5.8 PRACTICAL WORK .....	6
5.9 <i>VIVA VOCE</i> EXAMINATION .....	7
5.10 COMPLAINTS ABOUT PROVISIONAL MARKS .....	7
5.11 FEEDBACK ON ASSESSED WORK .....	7
5.12 REASSESSED/DEFERRED WORK .....	8
5.13 STAFF DEVELOPMENT .....	8
5.14 RETENTION OF STUDENT WORK .....	9
5.15 REQUIREMENTS FOR EXCESS WORD COUNT .....	9

***Appendices***

- 5A Anonymous Marking of Assessed Work
- 5B Second Marking Practice
- 5C Excess Word Count - Notes of Guidance to Staff and Students
- 5D Generic Marking Criteria – Foundation Year
- 5E Generic Marking Criteria at Levels 4, 5 and 6
- 5F Generic Marking Criteria at Level 7
- 5G Generic Feedback Criteria for Level 8
- 5H Guidance on feedback to students
- 5I Standards on Assessment, Feedback and Organisation and Management
- 5J Guidance on assessment briefs

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## SECTION 5: REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MARKING OF ASSESSED WORK

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The assessment tasks and their weightings, by means of which students are assessed, shall be in accordance with the authorised and published module descriptors as these are currently validated.

The work presented by a student shall be assessed by University of Chester internal assessors in such a way as to preserve the anonymity of the student. Guidance for the conduct of anonymous marking is given in Appendix 5A of this Handbook.

University of Chester requires that, normally, the marks awarded to students are determined by a first and second marker (hereafter referred to as the monitor), who shall be members of the Module Assessment Board and who shall satisfy themselves that the assessment of that module has been conducted accurately and fairly. Within these requirements, the phrase 'monitoring' applies in cases where there is an element of sampling, but 'double-marking' where every assessment is fully marked twice.

While the principal responsibility for accurate marking of an entire cohort's work rests with the first marker, an internal monitor also has a responsibility for ensuring that the entire cohort is fairly assessed.

The statements which follow on monitoring and double-marking are requirements for Levels 5, 6, 7 and taught provision at Level 8. There is no obligation to observe the requirements on monitoring and double-marking in relation to work submitted at Level 3 or Level 4. However, no student shall be failed in a Level 3 or Level 4 module without a monitor having participated in the determination of the agreed internal mark. Students shall be informed in writing of the University's practice on second-marking via handbooks.

Additional information on the role of the External Examiner, including the role descriptor, may be found in Handbook F12

## 5.1 External approval of examination and coursework questions

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The External Examiner will be required to confirm, in advance of publication to students, the comparability and appropriateness of academic standards of assessment tasks at Level 5 and above. The external examiner may review either all assessment tasks in advance or a representative sample of their choosing, in order to satisfy themselves that the standard is appropriate and that the intended learning outcomes are adequately assessed. This may include the general nature of tasks rather than specific questions, as appropriate.

## 5.2 Composition of samples

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A sample of a given batch of assessments shall be fully second-marked by the monitor. The sample shall include: (a) all assessments first-marked at 40% (50% at Levels 7 and 8) or below, and (b) at least five others selected from the remainder, representative of different classes (or all the remainder if less than five).

The sample shall normally comprise at least 25% of the total number of assessments. In cohorts of 24 students or less, the minimum size of the sample (including fails) shall be six assessments. In cohorts of over 100 students, a sample smaller than 25% may be monitored, but in no such case shall the number of assessments monitored be less than 25. It is good practice to include within the sample some cases of identified specific needs, so that the handling of such cases can be monitored.

In cases where there is more than one first-marker, the statements set out above shall apply to each first-marker in order that both the internal monitor and the External Examiner see a sufficient number of assessments to be able to satisfy themselves that the marking of all first-markers is both consistent and at the appropriate level. However, when an assessment has a very large number of markers marking a small number of pieces of work each, such that sampling 6 from each would lead to a disproportionate amount of the whole cohort being monitored, then the number per marker may be reduced to a minimum of 3 with the agreement of the Deputy Registrar. The monitoring arrangements need to be clearly the responsibility of an individual co-ordinating the monitoring process.

The department must ensure that the external examiner has access to an appropriate sample of work for each completed assessment component. Where work is freely accessible online, the external examiner may review whichever pieces of work they choose as long as they satisfy themselves that they have seen a representative sample. Where work is not available online, the department will supply an appropriate sample in consultation with the external examiner. The external examiner must ensure that they review a sufficient amount of work at each level to assure themselves that marking and moderation are appropriate, fair and consistent on the programme.



### 5.3 Changes to marks

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Having seen all the work in this category, the monitor may propose changes to the marks of individual assessments first-marked at 40% and below (50% and below for Levels 7 and 8), but in all such cases the changes shall be discussed between the first-marker and monitor so that an agreed internal mark can be recorded. In cases where first-marker and monitor cannot agree, the Chair of the relevant Module Assessment Board shall arbitrate, with recourse as necessary to a third internal marker.

The monitor shall not propose changes to the marks of individual assessments first-marked at 41% or above (51% or above for Levels 7 and 8), but shall comment on the overall standard and consistency of first-marking in a Monitoring Form, and shall have the right to propose the moderation of the entire cohort up or down or to propose the re-marking of the entire cohort. An assessment the mark for which moves into the category of 40% and below (50% and below for Levels 7 and 8) as a result of moderation of the cohort up or down shall be considered individually as in the previous paragraph above. Accordingly, monitors may find it helpful to address the issue of whether the marks for an entire cohort require moderation up or down, before considering individual assessments first-marked at 40% or below (50% or below for Levels 7 and 8).

In cases where there is more than one first-marker, the monitor shall have the right to propose the moderation of all assessments marked by any individual first-marker up or down, or to propose the re-marking of all assessments marked by any of the first-markers. Marks returned to students as feedback must (a) be the agreed marks following completion of internal first marking and monitoring, not the marks of the first marker and the monitor individually; (b) be clearly indicated to students as provisional, pending confirmation by the relevant assessment board.

External examiners are not to be regarded as third markers and must not be involved with the raising or lowering of individual marks. Where there is concern over the appropriateness of marks in the sample, the external examiner may recommend a review of the whole cohort. However, such a recommendation is not binding and requires the approval of the full Module Assessment Board, nor does the external examiner have the right to take a final decision on any proposed adjustment.

### 5.4 Monitoring Form

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It is not necessary for monitors to signal agreement of the marks for individual assignments (whether inside or outside the selected sample) on scripts or assessment feedback forms, provided that the Monitoring Form is completed.

The Monitoring Form shall:

- (i) include brief guidance from the first marker to the monitor on the performance of the cohort, and (if appropriate) on any issues for attention;
- (ii) include comment by the monitor based on the monitoring of the sample, either verifying the overall marks awarded, or proposing the moderation of the entire cohort up or down, or proposing the re-marking of the entire cohort. (It shall be left to the discretion of the Chair of the relevant Module Assessment Board whether such re-marking shall be conducted by the first marker, the monitor, or a third marker.) In cases where agreement on marks cannot be reached, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board shall arbitrate, with recourse as necessary to a third marker;

- (iii) record the total number of assessments passed to the monitor, and the names (or numbers) of students whose assessments were in the sample monitored, as evidence that procedures have been followed;
- (iv) record all cases in which changes have been proposed to marks of 40% and below (50% and below for Levels 7 and 8), together with the agreed internal marks;
- (v) on completion, be made available to the Departmental Assessment Contact, or other designated person, who shall ensure it is made available to the External Examiner.

## 5.5 Double-marking

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All work of an individual nature where the supervisor is also the first marker, such as Level 6 and Level 7 dissertations, performances and exhibitions, must be 100% double-marked, with the comments of both markers, and agreed internal marks, recorded [see also the guidance on good practice in Appendix 5B]. The Chair of the Module Assessment Board has discretion to apply double-marking to other modules in consultation with the External Examiner. Where 100% double-marking has taken place, the monitor may propose changes to any individual mark; where the two markers cannot agree a mark, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board shall arbitrate as set out above.

## 5.6 New first-markers

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In cases where the first marker is new to University of Chester, either, (a) all work for such new tutors shall be 100% double-marked, or (b) an enhanced sample comprising at least 20 scripts drawn from different classes shall be initially double-marked to verify the marking standard. If the double-marker does not agree with the marking standard a meeting shall take place with the Chair of the Module Assessment Board in order to agree the internal mark. The Chair of the Module Assessment Board shall ensure that these procedures apply at least for the first assessment in which such new tutors are involved and shall determine the point at which the double marking or enhanced monitoring is no longer required.

## 5.7 Oral assessments

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Oral assessments (presentations, dialogues, debates, etc.) shall, as far as practicable, have two markers present to determine the marks awarded. Where this is not practicable and only one marker is present, arrangements to assure the consistent standard of marking (such as appropriate staff development and the observation of every marker on at least one occasion) shall be agreed with the External Examiner. These arrangements should, where possible, include the submission of evidence of each student's performance, for example via recordings, copies of PowerPoint slides, or a written script. Where recordings are made, all students undertaking an assessment must be recorded in order to ensure consistency of practice; a monitor will sample the recordings and a Monitoring Form will be completed in the manner set out for written work in paragraph 5.4 above. For work at Level 3 or Level 4 and for work weighted at 10% or less of total module assessment, only one marker need be present and the procedures set out above need not apply. These requirements shall also apply to the assessment of 'live' performances, subject to the agreement of the External Examiner.

## 5.8 Practical work

Practical work (other than written work arising therefrom) shall be subject to monitoring according to established professional procedures, and/or as agreed with External Examiners and approved by validation panels. No student shall be recorded as having failed without a second opinion having been obtained. Written assessments arising from practical work shall be subject to the normal procedures set out in paragraphs 5.2 to 5.4 above.

## 5.9 *Viva Voce* examination

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In exceptional circumstances, examiners are empowered to conduct a *viva voce* (oral) examination. This form of additional assessment may be used to:

- i) determine difficult or borderline cases (from which the outcome can only be to raise or confirm a student's marks);
- ii) assist the Chair of a Module Assessment Board to decide whether there is a *prima facie* case in respect of an alleged breach of academic integrity.

The student must be informed in writing at least seven days in advance that she/he is required to attend for a *viva voce*, stating clearly the time and place, and the name(s) of the examiners conducting the process. Written records of the *viva voce* must be kept which are then reported in the minutes of the Module Assessment Board.

It must be ascertained whether the student has any declared disability that may affect their ability to reflect their knowledge in a *viva voce* examination and where this might be the case Student Services should be consulted to ensure any required reasonable adjustments are put in place.

## 5.10 Complaints about provisional marks

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A student who wishes to complain about a provisional mark should submit a case in writing to the Departmental Assessment Contact, who shall investigate whether there has been a procedural or administrative irregularity and notify the student accordingly, in writing. Any such irregularity shall be reported to the Module Assessment Board and, in exceptional cases, to the Awards Assessment Board. A student who wishes to complain about a mark following the final Awards Assessment Board of the academic session should follow the University's Academic Appeals procedure (see Handbook F10). Complaints and appeals against academic judgment are not permitted.

## 5.11 Feedback on assessed work

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Written feedback on coursework (other than for final-year dissertations) shall normally be available to students in good time to be of assistance in preparation for the next assignment (where applicable) and within 20 working days of the submission deadline. Feedback shall show the agreed internal mark following the monitoring process. In cases where, for good reason, the 20 working day schedule cannot be adhered to, students shall be notified by the relevant Subject Department with an accompanying rationale and a revised schedule. (Notification may be through letters, e-mails or an announcement on the Portal, as appropriate).

Feedback on dissertations may be deferred until after the relevant Module Assessment Board has met, but students shall be informed of departmental practice on this matter. In a case of a suspected breach of academic integrity, the initial letter of accusation to the student shall stand in place of the normal feedback.

A student who submits written coursework early shall not be given feedback until after the submission deadline.

Departments and Programme Teams shall not return examination scripts to students but shall offer feedback in some format to all students sitting the exam. This will be done without prejudice to the outcome of any reassessment. Departments wishing to provide individual written feedback to students on exam performance, including the disclosure of provisionally-agreed marks for each answer, may do so but must ensure that such feedback is given to all students who took the exam in question. A clear rationale must also be provided to students in cases where there is written feedback on some exams for which a Department is responsible, but not all. Boards of Studies shall approve the rationale and the means by which it is communicated to students.

For oral presentations and other forms of non-written assessment, students shall normally receive written feedback within three working weeks, even if supported by oral feedback. Feedback shall show the agreed internal mark, following the second-marking process. (The three weeks shall not include days when the University is officially closed.) Cases where, exceptionally and for good reason, the three-week schedule cannot be adhered to shall be notified to students with a rationale, as for feedback on written work (above).

## 5.12 Reassessed/Deferred work

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When marking reassessed or deferred work, in circumstances in which the total number of scripts is often very small, the requirements for monitoring shall be interpreted flexibly within the spirit of paragraphs 5.2 to 5.4 above. All work proposed (before adjustment for reassessment) for a mark of 40% or below (50% or below for Levels 7 and 8) shall be monitored, plus a representative sample of work proposed for higher marks (prior to any adjustment to 40%/50%). All work subject to monitoring shall be recorded on the Monitoring Form in the standard fashion, with a sample made available to the External Examiner, whose rights and responsibilities are as set out both above and in Handbook F12. Paragraphs 5.5 to 5.8 shall be observed without modification.

## 5.13 Staff development

Every Faculty or department shall hold staff development in relation to assessment, such as a marking exercise, in advance of a major assessment period at least once a year.

## 5.14 Retention of student work

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Each Faculty or department shall retain an archive of all assessed written work, and, where possible, work in other media, representing a sample of students from each module. This should include the work of students ranked at the top, in the middle, at a threshold pass level, and (where applicable) as a clear fail. The work of a minimum of four students per module shall be retained on an annual basis and kept for a minimum period of five years, for purposes of internal and external review and as a means of comparing marking standards over a period of time. Copies of the originals are acceptable for retention purposes.

Provided that the requirements above are fulfilled, the only reasons to retain students' work once internal marking has been completed are for the benefit of external examiners and assessment boards, and in case of academic appeal or a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy. Once a department is satisfied that work is no longer needed for these purposes, it can be returned to students (or copies destroyed if originals have already been returned to students as feedback), although every effort should be made to vary questions set from one year to another to guard against plagiarism through being handed down the cohorts. A student who formally accepts a degree cannot subsequently appeal, so there is no need to retain all students' work for any length of time after the graduation ceremony.

## 5.15 Requirements for Excess Word Count

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A penalty for excessive word count shall be applied to all programmes of study that use numerical marking.

The word count shall not include appendices, bibliographies or references to sources. Quotations may also be excluded from the word count at the discretion of the relevant Module Assessment Board, but students must be notified via the module handbook of the Assessment Board's practice on this matter.

Wherever possible, on the basis of the electronic word count facility, students should include the number of words written, excluding the relevant items above, on the front of the assignment cover sheet or at the end of the assignment.

There will be a 10% leeway allowed above the specified word count before the penalty is imposed.

Assignments must be marked in their entirety and the penalty imposed at the end.

The penalty for exceeding the word count will be 5 marks per 1000 words excess (e.g. a 1000-word assignment should have 5 marks deducted if it runs to 1101-2100 words, 10 marks deducted for 2101-3100 words, and so on).

Details of the word count penalty shall be included in all programme or module handbooks where numeric marking scales are used.

Guidelines on this requirement are in Appendix 5C.



University of  
Chester

# Quality and Standards Manual

## Academic Conduct Policy for Taught Assessment

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Approved by:	
Owner:	Academic Services
Contact:	<a href="mailto:aqs@chester.ac.uk">aqs@chester.ac.uk</a>
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## Contents

PART A: THE ACADEMIC CONDUCT POLICY.....	2
1. Maintaining Academic Conduct .....	2
2. Breaches of Academic Conduct.....	3
PART B: OVERVIEW OF PROCEDURE .....	4
3. Introduction .....	4
4. Roles, Rights and Responsibilities .....	5
5. Categorisation and Recording Breaches of the Academic Conduct Policy.....	6
PART C: ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT PROCEDURE (COURSEWORK).....	8
6. Identifying a Suspected Breach of the Academic Conduct Policy.....	8
7. Use of a <i>Viva Voce</i> .....	9
8. Unacceptable Academic Practice at Level 3 and Level 4 only.....	10
9. Independent Review Mechanism (Level 3 or Level 4 only).....	11
10. Departmental Meeting with Students .....	11
11. Defence of the Allegation.....	12
12. Mitigation.....	12
PART D: ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT PROCEDURE (Examinations) .....	13
13. Definition of an Examination.....	13
14. Suspecting a Breach of the Academic Conduct Policy .....	13
PART E: STANDARD PENALTY .....	14
15. Determination of Eligibility & Authorisation of a Standard Penalty .....	14
16. Application of a Standard Penalty.....	15
PART F: CONFORMATION OF ACADEMIC CONDUCT BREACH AND PENALTY IMPLEMENTATION .....	16
17. Confirming a breach of the Academic Conduct Policy.....	16
PART G: ACADEMIC CONDUCT REVIEW PANEL .....	16
18. Scope and Composition of the Academic Conduct Review Panel.....	16
19. Scheduling and Notification .....	17
20. Requests to Defer a Hearing .....	18
21. Conduct of Hearings of the Academic Conduct Review Panel.....	18
22. Decisions of the Academic Conduct Review Panel .....	19
PART H: PENALTIES .....	20
23. Penalties.....	20
24. Penalties for proven allegations of Unacceptable Academic Practice .....	21
25. Penalties for Academic Misconduct.....	22

PART I: REVIEWS AND APPEALS RELATING TO BREACHES OF ACADEMIC CONDUCT	
26. Independent Review of the penalty issued by Academic Services. ....	23
27. Appeals relating to breaches of the Academic Conduct Policy.....	24
PART J: ADMINISTRATION .....	24
28. Reporting Outcomes .....	24
PART K: SUPPORTING FORMS AND DOCUMENTS.....	26

The University of Chester values its students’ contribution to the necessary quality of its academic standards and awards by adhering to the principles of academic conduct and fair play in assessment. These standards are upheld when students, completing work for assessment, act honestly and take responsibility for the fair presentation of the contents of any work they produce for assessment. This means that students will do nothing that has the potential for them to gain an unfair advantage in assessment.

## PART A: THE ACADEMIC CONDUCT POLICY

### 1. Maintaining Academic Conduct

1.1 In order to adhere to the University’s definition of academic conduct, students are expected to abide by the following conventions when completing work for assessment:

- 1.1.1. Acknowledge all sources of information, knowledge and ideas used when completing work for assessment by consistently and correctly using an acceptable referencing system;
- 1.1.2. Produce work that is the product of their own, individual efforts. An exception to this is where an assignment brief specifically requires a single piece of work be submitted on behalf of a group of students.
- 1.1.3. Declare when they have used work before in a previous assessment (whether successful or not) using an acceptable referencing system;
- 1.1.4. Present accurate information and data that has been obtained appropriately and which is a fair representation of their own endeavours, knowledge and understanding;
- 1.1.5. Adhere to and comply with all applicable regulatory, legal and professional obligations and ethical requirements therein.

The University will make information on how to maintain academic conduct available to students in ways that are appropriate and accessible. However, at all times, it is the sole responsibility of the student to act in a way that is consistent with the Academic Conduct Policy and to seek advice and guidance if they are unclear.

Academic Services (AS) will maintain and manage the Academic Conduct Policy.



## 2. Breaches of Academic Conduct

A student will be regarded as being in breach of the Academic Conduct Policy if they act or behave in a manner that is inconsistent with the University's general definition of academic conduct or the specific statements given in 1.1.

A breach of the Academic Conduct Policy may occur when a student knowingly acts in a way that is contrary to the policy or does so inadvertently by means of careless scholarship.

Inexperience, intention, lack of intention or unfamiliarity with the Academic Conduct Policy will not be regarded as a defence in the event that the policy is breached.

The decision of whether a student has breached the Policy is one of Academic Judgement.

Any breach of the Academic Conduct Policy will be categorised as either unacceptable academic practice or academic misconduct. These are dealt with in different ways according to the published procedure described in Part B onwards.

Examples of unacceptable academic practice:

**Plagiarism:** the use of ideas, intellectual property or work of others without acknowledgement or, where relevant, permission.

**Reuse of previously submitted material:** the use of work, without appropriate referencing, that has been submitted for assessment, whether successful or not, by the same student in this University or any other institution. This will not apply where a student is making a resubmission for the same assessment component in the same module, unless specifically prohibited in the assessment information.

**Collusion:** the unauthorised collaboration between two or more students resulting in the submission of work that is unreasonably similar, but which is submitted as being the product of the submitting student's individual efforts.

**Unacknowledged use of Artificial Intelligence:** Where artificial intelligence has been used to support the assessment without proper acknowledgement.

Examples of academic misconduct include:

**Falsification:** the presentation of fictitious or distorted documents, data, evidence or any other material, including submitting the work of another person as if it is their own. This includes the submission of false evidence in an application for Exceptional Circumstances or to the Academic Appeals Board.

**Falsification by Artificial Intelligence:** A misrepresentation of knowledge. Where a student used artificial intelligence to complete the assessment [*in part or full*].

**Research misconduct:** failure to obtain ethical approval for a research project or failure to comply with regulatory, legal and professional obligations for research projects.

**Cheating:** any action before, during or after an assessment or examination which has the potential for the student to gain an unfair advantage in assessment or assists another student to do so. This includes failure to adhere to the examination regulations.

**Commissioning (Contract Cheating):** engaging another person or organisation to complete or undertake an assessment, in part or in full, whether a financial transaction has taken place or not.

These lists are not exhaustive and the Academic Conduct Policy might be breached in ways not specifically referred to here.

The University will take steps to detect potential breaches of the Academic Conduct Policy which might not be immediately apparent when work is marked anonymously. Following completion of the marking process, once marks have been de-anonymised, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board might authorise a viva voce. The purpose of this will be to confirm the authenticity of the work that has been submitted.

Suspected breaches of the Academic Conduct Policy will be initially referred by the relevant marker to the relevant Chair of the Module Assessment Board in accordance with the published procedure described in Part B onwards. The decision of the Chair of the Module Assessment Board will be communicated to Academic Services who will confirm the decision and notify the student, Registry Services and the department which presented the case, of any penalties or other impact.

Except in the case of unacceptable academic practice by students studying at Level 3 or Level 4, a breach of the Academic Conduct Policy can only be confirmed by Academic Services, the Academic Conduct Review Panel or an independent Chair of the Academic Conduct Review Panel.

## PART B: OVERVIEW OF PROCEDURE

### 3. Introduction

3.1. The University of Chester expects that when completing work for assessment, students will act honestly and take responsibility for the contents of the work that they submit. This means that students must adhere to the University's Academic Conduct Policy and do nothing that has the potential for them to gain an unfair advantage in assessment.

3.2. Where a tutor responsible for marking work suspects that a student has submitted work that breaches the Academic Conduct Policy, they have an obligation to report it for investigation. This ensures that:

3.2.1. Marks and academic credit are awarded for work which accurately reflects the true efforts and abilities of the student;

3.2.2. The efforts of students who have not breached the Academic Conduct Policy are recognised by ensuring that those who have produced work by unfair means are not advantaged for doing so; and

3.2.3. Employers and members of the public can have confidence that everyone who holds a University of Chester award has undergone a rigorous assessment process and has achieved an award that reflects their true knowledge and ability.

3.3. Throughout this procedure, where reference is made to a specific post-holder, the line manager of that post-holder may nominate another person to act instead.

3.4. Throughout this procedure, where reference is made to a particular timescale, it is given in calendar days. Where communications are sent via email no later than 5pm Monday-Friday, they will be deemed to have been received the same day.

#### 4. Roles, Rights and Responsibilities

4.1. The University accepts that when a student is accused of submitting work that breaches the Academic Conduct Policy, they might find the process stressful. The University takes steps to minimise any distress caused to the student by:

4.1.1. Dealing with the matter as quickly as possible, whilst ensuring that this procedure is followed correctly;

4.1.2. At every stage, giving clear information about the procedure and the role that the student is expected to take;

4.1.3. Recognising that breaches of academic conduct relate to pieces of assessment and are not judgements about the character of the individual student involved; and

4.1.4. Arriving at an outcome that is just, proportionate and, where appropriate, takes into account the individual circumstances of the student.

4.2. To ensure that each case is dealt with fairly, different people will be involved at each stage. These are referred to throughout the procedure. Some of the key figures involved are:

4.2.1. The Examiner: this is the tutor who is responsible for marking assessment submissions;

4.2.2. The Monitor: this is another tutor who will review the assessment submission and agree a mark to be released if the student is eligible to receive a mark at the end of the procedure.

4.2.3. Chair of the Module Assessment Board: this is usually the Head of Department (or equivalent) who is responsible for making an allegation, conducting a meeting with the student and determining, on the balance of probability, whether the Policy has been breached. The Chair of the Module Assessment Board can also nominate other members of academic staff to undertake this role for them. Reference in this procedure to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board should be taken to refer to their nominee where another person is appointed to act instead.

4.2.4. Academic Services (AS): the Student Casework team in Academic Services is responsible for administering this procedure once allegations are sent from departments.

4.3. In some cases, for students at Level 3 or Level 4, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board is able to make a decision that a piece of work is in breach of the Academic Conduct Policy without the case being confirmed by Academic Services or considered by the Academic Conduct Review Panel. However, a student is allowed to ask for a review of that decision if they have good reason to do so.

4.4. For students at Level 5 or higher, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board uses their academic judgment, based on evidence, to determine whether or not a piece of work is in

breach of the Academic Conduct Policy. Students are given the opportunity to present a defence and, as appropriate, any mitigation to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board to assist them in making that determination.

4.5. If the Chair of the Module Assessment Board determines that, in their academic judgement, a piece of work does breach the Academic Conduct Policy, this decision must be confirmed by Academic Services before any penalty is applied. This ensures a consistent approach across the University. Academic Services will normally confirm the decision of the Chair of the Module Assessment Board as long as the available evidence clearly supports the decision.

4.6. A student whose work is suspected of breaching the Academic Conduct Policy will, in every case, be invited to a meeting with the Chair of the Module Assessment Board. They may choose to attend this meeting and/or make written statements. If a student chooses not to attend the meeting nor provide the Chair of the Module Assessment Board with any written statements, it will be assumed that they do not wish to present a defence of the allegation.

4.7. A student who chooses not to present a defence of an allegation is still entitled to send a statement and/or evidence outlining any mitigating factors, as per Clause 12, to Academic Services, by email, within seven days of the meeting with the Chair of the Module Assessment Board.

4.8. To ensure that the procedure is handled as efficiently as possible, all communication will normally be sent to the student's University of Chester email address only. It is the responsibility of each student to check their email account regularly.

4.9. When determining whether or not a piece of work is in breach of the Academic Conduct Policy, the University does not take into consideration whether or not the student concerned acted deliberately.

4.10. Where a piece of work found to be in breach of the Academic Conduct Policy is nevertheless eligible for marking, it is the responsibility of the Chair of the Module Assessment Board to ensure that this is done so in accordance with Handbook F, Section 5 of the Quality and Standards Manual.

4.11. In all circumstances, where an allegation of a breach of the Academic Conduct Policy is found to have been proven, the student shall not normally be permitted a deferral of the assessment component.

4.12. At the point of submitting an application to defer an assessment after submission, students will be advised that a proven breach of the Academic Conduct Policy in the assessment component(s) for which they are seeking a deferral will normally override any decision to approve the request.

## 5. Categorisation and Recording Breaches of the Academic Conduct Policy

5.1. In order to deal appropriately with the different ways in which the Academic Conduct Policy might be breached, each allegation will be provisionally categorised. The assigned category will be determined by the nature of the suspected breach.

5.2. The following will normally be categorised as unacceptable academic practice:

- 5.2.1. Plagiarism
- 5.2.2. Reuse of previously submitted work
- 5.2.3. Collusion
- 5.2.4. Unacknowledged use of Artificial Intelligence

5.3. The following will normally be categorised as academic misconduct:

- 5.3.1. Commissioning (Contract Cheating)
- 5.3.2. Falsification
- 5.3.3. Research misconduct. Including falsification of data
- 5.3.4. Failure to abide by the examination regulations
- 5.3.5. Cheating or other types of dishonesty
- 5.3.6. Fabrication of evidence or official documentation
- 5.3.7. Falsification by use of Artificial Intelligence

5.4. Other acts, not specifically listed here, might also be regarded as breaches of the Academic Conduct Policy. Where this happens, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board may take advice from the Student Casework Manager before making a decision about the provisional category.

5.5. In the case of students registered at Level 3 or Level 4, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board can confirm that a student has breached the Policy by means of unacceptable practice and impose a penalty as detailed in Part C8. For allegations at all other levels, or allegations of academic misconduct, the Chair of the Module assessment Board can determine, in their academic judgment, that the Policy has been breached, but Academic Services must confirm the decision.

5.6. Allegations of breaches of the Academic Conduct Policy that are confirmed proven will be recorded as academic offences. Details of allegations and recorded offences will be held electronically by Academic Services. Registry will hold details of recorded offences and any penalties applied.

5.7. In the event that a student has multiple allegations brought against them at Level 5 or higher, any previous offences of unacceptable academic practice will be considered as either spent or unspent for the purposes of determining an appropriate penalty. Offences that are spent will not be considered as factors when determining a penalty for any further breaches of the Academic Conduct Policy by means of unacceptable academic practice.

5.7.1. Offences of unacceptable academic practice relating to assessments at Level 3 or Level 4 will be regarded as spent when the student starts study at Level 5.

5.7.2. One initial offence of unacceptable academic practice at Level 5 or higher, if the student was eligible for a standard penalty, will be regarded as spent if the student successfully completes or attempts the Academic Conduct Course.

5.7.3. All other offences will be considered unspent.

5.8. If a student withdraws from the University, or signals their intention to withdraw, before an allegation of a breach of the Academic Conduct Policy has been resolved, the matter will continue to be investigated in accordance with this procedure. The purpose of this will be to determine what, if any mark, should appear on the former student's transcript for the assessment concerned.

## PART C: ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT PROCEDURE (COURSEWORK)

### 6. Identifying a Suspected Breach of the Academic Conduct Policy

6.1. This clause does not apply where work submitted for a Level 3 or Level 4 module is suspected of breaching the Academic Conduct Policy by means of unacceptable academic practice (plagiarism, reuse of previously submitted material or collusion only). In these cases, clause 8 applies.

6.2. Where the examiner believes that there is evidence that a piece of work is in breach of the Academic Conduct Policy, they will make a report to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board by submitting Form AC-1. This will detail the suspected breach and be accompanied by evidence.

6.3. If the examiner suspects that the student may have submitted work that has been completed by someone else, but where there is no documentary evidence to substantiate this, the examiner should consult with the Chair of the Module Assessment Board. Where necessary, the student may be required to attend a *viva voce* (see Clause 7).

6.4. If, in an application for ethical approval, an academic appeal or exceptional circumstances request there is suspicion that the documents in support of an application may have been falsified or fabricated, the relevant member of staff may make some limited investigation in order to verify the authenticity of those documents. If, having undertaken these investigations, they suspect that the student might be in breach of the Academic Conduct Policy, using Form AC-1 they will make a report to the relevant Chair of the Module Assessment Board who will deal with the matter as if a suspected breach had been referred by the examiner.

6.5. No mark will be disclosed to the student. However, if the suspicion arises after a provisional mark has been disclosed, this will not constitute a procedural irregularity. Where provisional marks have been entered onto electronic student systems, they should normally be removed while the matter is investigated.

6.6. The Chair of the Module Assessment Board will review the report from the examiner and decide whether to investigate the matter further.

6.7. If the Chair of the Module Assessment Board decides that there is no case to answer, they will give reasons to the examiner. The examiner will then complete the assessment according to the normal process.

6.8. If the Chair of the Module Assessment Board decides that the matter should be investigated further they will:

6.8.1. Write to the student (by email), to notify them of the allegation and give an opportunity for the student to request a meeting to discuss it. A template for this purpose is given at Form Allegation Notification.

6.8.1.2. The time and date of the meeting will be at the discretion of the Chair of the Module Assessment Board but will normally take place no sooner than 7 days after the allegation has been sent and no later than 21 days after.

6.8.1.3. The letter inviting the student to the meeting will be accompanied by a copy of the Form AC-1 and the evidence being relied upon.

6.8.1.4. The student can attend the meeting with another registered student of the University or by an officer of Chester Students' Union if they wish.

6.8.1.5. The student will be invited to present any documents or evidence that provide a defence to, or mitigation, of the allegation presented.

6.9. The purpose of the meeting will be to assist the Chair of the Module Assessment Board in their investigation to establish whether on the balance of probability the student's work breaches the Academic Conduct Policy. Where appropriate, it may also be taken as an opportunity to talk to the student about approaches to good academic practice.

6.10. In the event that the Chair of the Module Assessment Board determines that a piece of work has breached the Academic Conduct Policy, any mitigation that has been presented by the student will be taken into consideration for the purposes of determining an appropriate penalty from Part H. Mitigation however, will never void a proven allegation that an assignment was in breach of the Academic Conduct Policy.

6.11. If the student does not attend the meeting, it should not be delayed. Instead the Chair of the Module Assessment Board should decide on an outcome to their investigation in the student's absence.

6.12. A student may defer the meeting with the Chair of the Module Assessment Board on one occasion, with, where reasonable, 48 hours' notice and only on the reasons cited within clause 20.1.

## 7. Use of a *Viva Voce*

7.1. If the examiner suspects that a student may have submitted work that has been completed by someone else, but there is no documentary evidence, they may ask the Chair of the Module Assessment Board to authorise a *viva voce*. This is similar to an oral examination and gives the examiner the opportunity to talk to the student about the contents of the work.

7.2. If a *viva voce* is required, it is regarded as a continuation of the assessment. Its only purpose will be to help to decide whether, on the balance of probabilities, the student is the author of the work that they have submitted.

7.3. The *viva voce* will be conducted in accordance with the procedure set out at *Viva Voce Policy (Appendix 6D)*.

7.4. Under no circumstances will an allegation of a breach of the Academic Conduct Policy be put formally to a student during or immediately following the conduct of a *viva voce*.

Instead, a report of the *viva voce* must be sent to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board, who will decide whether to conduct an investigation into a possible breach of the Academic Conduct Policy and follow the procedure set out in Clause 6.

7.5. If the student fails to attend a *viva voce* the Chair of the Module Assessment Board may draw any conclusion from this that they wish when deciding whether to conduct an investigation.

7.6. The Academic Conduct Process may be paused at any time for a *viva voce* to be conducted where, through the academic conduct investigation, the examiner or Chair of the Module Assessment Board believes that the assessment may not be the student's own work (commissioned).

## 8. Unacceptable academic practice at Level 3 and Level 4 only

8.1. If the examiner believes that work submitted for a Level 3 or Level 4 module breaches the Academic Conduct Policy by means of unacceptable academic practice (plagiarism, reuse of previously submitted material or collusion), they should continue to mark the work, but shall disregard those elements that they believe constitute the breach. The provisional mark will be based on the remainder of the work, which the examiner believes to have been produced by fair means, and with reference to the applicable marking criteria.

8.2. The examiner should markup the submission to show which parts of it have been disregarded and give feedback as appropriate.

8.3. The examiner must complete Form AC-X Level 3 or Level 4 unacceptable academic practice. This form confirms that the mark has been affected by a breach of the Academic Conduct Policy and gives a brief description of the suspected breach.

8.4. The Form AC-X should be submitted to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board with a copy of the work and any other evidence required to substantiate the breach of the Academic Conduct Policy.

8.5. The Chair of the Module Assessment Board will decide either:

8.5.1. That the submission does breach the Academic Conduct Policy by means of unacceptable practice and that they should be warned as to their future conduct; or

8.5.2. That the submission breaches the Academic Conduct Policy, but suspects academic misconduct; or

8.5.3. That the submission does not breach the Academic Conduct Policy.

8.6. Where the Chair of the Module Assessment Board decides that the submission does breach the Academic Conduct Policy by means of unacceptable academic practice, they will:

8.6.1. Make provision for the student to have a meeting with a member of staff from the department to discuss the case and support to aid their development of good academic practice;

8.6.2. Send a copy of the Form AC-X to the student which shall act as a warning as to their future conduct and invite them to a meeting;

8.6.3. Act to agree an appropriate provisional mark that should be awarded for the work; and



8.6.4. Following the date of the meeting with the student, send a copy of the Form AC-X to Academic Services for statistical monitoring.

8.7. Where the Chair of the Module Assessment Board suspects that the submission breaches the Academic Conduct Policy, but by means of academic misconduct, they will follow the procedure set out in Clause 6.

8.8. Where the Chair of the Module Assessment Board decides that the submission does not breach the Academic Conduct Policy, they should give reasons to the examiner and instruct that the work is marked in its entirety in the normal way. All paperwork relating to the case will be destroyed.

## 9. Independent Review Mechanism (Level 3 or Level 4 only)

9.1. In the case of a student registered at Level 3 or Level 4, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board can decide that the Academic Conduct Policy has been breached by means of unacceptable academic practice. However, the student may request an independent review of that decision.

9.2. Within 7 days of the date that the Form AC-X was signed by the Chair of the Module Assessment Board, a student who wishes to dispute the decision may email [academicconduct@chester.ac.uk](mailto:academicconduct@chester.ac.uk) to request a review. Such a request will only be considered if, in the opinion of the Head of Academic Quality and Standards or nominee, the following criteria have been met:

9.2.1. The student attended a meeting with the Chair of the Module Assessment Board arranged to discuss the matter; and

9.2.2. The student advances a reasonable case for their disagreement with the finding. Statements that the Chair of the Module Assessment Board was simply mistaken in their decision without a compelling explanation will not be admissible.

9.3. Where a student fails to advance a reason for disagreement within 7 days of the meeting, they will be deemed to have failed to satisfy the criteria given at 9.2.2. and the decision of the Chair of the Module Assessment Board will stand.

9.4. Where the Head of Academic Quality and Standards or nominee is satisfied that the criteria to request a review have been met, the case file (all forms and evidence) will be sent to a Chair of the Academic Conduct Review Panel who has had no involvement in the case and who is independent of any department hosting the student's programme of study.

9.5. The Chair of the Academic Conduct Review Panel may, if they wish, interview the student, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board and/or the referring examiner.

9.6. The decision of the Chair of the Academic Conduct Review Panel will be final and binding on all parties. It will be communicated in writing normally no later than 28 days following the request for a review.

## 10. Departmental Meeting with Students

10.1. During the meeting the Chair of the Module Assessment Board will complete the remaining sections of Form AC- 1. If the student does not attend the meeting, this form should be completed in their absence and sent to the student via their University of Chester email address along with all other case documents.

10.2. If the outcome of the investigation by the Chair of the Module Assessment Board is that the student's work does not breach the Academic Conduct Policy:

10.2.1. The form AC-1 will be completed and a copy provided to the student;

10.2.2. The examiner will be informed and given a reason for the decision. The examiner will then complete the assessment according to the normal process; and

10.2.3. All paperwork relating to the case will be destroyed.

10.3. If the outcome of the investigation by the Chair of the Module Assessment Board is that the student's work has breached the Academic Conduct Policy:

10.3.1. The Form AC-1 will be completed and a copy provided to the student; and

10.3.2. A copy of Form AC-1, the accompanying evidence and any documents or statements submitted by the student will be sent to Academic Services as per Part F.

## 11. Defence of the allegation

11.1. The student is entitled to present a defence of the allegation to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board. They may do this by submitting their argument and evidence which substantiates their claims either in person at the meeting with the Chair of the Module Assessment Board, or by email prior to the meeting taking place.

11.2. The defence of an allegation may include communications, drafts or research documents which, on the balance of probability, indicate that the submission is completely the student's own work in line with the policy. A student may present what they believe to be relevant.

11.3. Presentation of fraudulent documents as a defence is considered a serious offence of academic misconduct and may lead to the termination of studies.

11.4. Neither intent, nor ignorance of the policy is considered a defence of the allegation. The Chair of the Module Assessment Board and marking tutor are determining whether the submitted work has breached the Academic Conduct Policy

11.5. Upon consideration of the documents and reason presented as a defence, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board may change or withdraw the allegation presented.

11.6. There are no further opportunities in which a student can present a defence of the allegation.

## 12. Mitigation

12.1. If the Chair of the Module Assessment Board decides that a piece of work does breach the Academic Conduct Policy, and Academic Services confirms this decision, any mitigation will be considered when determining an appropriate penalty.

12.2. A student may make statements and/or present evidence of factors which they believe may have had an impact on their ability to submit work in accordance with the Academic Conduct Policy.

12.3. Where mitigation is accepted it will be considered only when determining an appropriate penalty. There are no circumstances in which mitigation can void a finding that a piece of work breaches the Academic Conduct Policy.

12.4. Mitigation can be presented to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board prior to or during the meeting with them, or within seven days of such a meeting, by email to Academic Services.

## PART D: ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT PROCEDURE (Examinations)

### 13. Definition of an Examination

13.1. For the purpose of this procedure, an examination will be regarded as a timed assessment which students are expected to undergo at a specific time and place, notified beforehand, and conducted in accordance with the rules set out in Handbook F, Section 4. This may include class tests.

13.2. Notwithstanding 13.1., other assessments may be regarded as an examination, depending on the context of a specific discipline. Where it may not be immediately clear that an assessment is an examination, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board will, if required, take advice from the Quality Manager (Student Casework) and determine whether Part C or Part D of this procedure will apply.

### 14. Suspecting a Breach of the Academic Conduct Policy

14.1. If an invigilator suspects that a candidate may be in breach of the Academic Conduct Policy during an examination they will:

14.1.1. (If no other candidates are being disturbed) permit the candidate to continue with the examination. However, they will immediately require another invigilator to act as a witness. Where unauthorised materials are identified, they will be removed if possible. The script (or equivalent) will be endorsed by the invigilator at the point that the suspected breach is believed to have occurred. The front cover of the script (or equivalent) will also be endorsed. In a practical examination, the point at which the breach was suspected will be noted.

14.1.2. (If other candidates are being, or may be, disturbed) the candidate will be required to withdraw from the examination room. The script (or equivalent) will be endorsed and it will be noted that the candidate's examination was terminated. The chief invigilator should extend the examination by a length of time equivalent to deal with the disturbance. At the conclusion of the examination, the matter should be reported to the Deputy Registrar.

14.2. The invigilator will require the candidate to report to them at the end of the examination when there will be a meeting with an individual appointed by the Deputy Registrar or the Chair of the Module Assessment Board for this purpose and who will be known as the Examinations Officer.

14.3. The Examinations Officer will make a written record of the circumstances and retain any relevant materials. They will require the invigilator to make a written report, normally within three days.

14.4. Where it is not practical to retain any relevant materials, appropriate notes detailing their nature and reasons why they could not be retained should be made. If possible and appropriate, photographic evidence may also be gathered.

14.5. Normally within four days of receiving the invigilator's report, the Examinations Officer will complete Form AC-EX and submit it, with the invigilator's report and any retained materials to the relevant Chair of the Module Assessment Board.

14.6. Normally within ten days of receiving the Examination Officer's submission, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board will determine whether there exists, prima facie, evidence that the candidate might have breached the Academic Conduct Policy. They may, if they wish, choose to interview the candidate and/or the invigilator before making such a determination.

14.7. If the Chair of the Module Assessment Board determines that there is insufficient evidence, they will decide that no breach of the Academic Conduct Policy has occurred. In this situation, they will instruct either:

14.7.1. That the candidate's script is marked in accordance with the relevant procedures; or

14.7.2. That the candidate's assessment is deferred.

14.8. If the Chair of the Module Assessment Board determines that there is prima facie evidence that the candidate might have breached the Academic Conduct Policy they will refer the matter to Academic Services. They will prepare the following case file:

14.8.1. A brief report, outlining the reasons for the decision and a request that the matter be considered by the Academic Conduct Review Panel;

14.8.2. The full submission received from the Examinations Officer; and

14.8.3. Any relevant correspondence between the candidate and the department in relation to the matter.

14.9. All suspected breaches of the Academic Conduct Policy arising from an examination will be provisionally regarded as academic misconduct.

14.10. Where a student submits an application for exceptional circumstances or makes an Academic Appeal in relation to an examination and there is suspicion that documents submitted in support of this may have been falsified or fabricated, clause 6.4. of this procedure applies.

## PART E: STANDARD PENALTY

### 15. Determination of Eligibility & authorisation of a Standard Penalty

15.1. Once the case file has been received by Academic Services, the Student Casework Manager or nominee, will decide whether the student is eligible for consideration of a standard penalty. Eligibility will be confirmed where all of the following criteria are met:

15.1.1. The provisional categorisation of the suspected breach of the Academic Conduct Policy is by unacceptable academic practice only;

15.1.2. The student has not previously been found to have breached the Academic Conduct Policy, in either category, at Level 5 or higher;

15.1.3. If required, the student would normally be entitled to a further attempt at the assessment; and

15.1.4. Sufficient evidence has been presented which demonstrates that the student has breached the Academic Conduct Policy by means of unacceptable academic practice.

15.2. Where all of the criteria at 15.1. apply, the Student Casework Manager or nominee will authorise the issue of a standard penalty in accordance with the provisions of Clause 16.

15.3. Where one, or more, of the criteria at 15.1. do not apply, the case will be considered under Part F of this procedure.

15.4. The decision to issue a standard penalty will be communicated to the student via their University of Chester email address, and to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board, normally within 14 days.

## 16. Application of a Standard Penalty

16.1. Once Academic Services has authorised the issuing of a standard penalty, they will email the student to explain that they are required to complete the Academic Conduct Course within 14 days in accordance with Standard Penalty Guidance (*Appendix 6F*) of this procedure.

16.2. Following notification to the student, Academic Services will email the Chair of the Module Assessment Board who will be asked to ensure that a mark, based on those elements which the examiner decides have been produced by fair means, is determined. The work must be marked and moderated in accordance with the requirements of Handbook F, Section 5 and a provisional mark sent to Academic Services using Form AC-0. AS will state a deadline for the return of the form.

16.3. If the student successfully completes the Academic Conduct Course, they will be notified of the mark for the assessment as given on the Form AC-0, which will be provisional until ratified by the Module Assessment Board. The offence will be considered spent in the event of any future proven breaches of the Academic Conduct Policy by means of unacceptable academic practice.

16.4. If the student fails to successfully complete the Academic Conduct Course, they will fail, with a mark of zero, the assessment component concerned. The offence will be considered spent in the event of any future proven breaches of the Academic Conduct Policy.

16.5. If the student fails to attempt the Academic Conduct Course by the stipulated deadline, they will fail, with a mark of zero, the assessment component concerned. The offence will be considered unspent in the event of any future proven breaches of the Academic Conduct Policy.

16.6. For the avoidance of doubt, a student will be deemed to have attempted the Academic Conduct Course once they have accessed the timed test component.

16.7. If the student successfully completes the Academic Conduct Course after the Module Assessment Board has met, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board will be responsible for ensuring that the correct assessment procedures are adhered to in order to confirm the mark to be awarded.

## PART F: CONFORMATION OF ACADEMIC CONDUCT BREACH AND PENALTY IMPLEMENTATION

### 17. Confirming a breach of the academic conduct policy

17.1. A case file that has been received by Academic Services but is not eligible for a standard penalty will be checked by the Student Casework Manager or nominee to determine whether the case is eligible for a penalty to be applied as described in PART H, or whether it must be referred to the Academic Conduct Review Panel.

17.2. The Student Casework Manager or nominee will check the case file for the following:

17.2.1. The file contains the minimum of the Form AC-1 and the Turnitin report or similar evidence document(s).

17.2.2. That the Chair of the Module Assessment Board has determined that, in their academic judgment, the work has breached the Academic Conduct Policy and has clearly indicated by what means.

17.2.3. The evidence and explanation provided by the Chair of the Module Assessment Board matches the offence type and reasonably substantiates the allegation.

17.2.4. The student is not eligible for a standard penalty.

17.3. Where all of the above have been met a penalty will be issued in the manner detailed in PART H.

17.4. Where all the above cannot be confirmed the case will either be:

17.4.1. Returned to the department for clarification or correction;

17.4.1.1. Where the documentation requires corrections, the student must be notified and presented with the new documents.

17.4.2. Where the case is deemed to require further questions of the student it will be referred to the Academic Conduct Review Panel (PART G).

## PART G: ACADEMIC CONDUCT REVIEW PANEL

### 18. Scope and Composition of the Academic Conduct Review Panel

18.1. The Academic Conduct Review Panel (the Panel) will meet to hear all allegations which could not be resolved by the procedure outlined in Part F.

18.2. The Panel will consist of a Chair and normally two members drawn from a pool of academic staff appointed by the Head of Academic Quality and Standards on behalf of Education Committee.

18.3. The Student Casework Manager will appoint a procedural advisor to the Panel. In addition to giving regulatory advice, the advisor will be responsible for maintaining an accurate record of the meeting.

18.4. The Chair of the Module Assessment Board or nominee who referred the allegation for consideration will normally be asked to attend the hearing to present the case.

18.5. The University reserves the right to involve such other individuals in the hearing as it sees fit.

18.6. When convening the Panel, the Student Casework Manager will try to ensure, as far as possible, that it is academically independent of the student whose case is to be heard. This will normally be achieved by the following:

18.6.1. At least one of the Panel members will be independent of the Faculty from which the allegation originates; and

18.6.2. The Panel will not contain anyone who has been involved in the teaching or assessment of the student in the module to which the allegation refers.

18.7. All hearings will normally be heard online via Microsoft Teams, unless the Chair of the Academic Conduct Review Panel requires the hearing to be in person, or where Disability and Inclusion (Student Services) declare it is required as a reasonable adjustment.

18.8. All hearings will be recorded to ensure an accurate record has been made as detailed in clause 19.4.

18.9. Staff and students have the opportunity to present their case in writing and in person to the Panel. Other than through these channels, neither students, staff nor any other individual may seek to influence the Panel or in any other way seek to sway the operation of these procedures in relation to a case that has been submitted or which may be submitted in future. Doing so is likely to lead to the deferral of the case and a report being made to the Head of Academic Quality and Standards for further action.

## 19. Scheduling and Notification

19.1. As far as possible, cases identified for hearing by the Panel will be scheduled for the next available meeting, whilst making sure that the provisions of Clause 18 are adhered to.

19.2. Academic Services will send the student an invitation to attend the hearing at least 7 days before it takes place. The invitation will include the date, time and guidance on how to join the meeting. This will be sent to the student's University email account only.

19.3. The invitation letter from Academic Services will tell the student about their right to attend the hearing. It will also explain that the student has the right to submit a written statement if they want to.

19.4. The invitation letter from Academic Services will explain that the student can bring someone with them to the hearing if they want. That person must be a student of the University of Chester: it can be another student, or an officer of Chester Students' Union. If

the student is under 18, they can also be accompanied by a parent or guardian. In all cases such person must bring ID to identify their relationship or position.

19.5. If a copy of the evidence for the case was not sent with the invitation from Academic Services, the student will receive it at least 2 days before the hearing. The evidence will be exactly what was sent to Academic Services by the Chair of the Module Assessment Board.

19.6. If any more evidence is presented within 48 hours of the hearing to the student, or if it becomes available during the hearing, the University will still consider it as part of the case. However, if this happens, the student will be given the option to continue with the hearing or request the hearing is deferred to a later date.

## 20. Requests to Defer a Hearing

20.1. In order to resolve cases as quickly as possible, the Panel may be convened to hear cases at any point in the year, including during vacation periods. Where a hearing has been scheduled during term time a student can request a deferral of their case on one occasion only, for one of the following reasons:

20.1.1. A clash with a scheduled teaching session or assessment.

20.1.2. A clash with a scheduled field trip or with work placement.

20.1.3. A clash with another academic requirement.

20.1.4. Illness of the student, or someone for whom the student has a caring responsibility.

20.1.5. Work commitments (unless the student is part-time, this can only be cited outside of term time weeks).

20.2. In the case of 20.1.1. – 20.1.3. the request must be made no less than 3 days prior to the hearing and be accompanied by written confirmation from an appropriate member of academic staff.

20.3. In the case of 20.1.4. where the student cannot give notice in advance, a request for a deferral must be made as soon as possible following the hearing and, in every case, within no more than 3 days. It must also be accompanied by a valid medical certificate.

20.4. If the Panel meets on a date outside of term time weeks, in addition to the reasons listed in 20.1., a deferral may also be requested on the grounds of a pre-booked holiday.

20.5. Requests to defer a hearing should be made by email to the Student Casework Manager. The process for doing this will be given in the invitation letter.

## 21. Conduct of Hearings of the Academic Conduct Review Panel

21.1. If the student fails to arrive at the hearing, by the time given in their invitation letter, and they have not had a request to defer the hearing approved, the hearing will go ahead in their absence.

21.2. Prior to the hearing, the members of the Panel will have received a copy of the case file submitted to Academic Services by the Chair of the Module Assessment Board or nominee.



In addition, the Panel may take into consideration the following when deciding an appropriate outcome:

21.2.1. Any written statements from the student which were not included in the case file;

21.2.2. Any oral statements that the student wishes to make to the Panel at the hearing and any oral statements made by anyone who accompanies the student to the hearing; and

21.2.3. Any oral statements from any other relevant sources, including the Chair of the Module Assessment Board who referred the case.

21.3. No one else is allowed to attend the hearing on the student's behalf. However, where the student is accompanied to the hearing, the Chair of the Panel may invite that person to make a statement. That statement must be limited to general support of the student and their circumstances. The person accompanying the student is not permitted to answer questions posed to the student by the Panel.

21.4. The hearing will be conducted in two parts:

21.4.1. In the first part the student, anyone accompanying them and the Chair of the Module Assessment Board or nominee will be present. The purpose of this part of the hearing will be to present the evidence to the student, to hear the student's response and any requests for mitigation. This part of the hearing will normally be recorded.

21.4.2. The second part of the hearing will be conducted in private with only the Panel members and the procedural advisor present. The purpose of this part will be for the Panel to review the evidence presented both in writing and during the first part of the hearing and to consider an appropriate outcome. A written record of this part of the hearing will be made.

## 22. Decisions of the Academic Conduct Review Panel

22.1. The outcome of the hearing will consist of:

22.1.1. A decision about whether the student's work has breached the Academic Conduct Policy; and, if the Panel decides that a breach of the policy has occurred,

22.1.2. Whether that breach of the Academic Conduct Policy is by means of unacceptable academic practice or academic misconduct; and

22.1.3. What penalty should be applied. The Panel will be able to impose any penalty listed within Part H Clause 21 as it sees fit to the specifics of the case providing reason.

22.2. If the Panel decides that the student's work does not breach the Academic Conduct Policy, the matter will be referred back to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board who will instruct the examiner to complete the assessment in accordance with the normal procedures.

## PART H: PENALTIES

### 23. Penalties

Where it has been determined that the assessment is in breach of the Academic Conduct Policy a penalty will be issued by Academic Services as detailed in Part H of this policy. Clauses 24 and 25 provide detail and guidance on the penalty which will be issued.

23.1. Notwithstanding the provisions of Clause 24 and 25 the Academic Conduct Review Panel may choose to consider the case in a different penalty stage than the applicable criteria would suggest if it deems that the circumstances of the case warrant it. Where this happens, they will seek advice from the Policy Officer, and reasons for doing so will be documented in the record of the hearing.

#### **Penalty A:**

23.2. The student will be issued with a standard penalty in accordance with Clause 16.

#### **Penalty B:**

23.3. The component in question will be failed with a mark of 0.

23.4. The module in question will be failed with a mark of 0.

#### **Penalty C:**

23.5. The student's final degree classification will be lowered by one class, AND The module in question will be failed with a mark of 0.

23.6. The student's marks on all modules at the same level of study will be capped at the pass threshold, AND the module in question will be failed with a mark of 0.

23.7. The student's marks on all modules at the same level of study will be failed with a mark of 0, AND the module in question will be failed with a mark of 0. Where permitted the student is entitled to reassessment.

#### **Penalty D:**

23.8. The student's programme of study is terminated with immediate effect and they are not permitted to submit any further work for assessment. They will be entitled to an exit award if the total number of credits achieved based on all assessments submitted to date entitles them to one, AND the module in question will be failed with a mark of 0.

23.9. The student's programme of study is terminated with immediate effect and they are not permitted to submit any further work for assessment. All marks for modules not yet ratified by an Assessment Board will be set to zero. They will not be entitled to any award and may not re-enrol at the University for any other programme of study, AND the Component in question will be failed with a mark of 0.

Further penalty information:

23.10. Where a student has three unspent offences their studies will normally be terminated as per Penalty D 23.8.

23.11. Where a student has no further reassessment opportunity remaining, their studies will be terminated as per Penalty D 23.8 except in Standard Penalty cases where 24.5 is applied.

23.12. Where a student has previously been issued a penalty for breaching the Policy, a further proven allegation will result in a penalty from a higher penalty group, irrespective of any previous unspent offences. *E.g.* Where a student received a penalty from Penalty C, any subsequent penalty will be from Penalty D.

## 24. Penalties for proven allegations of Unacceptable Academic Practice

24.1. If Academic Services or the Panel confirms that the student's work has breached the Academic Conduct Policy by means of unacceptable academic practice, the penalty will take into account spent and unspent offences (see 5.7.).

24.2. In allegations of unacceptable practice where there are multiple allegations at the first offence the cases will normally be considered concurrently.

24.3. Any subsequent cases received will be counted consecutively, with the exception of a case where the assessment predates the AC-1 meeting with the Chair of the Module Assessment Board. In such circumstances the case will be considered as concurrent with the earlier cases.

24.4. If the student would be entitled to a reassessment opportunity:

24.4.1. the student has had no previous offences recorded (at any level) and the offence is one of unacceptable practice, the following penalty will be imposed: Penalty A.

24.4.2. Where the student has one previous spent offence of unacceptable practice: Penalty B.

24.4.3. Where the student has one previous unspent offence: Penalty C.

24.4.4. Where the student has two previous unspent offences: Penalty D.

24.5. If the student would not be entitled to a reassessment opportunity and has previously been found to have breached the Academic Conduct Policy, the student's programme of study is terminated with immediate effect and they are not permitted to submit any further work for assessment. They will be entitled to an exit award if the total number of credits achieved based on all assessments submitted to date entitles them to one as per Penalty D.

24.6. Where a student is found to have breached the Policy for the first time at Level 5 or higher and that breach has occurred in the final assessment attempt allowed by the University, Academic Services will decide whether Penalty A or Penalty D should apply. The following normally applies:

24.6.1. Academic Services may choose to consider the case in Penalty A if all of the following criteria hold:

24.6.1.1. The module to which the offence relates permits internal compensation of marks; and

24.6.1.2. The moderated mark recorded on Form AC-0 is compensable (i.e. 20 or higher); and

24.6.1.3. Based on information available to the Panel, there is a mathematical chance that the student can pass the module overall if the moderated mark can be awarded.

24.6.2. Academic Services must consider the case in Penalty D if any of the following criteria hold:

24.6.2.1. The module to which the offence relates does not permit internal compensation of marks; and/or

24.6.2.2. The moderated mark recorded on Form AC-0 is not compensable (i.e. 19 or lower); and/or

24.6.2.3. Based on information available to the Panel, there is no mathematical chance that the student can pass the module overall even if the moderated mark can be awarded.

## 25. Penalties for Academic Misconduct

25.1. If it is determined that the student has breached the Academic Conduct Policy by means of academic misconduct, the relevant penalty as detailed below will be applied.

25.2. Academic Services will determine an appropriate penalty, taking into account any previous proven breaches of the Academic Conduct Policy (whether by means of unacceptable academic practice or academic misconduct), the number of proven allegations in the current case, and the nature and seriousness of the allegations. There will also be regard to any mitigation that the student has presented.

25.2.1. Where there are multiple allegations in the case, the Academic Services will normally consider them consecutively.

25.3. Where the proven allegation is one of;

Falsification; or

Falsification by use of artificial intelligence; or

Research misconduct, where there has clearly been no risk of harm to others, no risk to the reputation of the University AND the research was solely fabricated (in part or full); or

Failure to abide by the examination regulations by means of unauthorised material, but where the unauthorised material has no relevance to the examination.

The following penalties will apply;

25.3.1. The student has no unspent offences: Penalty B.

25.3.2. The student has one unspent offence: Penalty C.

25.3.3. The student has two unspent offences: Penalty D.

In all other cases the allegation will be referred to a full hearing of the Academic Conduct Review Panel.

25.4. Where the proven allegation is one of commissioning then Penalty C will apply, except in cases where 25.4.1. applies.

25.4.1. Where the allegation is one of commissioning and the student has been found to have previously breached the Policy, at any stage and by any means, then Penalty D will apply.

25.5. Fabrication of evidence or official documentation then Penalty D will be applied.

25.6. Cheating or other types of dishonesty will be referred to a full hearing of the Academic Conduct Review Panel.

25.7. Where there are any concerns that the breach of Policy is more serious than originally detailed in the allegation, and no penalty can be determined, Academic Services will refer the case to a full hearing of the Academic Conduct Review Panel.

## PART I: REVIEWS AND APPEALS RELATING TO BREACHES OF ACADEMIC CONDUCT

### 26. Independent Review of the penalty issued by Academic Services

At no point during a review or academic appeal is the student presented with the opportunity to restate their case. Such opportunities have been given and academic judgment has been confirmed.

26.1. Upon conclusion of the case and a penalty has been applied the student may request an independent review of the penalty.

26.2. Any requests for a review of the penalty must be received within 7 days of the outcome being communicated. Such a request will only be considered, if in the opinion of Academic Services one or both of the following criteria have been met:

26.2.1. There is new evidence presented that may provide good reason for the penalty to be adjusted;

26.2.2. The student has demonstrated or evidenced there was a procedural error in the conduct of the Academic Conduct Policy which could have had a detrimental impact on the consideration of the case.

26.3. Where Academic Services are satisfied that 26.2.1. of the criteria has been met, the case file (all forms, evidence and any newly disclosed documents) will be sent to an independent Chair of the Academic Conduct Review Panel for consideration.

26.4. Upon consideration of the case the Chair will decide one of the following;

26.4.1. The penalty was appropriate and/or there was no procedural error in the conduct of the Academic Conduct Policy and no further action will be taken.

26.4.2. The new evidence presented by the student demonstrates a reasonable case for consideration of mitigating in the penalty. The Chair will then issue a new penalty in line with Part H of this procedure.

26.4.3. Where the Chair cannot determine a reasonable penalty, or believes that the case requires further consideration, they will refer the case to a formal hearing at the Academic Conduct Review Panel.

26.5. Where Academic Services are satisfied that 26.2.2. of the criteria has been met, the case will be referred to a formal hearing at the Academic Conduct Review Panel.

26.6. Where the student has failed to meet the criteria of 26.2. they will be informed by Academic Services that their request for a review has been dismissed. An explanation will be provided.

## 27. Appeals relating to breaches of the Academic Conduct Policy

27.1. The final decision on whether a piece of work is in breach of the Academic Conduct Policy made by the Chair of the Module Assessment Board or a Chair of the Academic Conduct Review Panel will be regarded as academic judgment.

27.2. A student may not appeal against the final decision that a piece of work is in breach of the Academic Conduct Policy solely on the ground of a disagreement with that decision.

27.3. Where a student is entitled to receive a mark for a piece of work found to have breached the Academic Conduct Policy, that mark represents an academic judgment and may not be the subject of an appeal.

27.4. A student is entitled to appeal on the grounds of a procedural or administrative irregularity in the conduct of this procedure. Appeals must be submitted in accordance with Handbook F, Section 10.

## PART J: ADMINISTRATION

### 28. Reporting Outcomes

28.1. The outcome of an academic conduct case will be communicated to the student via their University of Chester email account and to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board no later than 14 days after the date of the penalty being confirmed.

28.2. Where it is found that the student has submitted work which breaches the Academic Conduct Policy, that decision and the decision on penalty will be reported to the Deputy Registrar or nominee as follows:

28.2.1. In the case of a standard penalty, the Deputy Registrar will be notified after the expiry date of the student's eligibility to complete the Academic Conduct Course. AS will advise the outcome in accordance with the provisions of Clause 15.

28.2.2. In all other cases, the Deputy Registrar will be notified as soon as possible after the conclusion of the case.

28.3. Any decision on penalty relating to components of assessment and/or module outcomes made by the Academic Services or the Panel are binding on the Module Assessment Board.

28.3.1. If the Module Assessment Board has not yet met to ratify the student's marks at the time the decision is made, it is the responsibility of the Chair of the Module Assessment Board to enter the penalty decision on the student's record.

28.3.2. If the Module Assessment Board has already met to ratify the student's marks at the time the decision is made, Registry will enter the penalty decision on the student's record.

28.4. Any decision on penalty relating to the student's programme of study and/or overall award outcome made by Academic Services or the Panel are recommendations to the relevant Awards/Progression Assessment Board.

28.4.1. If the Awards/Progression Assessment Board has not yet met to consider the student's eligibility to progress or for an award at the time the decision is made, the recommendation will be reported by the Deputy Registrar at the appropriate time.

28.4.2. If the Awards/Progression Assessment Board had already met to consider the student's eligibility to progress or for an award at the time the decision is made, or where it is appropriate to act prior to the next meeting of that Board, the Deputy Registrar will seek to obtain the consent of the Chair of the Board and, where required, the Chief External Examiner, to implement the recommended outcome.

## PART K: SUPPORTING FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

Form AC-X

Form AC-1

Form AC-Ex

Form AC-0

Form AC Allegation

Viva Voce Policy

Turnitin Policy

Staff guidance

Student Guidance





# Quality and Standards Manual

## Handbook F: Exceptional Circumstances Policy

Version:	2
Approved by:	Senate
Owner:	Registry Services
Contact:	<a href="mailto:S.Nelson@chester.ac.uk">S.Nelson@chester.ac.uk</a>
Effective from:	13 September 2023
Next review:	12 September 2027

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## SECTION 7: EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

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### 7.1 Exceptional Circumstances

1. Exceptional circumstances is the term used by the University to describe how we will make allowances for certain serious difficulties a student has experienced which were likely to have an impact on their ability to complete an assessment to the best of their ability and/or by the deadline.
2. The processes which fall under the umbrella term 'Exceptional Circumstances' are as follows:
  - extensions to the submission deadline
  - a deferral of the assessment, without penalty, to the next assessment point
  - the waiving or reduction of a late-work penalty
  - an extension to the maximum period of registration (the number of years a student has to complete their award)

More details on each of these may be found below.

3. With the exception of extensions to the registration period (see 7.7 below) the relevant Head of Department, in their capacity as Chair of the Module Assessment Board, has responsibility for taking decisions on requests made under this policy. The Head of Department may nominate other suitably experienced colleagues in their department to fulfil this function.

### 7.2 Categories of exceptional circumstances

Circumstances acceptable under this policy must be serious and exceptional relative to the normal daily challenges presented by academic study, and unpredictable in that the student could not reasonably have been expected either to avoid them, or to allow for them in planning the assessment work or preparation. The Exceptional Circumstances policy recognises that the assessment process itself can cause students to feel more pressurised than at other times of the academic year, and this should be considered to be one of the normal challenges presented by academic study, including where a student has multiple assessments due in a short period of time. Except in a very small number of cases, where the impact is serious and incapacitating, this would not be considered as a valid reason for submitting a claim under this policy.

There are many different reasons why a student's performance may have been adversely affected by exceptional circumstances, meaning that it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of everything the University is and is not able to take into account. However, the following are some of the types of exceptional circumstances the University may consider:

- Exceptional medical circumstances, such as where the student is ill either at the point of assessment or immediately in advance. The University is unable to make allowances for minor illnesses such as headaches, upset stomachs, coughs and colds. These affect everyone

and it would not be practical or sensible to take account of them all. Students are expected to plan their work and allow leeway to cope with minor ailments.

- Long term illness/medical conditions, particularly those which flare up close to the assessment deadline
- Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments are not yet in place and where the delay is not the fault of student
- Symptoms of an infectious disease that could be harmful if passed onto others; this will primarily be acceptable for assessments which require attendance such as exams or performances and not for assessments such as coursework, which can be worked on and submitted without the risk of harming others
- Bereavement or serious illness of a close family member; this would include spouse/partner, parent, grandparent, brother/sister or child/dependent (including step-father, step-sister etc). This is not an exhaustive list and departments should consider individual family circumstances when taking decisions.
- Victim of or witness to a serious crime/incident
- Domestic problems (including divorce, separation, parental divorce).
- Unexpected caring responsibilities for a family member or dependent
- Serious and sudden accommodation crisis such as eviction or where the home becomes uninhabitable;
- Exceptional work commitments (part time students and those repeating modules on a part time basis only)
- For assessments which require attendance at a specific location at a specific time (eg an exam or class test), difficulties associated with travel, but only where these difficulties are exceptional, impossible to anticipate in advance, not a result of poor planning or time management, and where there is clear independent evidence to substantiate the claim.
- Legal proceedings such as jury service or court cases requiring attendance
- Unforeseeable financial difficulties such as the sudden withdrawal of funding by a student's sponsor
- Competing in sport, or participation in other similar activity, with representation at national or international level. This does not include being part of a University sports team or society and will normally only be acceptable for timed assessments taking place at a particular time and date.
- Other personal factors which may reasonably be deemed to have had an adverse impact comparable with those above.

The following are not valid exceptional circumstances:

- Anything which could reasonably have been foreseen and/or prevented
- Misreading the examination timetable or any other information relating to either timed assessments taking place at a particular point in time, or to submission deadlines.
- IT failure, including but not limited to computer failure/storage device failure/printer failure, unless the University's LIS department provide proof that the University was at fault.
- A minor illness such as a cough or cold
- Having assessments scheduled close together
- Normal anxiety resulting from taking assessments such as exams
- Holidays or events such as weddings
- Minor accommodation issues such as disturbances from other housemates
- Submission of an incorrect document (eg a piece of work from another module or an incomplete draft of the assessment)
- Submission of the wrong file type or a corrupted file
- English not being the student's first language
- The death of a pet, or a person the student does not have a personal relationship with
- Work commitments for full time students, or normal/unexceptional work commitments for part time/repeating students
- Problems associated with travelling arrangements/holidays, traffic problems or stress caused by travel problems, unless these problems are exceptional, impossible to anticipate in advance, not a result of poor planning or time management, and where there is clear independent evidence to substantiate the claim. It is the responsibility of the student to make appropriate arrangements to ensure that assignments are submitted on time and/or that they present themselves for an examination on time. This should be borne in mind when making any plans to return to University after a home visit or when making holiday/travel arrangements. In cases of extremis, travel issues may be taken into account for students with disabilities where the combination of unforeseen circumstances and disability related issues impinge on attendance
- House moves, renovations or other routine accommodation difficulties

### **7.3 Evidence in support of requests for the consideration of exceptional circumstances**

If a student has exceptional circumstances they may self-certify in support of an extension of up to and including 7 calendar days. See section on extensions for more information.

Requests for an extension of more than 7 calendar days, and all requests for a deferral, the waiving of the late work penalty or an extension to the registration period, must be accompanied by independent documentary evidence demonstrating the impact on the student.

The evidence provided should include relevant dates so it is clear when the student was affected by the exceptional circumstances.

All evidence must be in English. Where the original documentation is in another language, a certified translation must be provided and the student must meet any cost arising from this.

Where a student provides medical certification which states that they are suffering from an on-going medical condition which will on an on-going or recurring basis impact on their studies, they will not be expected to provide new date-specific evidence for each assessment period for which they seek mitigation and will be able to submit the same evidence on each occasion they apply.

The following provides some examples of the types of evidence which may be submitted to support a claim; it is intended to act as a guide and is indicative rather than exhaustive and there may be occasions on which the department and student need to discuss what can be provided and whether this is reasonable. In most cases a copy or photo of the evidence will be acceptable:

Circumstance	Examples of the type of evidence which may be submitted in support of a claim
Medical	<p>Letter/certificate from a health professional, hospital appointment letter, hospital admission/discharge letter, details from the NHS App, a copy of prescription or medicine labelling with appropriate explanatory notes and clear evidence it is for the student.</p> <p>In order for the University to approve a request on medical grounds the evidence provided should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide a clear diagnosis of illness or medical condition which would affect the student’s ability to undertake assessment or to perform to the best of their ability. Evidence stating that, for example, <b>‘the student informs me</b> that they suffered from a virus.....’ is not acceptable;</li> <li>• provide the specific dates or a date range in which the student’s performance or ability to undertake assessment would have been impaired. In cases where the nature of the illness or condition would have a significant and prolonged impact this must be clearly stated as students often submit claims for assessments due at different points in the academic year;</li> <li>• in the case of a letter, be signed and dated by the medical practitioner (eg GP, clinical specialist, registered professional in psychiatric practice or nurse practitioner) and on headed paper which clearly details the name, address and contact details of the practice;</li> <li>• students should not submit photographs of injuries or the symptoms of medical conditions</li> </ul>
Close bereavement	<p>A death certificate, obituary or confirmation from an independent relevant professional eg solicitor or undertaker, or an order of service from the funeral ceremony. If the student is severely affected by the death of someone not defined as close within this policy, additional evidence from an independent third party demonstrating the impact on the student would be required.</p>

Work commitments (part time students and those repeating modules on a part time basis only)	A letter from the employer confirming that the student's workload during the period in question has been exceptional. If you are self-employed please contact your department to discuss the circumstances.
Victim of or witness to a serious crime/incident	Documentation from the police or other relevant authority demonstrating that the student has reported/witnessed a crime/incident. An insurance claim or medical report may also be considered.
Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments are not yet in place and where the delay is not the fault of student	A letter or email from Student Services
Exceptional and unforeseeable transport difficulties	Evidence of a major transportation incident, or a letter from the relevant transport company confirming the nature of the delay.
Legal proceedings requiring attendance	A letter from a solicitor or court.
Competing in sport, or participation in other activity, with representation at national or international level	A letter from the supporting sports/organising body indicating the dates when the student is required for training, competitions and/or attendance;
Other personal factors which may reasonably be deemed to have had an adverse impact comparable with those above.	For significant adverse personal or family circumstances encountered by a student, a signed and dated letter from one or more of the following: a medical practitioner, a social worker (stating their position with respect to the student), a registered psychological therapist, a registered professional in psychiatric practice, an officer of the law or a religious leader. The letter must provide information on the time when the circumstances occurred, whether they are continuing and an opinion on the severity and effect the circumstances are having on the student.

### **Practical problems**

The University will not take account of events such as computer breakdowns. For a submission deadline or an exam, students must allow extra time in case such things happen. It is the student's own responsibility to ensure their work is saved and not therefore lost.

## **Disability**

The University will take into account issues arising from a combination of disability and wholly exceptional circumstances

## **Evidence in respect of third parties**

GDPR legislation means the University is not permitted to consider documentation which includes personal information such as health details relating to a third party in support of any request for mitigation.

Where a student has been affected by the illness of a third party such as a family member or close friend, they must provide evidence which demonstrates the impact this had on them, for example via provision of a medical note.

The University is only permitted to consider documentation relating to a third party in the following cases:

- Where the third party is deceased.
- Where the third party is a dependent of the student's under the age of 14

## **Evidence from the University**

In exceptional cases, a signed statement from the Director of Student Services, or their nominee, may be deemed acceptable evidence. However, this will be limited to those cases where in the view of the Director of Student Services, the nature of the exceptional circumstances are such that other independent documentary evidence could not reasonably be provided. The Director of Student Services or nominee are under no obligation to provide a supporting letter and will only do so where they feel this is required by the circumstances.

If a student is ill during an examination or other formal timed assessment, a statement from a member of University staff who witnesses the condition of the student in or on leaving the assessment may be considered.

Students will normally be granted an extension if the University's own computing systems were at fault. However, the failure has to be substantial, very close to the deadline, and documented by LIS.

## **7.4 Extensions**

Students unable to complete an assessment on time may apply for an extension to the submission deadline, thereby allowing them to submit the work after the deadline without late-work penalties being imposed. Extensions are normally for relatively short periods of time as in all cases the mark for the work must be available to the Module Assessment Board at which the results of that module or modules are to be confirmed. If an academic department confirms that the length of extension requested by the student means the mark cannot be confirmed by the relevant Module Assessment Board, the student must instead request a deferral of the assessment to the next assessment period (see 7.5).

All extension requests, including those for which a student is self-certifying, must be **submitted in advance of the deadline** for the assessment for which the extension is sought; requests, including those for which a student self-certifies, submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

For extensions of more than 7 days from the original deadline, the length of extension requested should be no longer than the length of time justified by the evidence provided.

By their very nature, an extension is not possible for all types of assessment; it is not possible, for example, to have an extension for an assessment such as an examination, in-class test or timed take home assessment, which takes place at a set time on set dates. Other examples of assessments where self-certification may not be possible are group work, placements, presentations and performances. The academic department will tell students which assessments are excluded from self-certification at the start of the module.

### **Self-certification**

Students experiencing exceptional circumstances covered by this policy, and for an assessment where an extension is possible (see above) may self-certify for an extension of up to and including 7 calendar days; all extensions of more than 7 calendar days must be accompanied by independent documentary evidence (see 7.3). In cases where a student self-certifies for 7 calendar days but then requires additional time, a further extension request must be submitted in advance of the assessment deadline (which has already been extended by 7 days) and evidence must be provided.

### **7.5 Deferrals**

In cases where an extension is not appropriate, either because the assessment deadline has already passed, the nature of the assessment means an extension is not possible, the deadline for submitting the assessment and/or a request for the late work penalty to be waived has passed, or where an extension would give insufficient time for the assessment to be completed and marked in advance of the Module Assessment Board, the student should request a deferral of the assessment to the next assessment point.

The outcome of a valid claim for deferral/waiving of the late work penalty shall be one of the following:

- a) to defer the assessment without penalty to the next assessment point. In cases where the assessment was attempted and a deferral is subsequently approved, the deferral will replace any mark attained, unless the student specifically states in writing or via email, in advance of the Module Assessment Board, that they wish to cancel the deferral and keep the mark; in cases where a deferral is approved in advance of the deadline and the student subsequently submits the assessment, the deferral will be deemed null and void and the mark will stand.
- b) Where a student has a chronic condition or her/his circumstances are not improving, an interruption of studies may be recommended.

Independent evidence will be required in all cases; students cannot self-certify for a deferral

### **7.6 Late Work**

The following applies to any piece of assessed work for which a submission time and date has been given and where the assessment does not involve the attendance of the student during the assessment (e.g. the submission of an essay or project but not the presentation of a seminar, a



drama performance, a written examination). Take home assessments (normally 24 or 48 hours) are covered (below). If the student does not have a pre-approved extension but misses the assessment deadline, they have a maximum of seven calendar days in which to submit the assessment and (where appropriate) any request for the late work penalty to be waived or reduced; assessments submitted more than seven calendar days after the deadline without a pre-approved extension will not be marked. This also applies when the student has had an extension – ie they must submit the assessment and (where appropriate) any request for the late work penalty to be waived or reduced within seven calendar days of their extended deadline. Submissions within seven days of the deadline without an approved late penalty waiver will have a late work penalty of 5 marks per 24 hour period (or part thereof) applied, although a student cannot fail an assessment solely as the result of the late work penalty, so a pass mark will only ever be reduced to 40% at Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6 and 50% at levels 7 and 8. The following example is for an assessment with a pass mark of 40%, although the same principle applies where the pass mark is 50%:

	<i>Intrinsic Merit</i>	<i>Mark Following Penalty</i>
	<i>(% mark awarded by markers)</i>	<i>%</i>
Work up to 24 hours late	50	45
Work up to 48 hours late	50	40
Work up to 72 hours late	50	40

Providing a pass mark is attained, and the assessment was submitted within seven calendar days of the student’s deadline, the mark cannot fall below the pass mark. Assessment submitted more than seven calendar days after the student’s deadline will not be marked and a non-submission will be recorded.

However, a fail mark can be reduced right down to zero:

	<i>Intrinsic Merit</i>	<i>Mark Following Penalty</i>
	<i>(% mark awarded by markers)</i>	<i>%</i>
Work up to 24 hours late	35	30
Work up to 48 hours late	35	25
Work up to 72 hours late	35	20

and so on, to 0.

For take home assessments (normally 24 or 48 hour papers), work submitted late will have a 5 mark penalty applied if submitted up to 30 minutes late, after which the mark will be reduced to zero.

Where an assessment component is assessed on a Pass/Fail basis, a fail will be recorded in cases where that component is submitted after the deadline.

Providing the assessment was submitted within seven calendar days of the student's deadline, assessed work submitted late should still be marked in the usual way so that the student is given feedback on the standard of work achieved and the full mark is available if a late work penalty waiver is agreed.

Consideration should be given to the availability of LIS support for students experiencing technical difficulties when setting deadlines. Deadlines must be clearly publicised at or in advance of the start of the module.

Late work penalties must be included in the minutes of the Module Assessment Board, along with details of assessments not marked as they were submitted more than seven calendar days after the student's deadline.

Other than via the waiving or reduction of the late work penalty, under no circumstances will a mark ever be amended as a result of an approved claim under this policy.

If the claim is rejected no action will be taken and the original mark will stand, including the application of late work penalties where appropriate; if the student failed to submit the assessment, either at all or more than seven calendar days after their deadline, a non-submission will be recorded.

A student has the right to appeal against a decision to reject a claim submitted under this policy. Information about appeals may be found in Handbook F10.

If it is subsequently discovered that a student had misled the Head of Department in any way, that Head of Department has the right to rescind the decision it has taken on the case and, where appropriate, this may be considered as a breach of academic conduct.

In cases where a request for exceptional circumstances is approved, but the student is found to have breached the University's Academic Conduct Policy, any penalty imposed as a result of the breach of the Academic Conduct Policy will take precedence over the approved exceptional circumstances.

## **7.7 Extensions to a student's period of registration**

The maximum periods of registration for University of Chester awards are set out in Section D of the Principles and Regulations. In exceptional cases, students may apply for an extension to their registration period, with decisions taken by the Deputy Registrar and Head of Student Administration (or nominee). An extension will only be granted in exceptional cases where the student is able to provide independent documentary evidence proving they have suffered severe and prolonged exceptional circumstances which have affected their ability to complete within the approved period of registration. If approved, an extension will be granted for a period of 12 months in excess of the approved period of registration; further extensions are not normally granted.

## **7.8 Application Process**

In respect of all the processes set out in this section of the Handbook, students must submit their applications online. Further specific details about the application process may be found on the Registry Services Portal pages.



University of  
Chester

# Quality and Standards Manual

## Handbook F: Assessment Boards Policy

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Owner:	Registry Services
Contact:	<a href="mailto:S.Nelson@chester.ac.uk">S.Nelson@chester.ac.uk</a>
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## CONTENTS

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<b>SECTION 8: ASSESSMENT BOARDS</b> .....	<b>2</b>
8.1 ASSESSMENT BOARD STRUCTURE AND OPERATION .....	2
8.2 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP .....	2
<i>AWARDS ASSESSMENT BOARDS</i> .....	3
<i>MODULE ASSESSMENT BOARDS</i> .....	3
8.3 MODULE ASSESSMENT .....	4
<i>Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6</i> .....	4
<i>Levels 7 and 8</i> .....	5
8.4 REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONDUCT OF ASSESSMENT BY MODULE ASSESSMENT BOARDS.....	5
8.5 REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONDUCT OF ASSESSMENT BY AWARDS ASSESSMENT BOARDS.....	7

### *Appendices*

8A	Conduct of Module Assessment Boards
8B	Reassessment and Third Attempts
8C	MAB cover sheet
8D	Guidance on submission of late or corrected marks
8E	Examination Committee - Notes for Guidance
8F	Guide to 360 credit honours degree classifications
8G	Guide to Honours Degree classifications - Level 6 only
8H	Guide to Postgraduate classifications
8I	Guide to Foundation Degree classification
8J	Guide to condonement of failure in assessment

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## SECTION 8: ASSESSMENT BOARDS

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### 8.1 Assessment Board Structure and Operation

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The University operates a two-tier system of Assessment Boards, with subject specialist External Examiners and External Quality Advisors who operate through Module Assessment Boards and Chief External Examiners appointed to Awards Assessment Boards. Further information about these posts may be found in Handbook F12.

A Module Assessment Board has responsibility for the outcomes of modules assigned to that Board. An Awards Assessment Board has responsibility for the outcomes of the Programmes of Study assigned to that Board. The appropriate Awards Assessment Board considers matters of awards, progression, re-assessment and third assessment attempts. An Appeals Board deals only with appeals against the decision of an Awards Assessment Board or Examination Committee.

The Chair of an Assessment Board shall be responsible for ensuring that meetings are conducted in accordance with University of Chester Principles and Regulations concerning assessment, and also in accordance with any special Regulations affecting the particular programme of study on which the Board is adjudicating.

Except provisional marks disclosed in the normal course of assignment feedback, only component marks, coursework and/or examination marks, as finally approved by both tiers of Assessment Board, shall be disclosed to students.

Module Assessment Boards shall meet formally at an appropriate time following a student assessment period, which may involve several meetings in each academic session. Awards Assessment Boards shall meet on pre-determined dates and in line with the approved schedule. A Chief External Examiner has the right to attend any Awards Assessment Boards but will normally attend at least two boards per academic year, by arrangement with the Deputy Registrar and Head of Student Administration.

### 8.2 Terms of Reference and Membership

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## AWARDS ASSESSMENT BOARDS

### Terms of Reference

- To consider the overall profiles of students at Levels 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and Taught Provision at Level 8.
- To determine, on behalf of Senate, the awards for candidates who have completed University of Chester programmes of study.
- To determine the candidates who may progress or proceed to the next level or modules of study.
- To determine the candidates who may be reassessed or deferred in modules.
- To determine the candidates who shall be offered a third assessment attempt.
- To determine the candidates who will have failure in assessment condoned.
- To determine the candidates whose studies are to be terminated.

### Membership

- Dean or Associate Dean of Faculty (Chair)
- Chief External Examiner<sup>1</sup>
- Head of Academic Quality and Standards (or nominee)

In attendance

- Deputy Registrar and Head of Student Administration (or nominee)
  - Representative of Registry Services, who will service the Board

The accuracy of results profiles being considered by each Awards Assessment Board will be signed off in advance by the relevant Head of Academic Department or their nominee.

## MODULE ASSESSMENT BOARDS

### Terms of Reference

To make recommendations on the results of individual modules of study .

### Membership

- Head of Department (Chair; in his/her absence, this may be delegated to the Deputy Head of Department).<sup>2</sup> The Chair must be a member of University of Chester staff.
- External Examiner(s)/External Quality Advisor(s)
- The module leaders of all modules to be considered by the board.
- Departmental Assessment Contact

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<sup>1</sup> An Awards Assessment Board can take place and decisions can be made without the presence of a Chief External Examiner.

<sup>2</sup> In the unavoidable absence of both the Head and Deputy Head of Department, the Board may be chaired by the Dean, Deputy Dean or Associate Dean of the relevant Faculty

In attendance

A member of University of Chester staff, normally an administrator from an academic department, who will service the meeting

## 8.3 Module Assessment

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### *Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6*

The following percentage marking scale shall be adopted for all academic provision at Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Percentage	Classification for a Bachelor's degree
70 - 100	First class honours or equivalent designation
60 - 69	Upper second class honours or equivalent designation
50 - 59	Lower second class honours or equivalent designation
40 - 49	Third class honours or equivalent designation
0 - 39	Fail

Except where provision is validated to include modules or components thereof marked on a pass/fail basis, the following requirements shall apply. The minimum aggregate pass mark for each module shall be 40%. Unless formal derogation has been approved, failure in one or more components of the assessment of a given module shall normally be compensated for by the results in one or more other component within that module, provided that the overall pass mark for the module of 40% is attained. However, components assessed on a Pass/Fail basis must be passed in order for the module to be passed or condoned. Students reassessed (or subject to third assessment attempt) in previously-failed components of such modules shall be required to attain the same minimum marks as those stipulated for first assessment in order to pass the module overall.

In calculating the overall mark for a given module all marks of 0.50 or above shall be rounded up to the next integer. Correspondingly, all marks of 0.49 and below shall be rounded down to the appropriate integer.

The formal module documentation shall identify the weighting as between the components of assessment in each module.



In order to reduce plagiarism, Departments should take steps to ensure that, where assessment tasks admit of variation, all assignment and coursework titles are varied from one assessment session to the next.

### *Levels 7 and 8*

The following percentage marking scale shall be adopted for postgraduate programmes:

Percentage	Classification
70 - 100	Distinction
60 - 69	Merit
50 - 59	Pass
0 - 49	Fail

The minimum aggregate pass mark for each module to which these regulations apply shall be 50%. Unless formal derogation has been approved, failure in one or more components of the assessment of a given module shall be compensated for by the results in one or more other component within that module, provided that the overall pass mark for the module of 50% is attained. [However, components assessed on a Pass/Fail basis must be passed in order for the module to be passed or condoned.](#) Students reassessed (or subject to third assessment attempt) in previously-failed components of such modules shall be required to attain the same minimum marks as those stipulated for first assessment in order to pass the module overall.

In calculating the overall mark for a given module all marks of 0.50 or above shall be rounded up to the next integer. Correspondingly, all marks of 0.49 and below shall be rounded down to the appropriate integer.

The formal module documentation shall identify the weighting as between the components of assessment in each module.

In order to reduce plagiarism, Departments should take steps to ensure that, where assessment tasks admit of variation, all assignment and coursework titles are varied from one assessment session to the next.

## 8.4 Requirements for the conduct of assessment by Module Assessment Boards

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1. For purposes of conducting the assessment of all those modules which have been assigned to a given Module Assessment Board at the point of validation, all

members of that Board must have access to all modular marks, including component marks. Please see notes of guidance on Presentation of Module Assessment Boards (Appendix 8A).

2. The Module Assessment Board must determine the marks of all students being assessed in all modules within its jurisdiction without regard to the ultimate profile of any individual student. Once marks have been determined, for each module within the Board's jurisdiction, changes to individual outcomes may occur for the following reasons only:
  - the identification of an administrative error
  - a successful appeal against a decision of the Board
  - a ruling by the relevant Assessment Board in the light of a student having been found guilty of breaching the academic conduct policy

All such changes shall be reported back to the next Module Assessment Board

3. The Module Assessment Board shall be required to abide by any decision concerning a student which has already been taken by the Exceptional Circumstances Board.
4. All decisions taken by the Module Assessment Board shall be taken in the name of the entire Board. Those decisions must be taken and recorded with all members of the Board present, except for those who, for valid reasons, have been given permission by the Chair of the Board not to attend.
5. In any event, no decision concerning the assessment of a student or students shall be taken by a Module Assessment Board, unless that Board is quorate. A quorum shall be deemed to be 50% of the full-time equivalent staff responsible for assessment within the purview of that Board.
6. It is a requirement of University of Chester that the proceedings of a Module Assessment Board shall be minuted by a member of staff of University of Chester in accordance with the guidelines in Appendix 8A.
7. External Examiners must have signalled their approval of the marks in order for the marks to go forward for consideration at the Awards Assessment Board.

Further guidance on matters relating to the conduct of Module Assessment Boards is given in Appendix 8A of this Handbook.

## 8.5 Requirements for the conduct of assessment by Awards Assessment Boards

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### **Condonement of Failure**

#### **Level 3**

In the case of a student who is registered for a minimum of 120 credit points at Level 3, an Awards or Progression Assessment Board, having due regard to the standard of the award, the programme objectives, the programme assessment requirements, and any professional requirements, may allow condonement of failed modules up to and including 20 credits at Level 3. In order for this to apply, the student must have a profile (following initial assessment, reassessment or a third assessment attempt) with no more than 20 failed credits. If these conditions are met, condonement will be applied to those failed module(s) where the overall module mark falls in the range 30-39%. The Board will deem that a student in this position has achieved the credit for the condoned module(s), although the fail marks themselves will stand and will be recorded on the student's transcript.

#### **Level 4**

In the case of a student who is registered for a minimum of 120 credit points at Level 4, an Awards or Progression Assessment Board, having due regard to the standard of the award, the programme objectives, the programme assessment requirements, and any professional requirements, may allow condonement of failed modules up to and including 40 credits at Level 4. In order for condonement to be applied, the student must have a profile (following initial assessment, reassessment or a third assessment attempt) with no more than 40 failed credits. If these conditions are met, condonement will be applied to those failed module(s) where the overall module mark falls in the range 30-39%. The Board will deem that a student in this position has achieved the credit for the condoned module(s), although the fail marks themselves will stand and will be recorded on the student's transcript.

#### **Level 5**

In the case of a student who is registered for a minimum of 120 credit points at Level 5, an Awards or Progression Assessment Board, having due regard to the standard of the award, the programme objectives, the programme assessment requirements, and any professional requirements, may allow condonement of failed modules up to and including 20 credits at Level 5. In order for this to apply, the student must have a profile (following initial assessment, reassessment or a third assessment attempt) with no more than 20 failed credits. If these conditions are met, condonement will be applied to those failed module(s)

where the overall module mark falls in the range 30-39%. The Board will deem that a student in this position has achieved the credit for the condoned module(s), although the fail marks themselves will stand and will be recorded on the student's transcript.

## Level 6

In the case of a student who is registered for a minimum of 120 credit points at Level 6, an Awards or Progression Assessment Board, having due regard to the standard of the award, the programme objectives, the programme assessment requirements, and any professional requirements, may allow condonement of failed modules up to and including 20 credits at Level 6. In order for this to apply, the student must have a profile (following initial assessment, reassessment or a third assessment attempt) with no more than 20 failed credits. If these conditions are met, condonement will be applied to those failed module(s) where the overall module mark falls in the range 30-39%. The Board will deem that a student in this position has achieved the credit for the condoned module(s), although the fail marks themselves will stand and will be recorded on the student's transcript.

Condonement may not be applied to a module that, for professional reasons, has been granted formal derogation from the regulations.

Condonement may be applied to part time students before they have completed all the modules at the level; providing they have failed no more than the maximum number of credits for which condonement is permitted at the level, condonement will be applied to those failed module(s) where the overall module mark falls in the range 30-39%.

Where, exceptionally, students are registered for programmes based upon a 15-credit modular structure, condonement as stated herein shall apply to up to 15 credits at Level 3, 30 credits at Level 4, 30 credits at Level 5 and 15 credits at Level 6.

Progression: Level 3 to Level 4, Level 4 to Level 5 and Level 5 to Level 6

Full time undergraduate students shall not be allowed to progress to the next level of study until all modules at a given level have been passed or condoned. However, a student with no more than 20 module credits outstanding (deferral, reassessment or third assessment attempt) shall be allowed to progress conditionally to the next level of study. A student with more than 20 module credits but no more than 40 module credits outstanding shall be allowed to progress conditionally to the next level of study where the outstanding component(s) within the outstanding module(s) amount to no more than the equivalent of a full 20 credit module. A student with more than 20 module credits but no more than 40 module credits of outstanding assessment shall not be allowed to progress conditionally to the next level of study where the outstanding component(s) within the outstanding module(s) amount to more than the equivalent of a full 20 credit module. In both cases the percentage weightings assigned to the assessment components and the credit value of the modules shall be used in this calculation.

A student with more than 40 module credits outstanding shall not be allowed to progress to the next level of study.

In no circumstances shall a student be permitted to commence Level 6 study until they have successfully completed all required credits at Levels 3 and 4.

Where a decision on a student who would be allowed to progress conditionally under the criteria set out above could not be taken by the Awards Assessment Board, and is taken more than 4 weeks after the commencement of the next level of study, the student will not normally be permitted to progress until the next occasion on which the level of study is offered. In these cases, the Assessment Review Board shall take into consideration the student's ability to cope with the additional assessment burden and the period of time the student will have already missed.

Students granted an opportunity for conditional progression may not cite the additional workload as an exceptional circumstance for purposes of requesting an extension, deferral or academic appeal. If a student does not wish to take up the offer of conditional progression they should confirm this in writing within the first 4 weeks following commencement of the next level of study.

A student who passes modules at the higher level of study shall be entitled to the credit gained from those modules, but shall not have them taken into account for further progression until the necessary modules at the lower level have been passed. In no circumstances shall a student be permitted to commence Level 6 study until they have successfully completed all modules at Levels 3 and 4.

Part time students may register for modules at different levels during the same academic year. However, where a third assessment attempt has been granted in more than 20 module credits, a part time student is not permitted to register for any further modules at the higher level until the third assessment attempt has been successfully completed. Under no circumstances will a student be permitted to register for modules at Level 6 until they have successfully completed all required credits at Levels 3 and 4.

In cases where a student on an accelerated programme has been allowed to conditionally progress to the next level of study, the outstanding reassessment and/or deferrals from the lower level of study shall be assessed in the next assessment session, regardless of whether other students are taking these assessments in that session.

[The default position is that a student should attend the module again if it is running. In particular, this applies to undergraduate students with outstanding modules following the Awards Assessment Boards in August and September.](#)

Where programmes are validated to include requirements for progression and completion which do not contribute to the credits of the award, such requirements shall be stated within the formal programme documentation. This documentation shall also state the means by which students may retrieve initial failure to meet such requirements.

## 1. Procedure for the determination of the classification of Bachelor's Degrees with Honours

- (a) These requirements are sequential and shall be applied in order.
- (b) Module Assessment Boards shall provide moderated module marks for all the students who have been assessed within the purview of those Boards for consideration by the Awards Assessment Board in relation to a recommended honours degree classification. A Module Assessment Board is not empowered to make recommendations concerning awards or classifications.
- (c) Students who have fulfilled the credit requirements for the award of an Honours Degree will be awarded classifications on the basis of a weighted average mark from their study at Level 6 and Level 5. Averages for Level 5 and Level 6 will be calculated, with each module's mark weighted according to its credit value. In cases where numerical marks exist for between 100 and 120 credits at the relevant level, the calculation will be based on the highest 100 credit marks at that level. Where numerical marks exist for in excess of 120 credits at the relevant level, the lowest 20 credit mark will be deducted from the calculation. In cases where numerical marks exist for fewer than 100 credits at the relevant level, all marks will be used. These averages will then be combined with a weighting of one-third for the Level 5 mark and two-thirds for the Level 6 mark. Figures used for this calculation shall not be rounded but will be expressed to two decimal places.
- (d) Where a student has been admitted by direct entry to Level 6, the overall mark total shall be calculated on the basis of the Level 6 marks only. In cases where numerical marks exist for between 100 and 120 credits at Level 6, the calculation will be based on the highest 100 credit marks. Where numerical marks exist for in excess of 120 credits at Level 6, the lowest 20 credit mark will be deducted from the calculation. In cases where numerical marks exist for fewer than 100 credits at Level 6, all marks will be used.
- (e) The average for Level 5 will only be used for degree classification purposes if there are numerical marks for 50% or more of the required Level 5 credits.
- (f) A provisional degree class shall be awarded in accordance with the following scale:
- |              |                            |
|--------------|----------------------------|
| 70 and above | First class honours        |
| 60 – 69.99   | Upper second class honours |
| 50 – 59.99   | Lower second class honours |
| 40 – 49.99   | Third class honours        |
| 0 – 39.99    | Fail                       |
- (g) A list of students shall be provided to the Awards Assessment Board, ranked by overall mark total expressed to two decimal places. The indicative, provisional degree class shall be ascribed.
- (h) Students whose overall total mark falls within one of the following ranges shall have that initial overall mark raised to the threshold of the next degree class above, i.e.

a mark within the range 69.50 to 69.99 shall be raised to 70

a mark within the range 59.50 to 59.99 shall be raised to 60

a mark within the range 49.50 to 49.99 shall be raised to 50

- (i) Students whose overall total mark falls within one of the following ranges shall be reviewed for possible raising of the indicative degree classification to the next class above, i.e.

67.00 to 69.49 shall be considered for raising to the first class

57.00 to 59.49 shall be considered for raising to the upper second class

47.00 to 49.49 shall be considered for raising to the lower second class

Where a student has an overall total mark within one of those ranges stated above and also has at least half the Level 6 credits for which numerical marks are available in the higher class, that student shall be placed in the higher class.

- (j) The Academic Conduct Panel may make a recommendation on the calculation of the student's average mark or degree classification.

## **2. Procedure for the award of the Foundation Degree with Distinction or Merit**

- a) These requirements are sequential and shall be applied in order.
- b) Students who have fulfilled the credit requirements for the award of a Foundation Degree will be awarded the classification on the basis of Level 5 module marks only. Level 4 modules must be passed or condoned but the marks do not contribute to the average upon which the classification is based.
- c) The number of Level 5 credits used to determine the average is dependent upon the number of Level 5 credits for which numerical marks exist. In cases where numerical marks exist for between 100 and 120 credits, the best 100 credits will be used; where numerical marks exist for in excess of 120 credits, the lowest 20 credit mark will be deducted from the calculation. In cases where numerical marks exist for fewer than 100 credits, all marks will be used
- d) A provisional degree class shall be awarded in accordance with the following scale:

70% and above - Distinction

60 - 69.99% - Merit

- e) Students whose average mark falls within one of the following ranges shall have that initial overall mark raised to the threshold of the next degree class above, i.e.

a mark within the range 69.50 to 69.99 shall be raised to 70 and a Distinction awarded

a mark within the range 59.50 to 59.99 shall be raised to 60 and a Merit awarded

- f) Students whose average mark falls within one of the following ranges shall be reviewed for possible raising of the indicative classification to the next class above, i.e.

67.00 to 69.49 shall be considered for raising to a Distinction

57.00 to 59.49 shall be considered for raising to a Merit

Where a student has an overall total mark within one of those ranges stated above and also has at least half the Level 5 credits for which numerical marks are available in the higher class, that student shall be placed in the higher class.

- g) The Academic Conduct Panel may make a recommendation on the calculation of the student's average mark or their eligibility to be awarded a Foundation Degree with Distinction or Merit.

### **3. Procedure for the award of Masters Degrees and Postgraduate Diplomas with Distinction or Merit**

In order to be eligible for the conferment of a Distinction, a candidate for a Masters degree or Postgraduate Diploma must attain a mark of 70% or higher in Level 7 and/or Level 8 modules representing at least half the credit for which numerical marks are available. The modules may include the dissertation. In order to be eligible for the conferment of a Merit, a candidate for a Masters degree or Postgraduate Diploma must attain a mark of 60% or higher in Level 7 and/or Level 8 modules representing at least half the credit for which numerical marks are available. The modules may include the dissertation.

The Academic Conduct Panel may make a recommendation on the student's eligibility to be awarded a Masters Degree or Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction or Merit.

The University does not confer Distinction or Merit on Postgraduate Certificate Awards.

### **4. Procedure for the determination of exit awards**

In circumstances where a student fails to gain the required number of module credits for the granting of the award for which he/she is registered, the Awards Assessment Board shall normally award the highest award to which the credits gained entitles them.



## 5. Powers to act on behalf of an Awards Assessment Board

In accordance with paragraphs F2.5 and F2.6 of the Principles and Regulations, the Chair of an Awards Assessment Board (or their nominee) may take decisions on granting reassessments (or third assessment attempts), progression and awards, on behalf of the Board.

An Awards Assessment Board may, in exceptional circumstances, also delegate its authority to a subsidiary examination committee. Where an examination committee is required this must be approved by the preceding Awards Assessment Board. Examination Committees may not make awards. Further guidance is given in Appendix 8E.

All decisions taken on behalf of an Awards Assessment Board shall be reported to and minuted at the next meeting of that Board.

## 6. Reassessment

A student normally has the right to reassessment in any failed module, except where:

- the module is the subject of condonement
- an academic conduct panel has determined that reassessment is not permitted
- for professional or other reasons, approved by Education Committee or its Quality and Standards sub-Committee on behalf of Senate, restrictions on reassessment opportunities within the programme should apply
- their registration period has expired

Unless permitted by the in-year reassessment scheme, full time students at Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6 cannot be offered reassessment until the results have been confirmed by the Awards Assessment Board and will not be presented to the Awards Assessment Board until all module results at the level have been confirmed by the Module Assessment Board.

Students on pre-registration programmes, where condonement of failed modules is not permitted, may be presented to the Awards Assessment Board before all module results at the level have been confirmed by the Module Assessment Board.

The Awards Assessment Board shall automatically offer a third assessment attempt to a student who attempted or deferred **at least one component** for which reassessment was due. Students failing to attempt or defer **at least one component** for which reassessment was due will have their studies terminated. A student with reassessment in only one module will be offered a third assessment attempt, even if they failed to submit any of the components for which reassessment was due.

A student whose studies are terminated on the grounds stated above will, via their online results letter, be offered the opportunity to resume their programme to undertake third attempts in the failed components of the failed modules. In order to accept this offer, they must complete and submit the appropriate form to the Assessment Team in Registry Services, by the deadline stipulated in the official results information published online following the Awards Assessment Board at which studies were terminated.

The minimum aggregate pass mark for each module to which these regulations apply shall be 40% at Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6 and 50% at Levels 7 and 8. Unless formal derogation has been approved, failure in one or more components of the assessment of a given module shall be compensated for by the results in one or more other component within that module, provided that the overall pass mark for the module is attained. [However, components assessed on a Pass/Fail basis must be passed in order for the module to be passed or condoned.](#)

A student who undertakes reassessment in a failed module is entitled only to undertake that component or those components for which a pass mark has not already been obtained.

[In cases where multiple components have been failed in the same module, the student can decide which components to resubmit, with the marks of those not resubmitted carried forward from one sitting to the next and the highest component marks attained by the student in each component used in calculating the overall module result..](#)

Notwithstanding the arithmetical outcome of the calculation of marks at the point of reassessment, the overall module mark which shall be recorded for a student who has succeeded in passing such reassessment shall be 40% (levels 3, 4, 5 and 6) or 50% (levels 7 and 8).

[If a student defers an assessment component due to exceptional circumstances, an assumption will be made that they wish to complete these deferred components and the credits will not therefore be awarded, even if they attain an aggregate module pass mark. If a student in this position does wish to accept the credits and mark without completing the deferred assessment\(s\) they must notify the Assessment Team in Registry Services within 4 weeks of publication of results.](#)

Reassessment must be undertaken at the point determined by the Awards Assessment Board.

Regardless of the number of credits outstanding, all candidates will normally be reassessed at the first opportunity following initial failure. Undergraduate students with in excess of 60 credits outstanding following an Awards Assessment Board where the next opportunity does not permit repeating attendance will be given the option to undertake outstanding assessment with attendance during the next academic session. In particular Undergraduate students with in excess of 60 credits outstanding at the June and July Awards Assessment Boards will be given the option to undertake outstanding assessment with attendance during the next academic year.

Where a student is registered for study in the part time mode, reassessment may take place prior to the conclusion of his or her studies at a given level. Unless permitted by the in-year reassessment scheme, full time students may not be reassessed until the results of all modules at that level have been confirmed by both tiers of assessment board.

Where a student is registered for study at Level 7 or 8, reassessment at second or third attempt may take place prior to the conclusion of studies. The student shall be offered reassessment in failed modules at the first opportunity, this being determined by the Awards Assessment Board.

A student who is allowed to progress conditionally to the next level of study shall normally be offered reassessment in the outstanding module(s) at the time when the equivalent components of those modules are being assessed within the next academic session.

[The default position is that a student should attend the module again if it is running. In particular, this applies to undergraduate students with outstanding modules following the Awards Assessment Boards in August and September.](#)

Where the objectives of the programme, pathway or course are such that attendance is compulsory for certain components, the formal programme documentation must give details of the attendance requirements to be met by students and make clear the relationship between compulsory attendance and the assessment process. It must also be made clear what provision there is for the retrieval of initial failure where this failure relates to attendance.

A reassessment task (including both fails and deferrals) in a given component of a module shall be proportionate to, comparable with and equivalent to the original assessment task; any variation from this is permitted only in circumstances where an assessment task cannot be practicably replicated in the reassessment.

In cases where a module in which a student has been offered reassessment is no longer being delivered at the time when the student is due for such reassessment, the Awards Assessment Board shall make appropriate alternative arrangements if necessary.

A student required to be reassessed in a module with attendance must pay the full module fee, even if assessed only in those components not already passed.

Further guidance on the availability of reassessment opportunities appears as Appendix 8B



# Quality and Standards Manual

## Requirements for the Disclosure of Assessment Results Policy

Version:	2.0
Approved by:	
Owner:	Registry Services
Contact:	<a href="mailto:assessment@chester.ac.uk">assessment@chester.ac.uk</a>
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## CONTENTS

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<b>SECTION 9: REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DISCLOSURE OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS .....</b>	<b>2</b>
9.1 CATEGORIES OF MARKS TO BE DISCLOSED.....	2
9.2 DISCLOSURE OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS TO STUDENTS.....	2
9.3 REQUESTS MADE BEFORE MARKS ARE FINALLY DETERMINED.....	2
9.4 NON-DISCLOSURE TO OTHER PERSONS .....	2

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## SECTION 9: REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DISCLOSURE OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS

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### 9.1 Categories of marks to be disclosed

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Students will receive the marks/results for individual modules, and for each individual assessment component as set out in the module descriptor.

### 9.2 Disclosure of assessment results to students

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In cases where marks are released to students by academic departments; for example where marks and feedback are made available on Feedback Studio, these results must be clearly labelled as provision. Final, official assessment results are then issued on e-vision after confirmation by the Awards Assessment Board. These final, official results include text explaining what the Awards Assessment Board decision means for the student and what is required of them. **It is the student's responsibility to ensure they check confirmed results on e-ision at the relevant times. Students will be sent an email informing them when their results have been confirmed and are available on e-ision, with these results available for two weeks following publication.** Students are advised to discuss their results with their Personal Academic Tutor or the relevant module/programme leaders.

On completion of an award, the final results profile will take the form of a Higher Education Achievement Report or Diploma Supplement, which will be issued after the meetings of Awards Assessment Boards, and be sent to each student by post to the home address held on the central student record system. Only students who have successfully completed their award, withdrawn or had their studies terminated will receive results via the post in addition to via e-ision. The volume of Higher Education Achievement Reports/Diploma Supplements issued after each Awards Assessment Board means it can take up to two weeks for results to be posted; during this time students will be able to access their results via e-ision.

### 9.3 Requests made before marks are finally determined

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Registry Services will only issue a hard copy of final results which have been confirmed by an Awards Assessment Board; hard copies of provisional results transcripts will not be issued by Registry Services.

### 9.4 Non-disclosure to other persons

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Only a student's own assessment marks shall be disclosed to that student and no member of the University shall be permitted to disclose to or discuss with a student or other unauthorised person the marks gained by another student. Should a student come to a member of staff having discovered, by whatever means, the marks of another student, and wish to discuss them, possibly in relation to his or her own assessment performance, the member of staff shall decline to do so.

***Assessment results will not be released over the telephone.***



# Quality and Standards Manual

## Academic Appeal Policy and Regulation

Version:	1.0
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Owner:	Academic Services
Contact:	<a href="mailto:aqs@chester.ac.uk">aqs@chester.ac.uk</a>
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## CONTENTS

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1. INTRODUCTION.....	2
2. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	2
3. GROUNDS FOR APPEAL.....	4
4. SUBMISSION OF AN ACADEMIC APPEAL.....	5
5. APPEALS RELATING TO SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFERENCES.....	6
6. PRELIMINARY STAGE.....	7
7. REVIEW OF THE PRELIMINARY STAGE.....	9
8. INVESTIGATORY STAGE.....	10
9. RESOLUTION PRIOR TO THE ACADEMIC APPEALS BOARD.....	11
10. HEARINGS OF THE ACADEMIC APPEALS BOARD.....	12
11. OUTCOMES OF THE ACADEMIC APPEALS BOARD.....	14
12. POWERS OF THE ACADEMIC APPEALS BOARD.....	15
13. ASSESSMENT REVIEW BOARD.....	16
14. REVIEW OF THE DECISION OF THE ACADEMIC APPEALS BOARD.....	18
15. MARK AMENDMENTS.....	19
16. OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.....	19
17. ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES.....	20

### **Forms**

Academic Appeal Form AA-1 10B

Academic Appeal Form AA-2 10C

Academic Appeal Form AA-3



## 1. Introduction

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The academic appeals procedure is intended to allow students of the University of Chester to raise concerns about their academic progress, where there is evidence to suggest that it is reasonable to do so. The procedure is designed to ensure that these concerns are fully considered and that, where appropriate, action is taken to deal with them.

It is in the student's interest to raise concerns informally with the department(s) concerned prior to submitting an academic appeal. This is especially true in cases where the student believes that there is clear evidence of an administrative error which could be corrected without the need to submit a formal appeal.

The academic appeals procedure does not allow students to challenge the marks that they have been awarded for a particular piece of assessment. The decisions made by the Examiners about the academic value of a piece of work are academic judgements and cannot be overturned.

The academic appeals procedure is designed to enable students to raise concerns relating to decisions of the Awards Assessment Board, the Progression Assessment Board, Exceptional Circumstances and, in limited circumstances, the Academic Conduct Review Panel, its subgroup or any formal outcome of the procedure from Academic Services. Other matters that do not relate directly to these, such as alleged poor teaching, supervision or academic guidance, should be raised at the time through student representation arrangements or via the complaints procedure.

When a student or former student of the University submits an appeal they are referred to as 'the appellant'.

The academic appeals procedure is primarily evidence based. It is the appellant's responsibility alone to provide sufficient independent documentary evidence to substantiate the contents of their appeal. An appeal is highly unlikely to succeed if no suitable evidence is provided. The University will publish separate guidance on the type of evidence that appellants may wish to consider submitting.

Throughout these procedures, where reference is made to specific post-holders, the line manager of that post-holder may nominate another person to act instead.

Throughout these procedures, indicative timescales are given in calendar days. However, where a deadline (either for the appellant or the University) falls on a Saturday, Sunday, Bank Holiday or on any other day that the University is closed, the deadline is extended to 4pm the next weekday (i.e. Monday – Friday).

## 2. Rights and Responsibilities

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- 2.1. Any decision that is the subject of an academic appeal remains in force while the appeal is being considered and the appellant must abide by that decision until the academic appeals procedure has been completed. Where an appellant has completed a programme of study, they must not attend any award ceremony until the academic appeal is completed. Attendance at a ceremony will invalidate the appeal and all decisions will stand.

- 2.2. The University undertakes that any student who submits an academic appeal under this procedure will not be academically disadvantaged for having done so. Any student who believes that they have been disadvantaged by submitting an academic appeal at any point should contact the Head of Academic Services immediately.
- 2.3. The University accepts that any student who submits an academic appeal under this procedure will do so in good faith and that any statements made in writing or verbally are truthful. However, it reserves the right to investigate the authenticity of any documents submitted in support of an academic appeal. Any student found to have deliberately attempted to deceive, manipulate or in any way interfere with the operation of this procedure will be subject to disciplinary action.
- 2.4. All members of staff who have been involved in the investigation, management or administration of an academic appeal will observe the requirements for confidentiality. The appellant has the right to restrict the extent to which any part of their appeal submission is disclosed outside of Academic Services and to the Academic Appeals Board. However, appellants exercising this right must be aware that doing so may impair the full investigation of the case.
- 2.5. As long as the appellant has not had their studies at the University terminated or has otherwise completed their programme of study, they will retain the same rights of access to the resources and support of the University as any other student. Following submission of an appeal, communication which directly relates to the substance of that appeal must be channelled through the Student Casework team in Academic Services.
- 2.6. The University will use its best endeavours to ensure that academic appeals are dealt with in a timely way. If the appellant meets all of the deadlines outlined in these procedures, a decision by the Academic Appeals Board should normally be made within 60 days of the date of submission. Where any delay is caused by the University, the appellant will be kept informed and reasons will be provided.
- 2.7. To facilitate the swift handling of appeals, communication will be to the appellant's University of Chester email address and may be copied to one other alternate email address specified by the appellant. It is the appellant's responsibility to check their email regularly during the appeals process. The University will regard any email sent to an appellant by 4pm (Monday-Friday) as having been received on the same day.
- 2.8. If at any point in the conduct of an appeal under these procedures it appears that other students who may or may not have appealed have been affected by an alleged or identified irregularity, this will be reported to the Head of Academic Services and the Deputy Registrar who jointly shall be empowered to instruct that appeals are considered on behalf of all students believed to have been affected.
- 2.9. In most cases the outcome of a successful appeal will be to allow the appellant a further opportunity to be assessed. Therefore, the academic judgements made by the Examiners and the marks agreed by them will not be altered unless an administrative error has been identified which warrants such a course of action.
- 2.10. Appellants who are registered for or seeking to return to a professional programme may be referred to the Professional Suitability Procedure where their appeal submission or supporting evidence suggests that it would be prudent to do so. Such a decision may be made by the Head of Academic Services, the Academic Appeals Board or the Assessment Review Board.

- 2.11. The University will not be liable for any expenses an appellant might incur arising out of an Academic Appeal, irrespective of whether the appeal is successful or not.
- 2.12. The appellant is permitted to withdraw their appeal at any point until 5pm on the day prior to its hearing by the Academic Appeals Board. After this time, an appeal may not be withdrawn. In the event of the appeal being upheld, the appellant must abide by the decision of the Examiners which shall be determined by the Assessment Review Board.

### 3. Grounds for Appeal

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- 3.1. A student may appeal against a decision of the **Awards Assessment Board** or the **Progression Assessment Board** on the following grounds only:
  - 3.1.1. That there were procedural or administrative irregularities in the conduct of the assessment process;
  - 3.1.2. That there were factors which materially affected the appellant's performance, provided that these circumstances were not known by the Examiners **and** there are compelling reasons why the appellant failed to follow the procedures for requesting an extension or deferral or for submitting an application for Exceptional Circumstances;
  - 3.1.3. That the appellant had been assessed as having a specific learning difference during the current academic session, provided that the provisions of section 5 of this procedure has been adhered to.
- 3.2. A student may appeal against an outcome of the **Exceptional Circumstances** procedure in relation to decisions regarding deferrals or Late Work Penalty waivers, on the following grounds only:
  - 3.2.1. That there is evidence of procedural or administrative irregularity in the conduct of the Exceptional Circumstances procedure;
  - 3.2.2. That there exists some new evidence which, for compelling reasons, could not be made available prior to an application for Exceptional Circumstances.
- 3.3. A student may appeal against a decision of the **Academic Conduct Policy** on the following grounds only:
  - 3.3.1. That there is evidence of procedural or administrative irregularity in the conduct of the published procedure relating to breaches of the Academic Conduct Policy;

- 3.3.2. That the appellant, for compelling reasons that can be substantiated, was unable to engage with the Academic Conduct Process and present a defence to the allegation, and/or provide any points of mitigation prior to a penalty being confirmed.

## 4. Submission of an Academic Appeal

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- 4.1. A student may only submit an appeal after the formal publication of results by the Awards Assessment Board or the Progression Assessment Board, or after receiving final notification of the decision of a request for Exceptional Circumstances, the Academic Conduct Review Panel or any formal academic conduct outcome from Academic Services.
- 4.2. In all cases, appeal submissions must be made using the appropriate Microsoft Form and be received by the University no later than **10 days** after the date of publication of results or notification of outcome. The form can be accessed on the Academic Appeals page via the University's corporate site or the Academic Services Portal page. It is the appellant's responsibility to seek advice from Academic Services if they are unsure on how to access the relevant form. The form can be completed by signing into Microsoft 365 with your university log in. Where the appellant is unable to access the online form refer to 4.4.
- 4.3. Where an appellant chooses to submit an appeal by digital means, it must meet the following requirements:
  - 4.3.1. Documentary evidence provided in support of an appeal (e.g. medical certificates, letters, records, etc.), must be attached to the form as **full colour scans** and preferably as PDF files. Where a student is unable to attach the evidence to the form it must be emailed to [academicappeals@chester.ac.uk](mailto:academicappeals@chester.ac.uk) and reported on the form. The submission of this evidence must be received no later than 10 days after the publication of results or notification of outcome.
  - 4.3.2. It is the appellant's responsibility to be able to produce the original documents submitted in support of an academic appeal if requested to do so by the University. Failure to produce such original documents will invalidate the appeal.
- 4.4. If the appellant is unable to submit an appeal by submission of the Microsoft Form they should contact Academic Appeals for guidance and to discuss provision of alternative arrangements. Alternative arrangements may include an open access online form or a PDF form.
- 4.5. Irrespective of the method chosen to submit, it is the appellant's responsibility to ensure safe receipt of an appeal submission and all evidence:
  - 4.5.1. If emailed or submitted to the University in person, the appellant should expect to receive an acknowledgement from Academic Services within 7 days.
  - 4.5.2. If alternative provision has been made for submission of an appeal, such as a postal submission, the appellant is strongly advised to use a suitable tracking service. The appellant should expect to receive an acknowledgement from Academic Services within a reasonable amount of time depending upon where the documents were posted from and, in every case, should make contact if no acknowledgement is received within 14 days of submission.

- 4.6. Where it is not possible to provide all of the supporting documentation with the appeal submission, the appellant must clearly indicate this and undertake to provide it separately, normally within no more than 10 days.
- 4.7. The Student Casework team in Academic Services will receive appeal submissions.
- 4.8. If an appeal is submitted late it will not normally be considered unless the Quality Manager (Student Casework) determines that this would be unreasonable in the circumstances. An appellant who submits a late appeal must clearly explain why it was not possible to adhere to the relevant deadline.
- 4.9. The appellant may give consent for their appeal to be discussed with a nominated third party by indicating this on the Academic Appeal Form.
- 4.10. Where the appellant supplies supporting evidence that is not in English, it is their responsibility to arrange for translation by a qualified, certified translator with copies appropriately marked.

## 5. Appeals relating to Specific Learning Differences

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- 5.1. If a student wishes to appeal a decision of the **Awards Assessment Board** or the **Progression Assessment Board** on ground 3.1.3 (diagnosis of a Specific Learning Difference in the current academic session *and* not being in receipt of the reasonable adjustments for assessment indicated on the student's Inclusion Plan), the student must contact the Disability & Inclusion team as possible.
- 5.2. The Disability & Inclusion team will notify Academic Services of any student wishing to submit an appeal on ground 3.1.3 and the deadline for receipt of the appeal shall automatically be extended to **21 days**.
- 5.3. The Disability & Inclusion team will, in consultation with the appellant, determine whether **all** of the following hold:
  - 5.3.1. The student had been diagnosed in the current academic session, and before the meeting of the relevant Awards Assessment Board or Progression Assessment Board; **and**
  - 5.3.2. The Disability & Inclusion team is in receipt of a report compiled by an Educational Psychologist or other person qualified to diagnose Specific Learning Differences; **and**

- 5.3.3. The student had not been afforded all opportunities agreed in a full Inclusion Plan to support the assessment or examination in question.
  - 5.4. If the Disability & Inclusion team is unable to verify that all of the provisions of 5.3 hold, the appellant will be notified and advised of their right to submit an appeal on any of the other grounds listed at 3.1.
  - 5.5. If the Disability & Inclusion team verifies that all of the provisions of 5.3 hold, the Academic Appeals Form should be completed in consultation with the appellant and sent to Academic Services with the following:
    - 5.5.1. Confirmation that the appellant had been diagnosed in accordance with the requirement of 5.3.1. in the current academic session;
    - 5.5.2. A copy of the report compiled by an Education Psychologist or other person qualified to diagnose Specific Learning Differences;
    - 5.5.3. A copy of the appellant's full Inclusion Plan; and
    - 5.5.4. Confirmation that the appellant had not been afforded all opportunities agreed in a full Inclusion Plan in accordance with the requirement of 5.3.2.
  - 5.6. On receipt of the Academic Appeals Form and other documentation outlined in 5.5, the Head of Academic Services is empowered to grant a deferral of assessment without the need to convene a meeting of the Academic Appeals Board.
  - 5.7. In no circumstances will a deferral of assessment be granted in respect of assessments taken in a previous academic session.
  - 5.8. Where the Head of Academic Services determines that there is doubt about whether the requirements of 5.3. or 5.5. have been fulfilled, the matter shall be sent to the Academic Appeals Board for resolution. Where this happens, both the appellant and the Disability & Inclusion team will be notified.

## 6. Preliminary Stage

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- 6.1. The Quality Manager (Student Casework) will nominate an Officer to initially consider appeal submissions. The Officer will review the submission and may make some limited investigations, only to the extent of verifying information contained in the appeal.
- 6.2. The Officer will make a recommendation to the Quality Manager (Student Casework) or nominee that either:
  - 6.2.1. There are sufficient reasons to accept the submission for further investigation; or

- 6.2.2. The appeal should be rejected.
- 6.3. A decision to reject the appeal at this stage may be based on any of the following:
  - 6.3.1. The appeal has been submitted outside of the stipulated deadline, the appellant has not given a sufficient explanation for the delay and nothing in the submission gives cause to suspect that it would be unreasonable to declare it ineligible;
  - 6.3.2. The appeal is based wholly on disagreement with academic judgement;
  - 6.3.3. The appeal is not accompanied by appropriate or relevant independent documentary evidence, the appellant has not indicated that this is to follow and/or the appellant has failed to provide documentary evidence requested by the Officer by the stipulated deadline;
  - 6.3.4. The appeal is based wholly on factors which were outside of the University's control and which the appellant might reasonably have been expected to foresee and/or taken reasonable steps to avoid.
- 6.4. If the appellant has indicated that further documentary evidence is to follow, it will normally be expected within **10 days** of the appeal submission deadline. Where the appellant cannot meet this deadline, it is their responsibility to notify Academic Services (Student Casework) and suggest a reasonable deadline.
- 6.5. The appellant alone is responsible for the content of their appeal submission and any accompanying documentary evidence. However, where it is reasonable to do so based on the full submission received, the Officer or the Quality Manager (Student Casework) may delay the decision and invite the appellant to provide further documentary evidence. Where this happens, the appellant will normally be invited to supply evidence within a reasonable amount of time (normally no less than 10 and no more than 28 days).
- 6.6. The decision of the Quality Manager (Student Casework) will be communicated to the appellant by the Officer, normally within **7 days** of the deadline for the appeal submission. If the appeal had been submitted late, or if the appellant was asked to provide further evidence, the decision will be communicated within **14 days** of the date of the submission or receipt of evidence.
- 6.7. If the decision is to **reject** the appeal at this stage, the Officer will:
  - 6.7.1. Write to the appellant giving reasons for the decision to reject the appeal;
  - 6.7.2. Explain any additional information that was requested of the department/service which was the subject of the appeal at the preliminary stage;

- 6.7.3. Explain whether there might be a different procedure that the appellant can use to pursue the case (for example, the Complaints Procedure);
  - 6.7.4. Explain the review procedure and the grounds upon which an appellant whose appeal has been rejected at the preliminary stage can request a review of that decision;
  - 6.7.5. Explain the procedure for requesting a Completion of Procedures Statement if the appellant does not believe that they have grounds to request a review; and
  - 6.7.6. Offer the opportunity of a telephone conversation or, in some circumstances, a meeting with the appellant within **28 days**. Any such conversation or meeting will be to clarify the reasons why the appeal was rejected and is not an opportunity to have the decision reviewed or overturned.
- 6.8. If the decision is to **accept the appeal for further investigation**, the Officer will:
- 6.8.1. Write to the appellant to explain that the appeal is to be investigated further and give an estimated date when the case might be heard by the Academic Appeals Board (however appellants should note that this date is subject to change to accommodate the prioritisation of cases according to 10.3.);
  - 6.8.2. Explain the possible outcomes if the Academic Appeals Board was to uphold the appeal, where it seems that the appellant's expectations go beyond what the Academic Appeals Board might reasonably be expected to do.
- 6.9. If in the opinion of the Quality Manager (Student Casework) there is clear evidence of an administrative error, the department(s) concerned will be invited to correct the error in accordance with the procedure outlined in section 9.

## 7. Review of the Preliminary Stage

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- 7.1. If an appeal is dismissed at the preliminary stage, the appellant may request a review of that decision by the Head of Academic Services.
- 7.2. A request for a review of the decision at the preliminary stage may only be made on the following grounds:
  - 7.2.1. That the preliminary stage was not conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined in section 6; and/or



- 7.2.2. That new evidence has come to light which could not have been disclosed in time to be considered at the preliminary stage.
- 7.3. An appellant wishing to request a review of the decision at the preliminary stage must do so in writing to the Head of Academic Services within **10 days** of receiving the letter outlining the reasons why the appeal was dismissed.
- 7.4. If, on receipt of the request for review, the Head of Academic Services identifies any potential conflict of interest, a Dean of an Academic Faculty will be asked to undertake the review.
- 7.5. The Head of Academic Services will consider the request and determine either:
- 7.5.1. The decision to reject the appeal at the preliminary stage should stand and that a Completion of Procedures Statement should be issued; or
- 7.5.2. The decision to reject the appeal at the preliminary stage should be overturned and that the case should be accepted for further investigation.
- 7.6. When considering the request, the Head of Academic Services will have due regard to whether the decision to dismiss the appeal at the preliminary stage was reasonable in all of the circumstances.
- 7.7. The decision of the Head of Academic Services will be communicated to the appellant, normally within **21 days** of the date that the request was received.

## 8. Investigatory Stage

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- 8.1. The Quality Manager (Student Casework) will nominate an Investigating Officer to handle an appeal that has been accepted for investigation. The appellant will receive the name and contact details of the Investigating Officer.
- 8.2. Where necessary, the Investigating Officer will contact the appellant to clarify any aspect of the appeal submission at any point during the investigatory stage.
- 8.3. Where the appeal relates to an outcome of the Exceptional Circumstances Procedure, the Academic Conduct Review Panel, its subgroup or an academic conduct outcome received from Academic Services, the Investigating Officer will normally request information from the Secretary of the relevant Board or Panel.
- 8.4. In all other cases the Investigating Officer will, subject to the provisions of 2.4, forward the submission to the department(s) referred to in the appeal with a request to:
- 8.4.1. Provide a response addressing the central issues of the appeal, including

- the reasons and justifications that the appellant advances;
- 8.4.2. Provide details of any additional factors which might have a bearing on the case;
  - 8.4.3. Provide details of any actions undertaken in relation to the appellant and the case;
  - 8.4.4. Provide details of any constraints imposed by any Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body;
  - 8.4.5. Respond to any specific questions which the Investigating Officer feels are pertinent to the appeal.
  - 8.4.6.
- 8.5. If the appellant has indicated that some part of their appeal submission or supporting evidence should not be disclosed to the department(s) referred to in the appeal, they may opt to provide a summary instead. The Investigating Officer may consult with the appellant to determine what may be disclosed.
  - 8.6. The department(s) referred to in the appeal will be asked to respond within a reasonable amount of time which shall not normally exceed **28 days**. Where additional time is requested, reasons for this will be communicated to the appellant.
    - 8.6.1. If a department fails to respond within a reasonable amount of time, the Academic Appeals Board will be notified. The Board may draw whatever conclusions it wishes from a failure to respond or it may compel the department to respond under powers delegated to it by Senate.
  - 8.7. On receipt of the responses from the department(s), the Investigating Officer will review and decide one of the following:
    - 8.7.1. The department(s) have accepted that the appeal submission is with merit **and** there would be no detriment to the appellant or other students by seeking a resolution to the case prior to its hearing by the Academic Appeals Board; or
    - 8.7.2. The case should be heard by the Academic Appeals Board.
  - 8.8. Appeals which relate to an outcome of the Exceptional Circumstances procedure, decisions of the Academic Conduct Review Panel, its subgroup or an academic conduct outcome received from Academic Services, will normally only be resolved by a hearing of the Academic Appeals Board.
  - 8.9. Where the Investigating Officer decides in accordance with 8.7.1., the decision must be ratified by the Quality Manager (Student Casework) and the procedure at Section 9 must be followed.
  - 8.10. Where the Investigating Officer decides in accordance with 8.7.2., the response(s)

received will be summarised and forwarded to the appellant. The appellant will also be advised of the date that the Academic Appeals Board will hear the case.

- 8.11. Appellants who wish to exercise their right to see the full case file before it is presented to the Academic Appeals Board will be notified that this may cause a delay to the hearing. This is to allow additional time for the file to be checked in order that the confidentiality of others is not inadvertently breached.
- 8.12. If they wish, the appellant may comment in writing on the response received from the department(s) and this will be presented to the Academic Appeals Board. However, the appellant may not introduce new evidence which, in the opinion of the Academic Appeals Board, could have been disclosed with the original submission.

## 9. Resolution Prior to the Academic Appeals Board

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- 9.1. During the course of the investigation, if it becomes clear that the department(s) referred to in the appeal accept that the case is with merit, it might be possible to resolve the matter without it being heard by the Appeals Board. Normally, this will only happen where an administrative error is clearly identified (for example, an incorrect mark having been entered).
- 9.2. The Investigating Officer will present the case to the Head of Academic Services who will decide whether or not to permit an attempt at resolution. A decision to allow such an attempt may only be made where the Head of Academic Services is satisfied that there would be no detriment to the appellant or other students by concluding the case without it being heard by the Academic Appeals Board.
- 9.3. On behalf of the Head of Academic Services, the Investigating Officer will liaise with the department(s) concerned to determine how the error might be corrected. This will normally entail the department(s) following another procedure, for example, the mark amendment process. A reasonable deadline for resolving the error will be agreed.
- 9.4. The Investigating Officer will write to the appellant to explain the proposed course of action and confirm that the appeal will be suspended while the matter is dealt with.
- 9.5. In very exceptional circumstances, the appellant may challenge the proposed course of action. Where this happens, the appellant must give their reasons in writing. The case will be referred to the Academic Appeals Board and the appellant advised of the date that the case will be heard.
- 9.6. The department(s) concerned will confirm to the Investigating Officer when the agreed course of action has been completed. The Investigating Officer will write to the appellant with details of the outcome.

- 9.7. If any procedure that is initiated does not result in a new assessment outcome, or if the department(s) concerned refuse the suggested resolution, the appeal will be recommenced.
- 9.8. The appellant will have **10 days** in which to reject the outcome and request that the case is heard by the Academic Appeals Board. If the appellant fails to respond within this time, it will be assumed that the resolution has been accepted.

## 10. Hearings of the Academic Appeals Board

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- 10.1. The Academic Appeals Board operates with the full delegated authority of Senate. This means that it has the power to require staff and students of the University to make written submissions, give evidence and answer any questions.
- 10.2. The Academic Appeals Board will meet as frequently as necessary to deal with cases referred to it in a timely way. Normally, it will meet not less than once per calendar month.
- 10.3. Cases will be referred to the Academic Appeals Board according to the following:
  - 10.3.1. Appeals against decisions which have led to the appellant's programme of study being terminated;
  - 10.3.2. Appeals against decisions which have led to the appellant being prevented from progressing to the next level of study;
  - 10.3.3. Appeals against decisions which have resulted in the appellant's ability to commence (or continue) employment is affected, where this can be confirmed independently by the employer concerned in writing;
  - 10.3.4. Appeals against decisions not covered by 10.3.1., 10.3.2. or 10.3.3., but where the appellant has not yet completed their programme of study;
  - 10.3.5. Appeals where the effect of a decision to uphold would result in the appellant needing to undertake further assessment;
  - 10.3.6. Appeals which do not fall into one of the previous categories;
  - 10.3.7. Appeals received late, but which were accepted for investigation.
- 10.4. The members of the Academic Appeals Board will be appointed by Senate for a two year term. Retiring members may be re-nominated.
- 10.5. Each Academic Appeals Board will be composed as follows:
  - 10.5.1. A Chair, who will normally be a Dean, Associate Dean or a Director of

School; and

10.5.2. Normally two members of academic staff.

- 10.6. Wherever possible no member of the Academic Appeals Board should work in the department(s) within which the appellant's programme of study resides. Any member from the appellant's department(s) will be asked to declare any perceived interest which could give rise to conflict at the beginning of the meeting and this will be recorded. If deemed appropriate by the Chair, the member will absent themselves from any relevant areas of discussion.
- 10.7. The Quality Manager (Student Casework), or other nominee of the Head of Academic Services will attend the Academic Appeals Board to give regulatory advice and make a record of the hearing, but will not be a member of the Board.
- 10.8. The appellant is not permitted to attend the hearing.
- 10.9. Other than through the presentation of their case via the means explained in this procedure, appellants must not seek to influence the Chair or members of the Academic Appeals Board or in any other way seek to sway the operation of the Academic Appeals Procedure.
- 10.10. For each case, the relevant Investigating Officer will be present to answer any questions about the investigatory stage and will hear the full deliberations and decisions of the Board in order to communicate them to the appellant. The Investigating Officer will not offer an opinion on the validity or otherwise of the appeal submission and the academic members of the Board alone will make the decision on whether to uphold or reject the appeal.
- 10.11. Neither the University nor the appellant may be legally represented at meetings of the Academic Appeals Board. However, the Academic Appeals Board may take advice from a member (or members) of staff of the University with appropriate clinical expertise or from others with such expertise relating solely to the interpretation of medical or other evidence supplied in support of an academic appeal. Any such advice is to be requested and received in writing and made available to the appellant.
- 10.12. The Academic Appeals Board will consider each case individually and on its own merits.
- 10.13. The Academic Appeals Board will not be bound by legal rules of evidence nor by previous decisions and in all cases will have due regard to whether a decision that is the subject of an appeal was reasonable in all the circumstances.
- 10.14. For each case, the Academic Appeals Board will receive a file containing the following:

- 10.14.1. A copy of the appellant's original submission with all supporting evidence provided;
- 10.14.2. A copy of any report or response received during the investigatory stage;
- 10.14.3. A copy of any further comments made in writing by the appellant following receipt of the responses received during the investigatory stage;
- 10.14.4. A copy of the appellant's most recent academic results transcript.

## 11. Outcomes of the Academic Appeals Board

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- 11.1. For each case, the Academic Appeals Board will decide either:
  - 11.1.1. The appeal should be upheld in part or in full or;
  - 11.1.2. The appeal should be dismissed and the original decision should stand.
- 11.2. Where the Academic Appeals Board decides in accordance with 11.1.1. it will determine a remedy using the procedure at section 12. The appellant will receive a letter from the Investigating Officer within **14 days** of the decision containing the following:
  - 11.2.1. Where necessary, the reasons for the decision in relation to each part of the appeal submission; and
  - 11.2.2. Details of the remedy decided upon by the Academic Appeals Board
- 11.3. Where the Academic Appeals Board decides in accordance with 11.1.2. it will give full reasons for the decision. The appellant will receive a letter from the Investigating Officer within **14 days** of the decision containing the following:
  - 11.3.1. The reasons for the decision in relation to each part of the appeal submission;
  - 11.3.2. Advice on whether there might be a different procedure that the appellant can use to pursue the case (for example, the Complaints Procedure);
  - 11.3.3. An explanation of the review procedure and the grounds upon which an appellant whose appeal has been dismissed can request a review of that decision;
  - 11.3.4. An explanation of the procedure for requesting a Completion of Procedures Statement if the appellant does not believe that they have

grounds to request a review; and

- 11.3.5. An offer of a telephone conversation or, in some circumstances, a meeting with the appellant within **28 days**. Any such conversation or meeting will be to clarify the reasons why the appeal was rejected and is not an opportunity to have the decision reviewed or overturned. -

## 12. Powers of the Academic Appeals Board

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- 12.1. The Academic Appeals Board operates with the full delegated authority of Senate. Therefore, when it decides to uphold an appeal, it can impose whatever remedy it deems is reasonable to resolve the matter, **except it can never:**
- 12.1.1. Increase (or decrease) the marks awarded by the Examiners;
  - 12.1.2. Alter a decision relating to progression by the Awards Assessment Board;
  - 12.1.3. Alter a degree classification determined by the Awards Assessment Board; or
  - 12.1.4. Quash a decision that the student has submitted work which breaches the Academic Conduct Policy.
- 12.2. Where the Academic Appeals Board decides to uphold an appeal against a decision of the Awards Assessment Board or the Progression Assessment Board it may normally:
- 12.2.1. In the case of Exceptional Circumstances being established and the Academic Appeals Board being satisfied that there are justifiable reasons for the appellant having not used one of the other procedures available, make a recommendation to the Assessment Review Board that the relevant assessment attempt(s) be set aside or that any late penalty be revoked.
  - 12.2.2. In the case of procedural or administrative error, instruct the department(s) concerned to correct the matter using one of the University's established procedures.
  - 12.2.3. In the case of a Specific Learning Difference diagnosis not resolved under section 5, to grant a deferral of the affected assessments.
- 12.3. Where the Academic Appeals Board decides to uphold an appeal against an outcome of the **Exceptional Circumstances** procedure, a recommendation will be made to the Assessment Review Board that the relevant assessment attempt(s) be set aside or that any late penalty be revoked.

- 12.4. Where the Academic Appeals Board decides to uphold an appeal against a decision of the **Academic Conduct Review Panel, its subgroup or an academic conduct outcome received from Academic Services**, it will decide the stage that the case should be referred back to (i.e. department, Panel or subgroup and whether the whole case should be heard again or a review of the penalty decision undertaken). The Board may also specify if the previous Panel which heard the case should be involved or whether a new Panel should be convened.
- 12.5. In very exceptional circumstances, where the Academic Appeals Board does not believe that any of the normal remedies outlined at 12.2., 12.3., or 12.4., are sufficient to resolve the matter, it may decide on another remedy. Where it does this, the Chair of the Academic Appeals Board must provide a report to Academic Quality & Enhancement Committee.
- 12.6. Where the Academic Appeals Board decides on a remedy that does not involve the Assessment Review Board, the Officer who investigated the case will monitor compliance with the Academic Appeals Board's decision.

### 13. Assessment Review Board

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- 13.1. Where the Academic Appeals Board instructs the Assessment Review Board to reconsider an assessment decision, it will normally provide reasons which must be taken into consideration when determining any amended outcome.
- 13.2. The Deputy Registrar (or nominee) will receive the Academic Appeal Board's decision and, normally within **10 days**, will determine the level of discretion available to the Assessment Review Board to amend the original assessment decision. The Deputy Registrar (or nominee) will then decide either:
  - 13.2.1. The Assessment Review Board would have no discretion and the original decision of the Awards Assessment Board or the Progression Assessment Board must be amended according to the regulations and conventions of the University; or
  - 13.2.2. The Assessment Review Board may have some discretion on matters relating to progression or for any other reasons deemed relevant.
- 13.3. Where the Deputy Registrar (or nominee) decides in accordance with 13.2.1., the Chair of the Assessment Review Board will be invited to authorise an amendment to the original decision of the Awards Assessment Board or the Progression Assessment Board according to advice from the Deputy Registrar (or nominee). Any such amendment will be reported to the next meeting of the Awards Assessment Board.
- 13.4. Notwithstanding the advice of the Deputy Registrar (or nominee) the Chair of the



Assessment Review Board may determine that there is sufficient reason for the matter to be considered at a full meeting of the Assessment Review Board.

- 13.5. Where the Deputy Registrar (or nominee) decides in accordance with 13.2.2., the Quality Manger or nominee (Student Casework) will be invited to convene a meeting of the Assessment Review Board.
- 13.6. The Assessment Review Board will be composed as follows:
  - 13.6.1. A Chair who shall normally also be the Chair of the Awards Assessment Board or Progression Assessment Board; and
  - 13.6.2. Normally two, but no fewer than one, members of academic staff, at least one of whom has some knowledge of the appellant's programme of study.
- 13.7. The Assessment Review Board will be advised by the Deputy Registrar (or nominee).
- 13.8. The Investigating Officer will normally be present to take a record of proceedings.
- 13.9. Where a full meeting of the Assessment Review Board is convened it must meet within a reasonable amount of time to consider the cases referred to it, taking into consideration the reasons advanced by the Academic Appeals Board. The Assessment Review Board must act in a way that is compatible with the decision of the Academic Appeals Board and it is not empowered to overturn any decision of the Academic Appeals Board.
- 13.10. The Assessment Review Board may decide as follows:
  - 13.10.1. The original decision of the Awards Assessment Board or Progression Assessment Board shall be overturned and a new recommendation for the relevant assessment(s) is made; or
  - 13.10.2. Exceptionally, the original decision of the Awards Assessment Board shall be upheld and the original recommendation confirmed.
- 13.11. Where the Assessment Review Board decides in accordance with 13.10.1., the Deputy Registrar (or nominee) will write to the appellant and the Investigating Officer to confirm the new outcome. The decision of the Assessment Review Board will be final. If the appellant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request a Completion of Procedures Statement and refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.
- 13.12. Where the Assessment Review Board decides in accordance with 13.10.2., the Chair of the Assessment Review Board will write to the Chair of the Academic Appeals Board giving reasons for the decision. On receipt of this, the Chair of the Academic Appeals Board may decide to refer the matter to the review stage. The Investigating Officer will write to the appellant with further information.

## 14. Review of the decision of the Academic Appeals Board

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- 14.1. At the conclusion of the process, the appellant may request a review of the academic appeal under the following circumstances:
  - 14.1.1. If the Academic Appeals Board decided to dismiss the appeal. Where the appeal was upheld in part, a review may be requested only of those parts which were not upheld; or
  - 14.1.2. If the Academic Appeals Board decided to uphold the appeal (either in full or in part), but the Assessment Review Board declined to amend the relevant assessment outcome, provided that the Chair of the Academic Appeals Board has not already referred the case for review.
- 14.2. In order to request a review of the academic appeal, the appellant must be able to demonstrate one or both of the following:
  - 14.2.1. There is evidence of some procedural or administrative irregularity in the operation of the Academic Appeals Procedure;
  - 14.2.2. New evidence has come to light which could not have been disclosed in time to be considered by the Academic Appeals Board.
- 14.3. An appellant wishing to request a review of an academic appeal must do so in writing to the Head of Academic Services within **10 days** of receiving the full outcome of the Academic Appeals Board.
- 14.4. If, on receipt of the request for review, the Head of Academic Services identifies any potential conflict of interest, a Dean of an Academic Faculty will be asked to undertake the review.
- 14.5. On receipt of the request for a review of an academic appeal, the Head of Academic Services will consider only the conduct of the Academic Appeals Procedure and/or the evidence submitted. The review is not an opportunity for the case to be re-heard and consequently the circumstances which lead to the decision that was subject to appeal will not normally be considered.
- 14.6. The Head of Academic Services will consider the request and determine either:
  - 14.6.1. The decision of the Academic Appeals Board to dismiss the appeal should stand and that a Completion of Procedures Statement should be issued; or
  - 14.6.2. The case shall be reconsidered by the Academic Appeals Board;

- 14.7. When considering the request, the Head of Academic Services will have due regard to whether the decision to dismiss the appeal in full or in part was reasonable in all of the circumstances.
- 14.8. Where a request for review has been made because the Assessment Review Board has declined to amend the original decision of the Awards Assessment Board despite the recommendation of the Academic Appeals Board, the Head of Academic Quality & Standards will present the case to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) whose decision will be final.
- 14.9. The decision of the Head of Academic Services will be communicated to the appellant, normally within **21 days** of the date that the request was received.
- 14.10. Where the Head of Academic Services decides in accordance with 14.5.2., the case will be referred to the next meeting of the Academic Appeals Board.

## 15. Mark amendments

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- 15.1. If at any point during the conduct of an appeal, a department agrees to or is required to submit an amendment to a mark previously agreed by the Awards Assessment Board or the Progression Assessment Board, the procedures outlined in this section will be used.
- 15.2. The Chair of the relevant Module Assessment Board, or nominee, will complete a mark amendment form supplied by Registry Services for this purpose. The form will outline the reasons for the amendment, where appropriate, referring to a decision made during the conduct of an appeal.
- 15.3. Where, in the view of the Deputy Registrar, or nominee, the nature and reasons given for the amendment indicate a serious breach of process, or would change an assessment outcome decision to the detriment of a student, the request will be referred to the Registrar.
- 15.4. Where a request for a mark amendment is referred to the Registrar, the nature and extent of the circumstances which led to the request will be determined. The Registrar will authorise any action deemed necessary to avoid a reoccurrence.

## 16. Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

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- 16.1. If an appellant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they may ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to review their case. In order to do this, the appellant must normally have been issued with a Completion of Procedures Statement.

- 16.2. The University will automatically issue a Completion of Procedures Statement when an appellant has exhausted all of the University's internal procedures. Normally, this will only be following a review either of the preliminary stage or following a review of the decision of the Academic Appeals Board.
- 16.3. An appellant is entitled to request a Completion of Procedures Statement at an earlier point provided that they confirm their understanding that they do not have grounds to request a review according to these procedures.
- 16.4. Further and specific details about the OIA can be obtained from its website: [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk).

## 17. Enhancement Opportunities

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- 17.1. The University will use information gathered throughout the conduct of appeals to determine areas of its practice that might be enhanced.
- 17.2. The outcome of each academic appeal will be communicated to the relevant Head of Department and to the Deputy Registrar (or nominee).
- 17.3. Where the need arises, the Academic Appeals Board will write to the Head of Academic Services and, where appropriate, other office holders to draw attention to any specific matters that may require attention or to general issues of policy that the University may wish to reflect on.
- 17.4. Academic Services (Student Casework) will record details of each appeal received, its nature and the outcome. Statistical data will be compiled on an annual basis in order to provide reports to Senate, via Academic Quality & Enhancement Committee. Such reports will not include any personally identifiable information.



University of  
Chester

# Quality and Standards Manual

## Certification Policy

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Contact:	assessment@chester.ac.uk
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## CONTENTS

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<b>SECTION 11: CERTIFICATION OF AWARDS/ACHIEVEMENT .....</b>	<b>2</b>
11.1 CERTIFICATES .....	2
11.2 DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENTS/HIGHER EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT REPORTS/RESULTS PROFILES .....	3
ANNEX A – CERTIFICATION DESCRIPTORS .....	4
ANNEX B – MANDATORY WORDING .....	5
1 <i>Certificates of Attendance</i> .....	5
2 <i>Certificates of Credit</i> .....	5
3 <i>Awards of Senate</i> .....	6

### *Appendices*

- 11A Procedures governing the approval and award of a Certificate of Credit
- 11B Example of a Certificate of Credit

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## SECTION 11: CERTIFICATION OF AWARDS/ACHIEVEMENT

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The regulations governing the certification of awards at the University of Chester encompass any printed verification of achievement or award issued by the University. Irrespective of the level of award, all certification produced by the University must conform to institutional guidelines, outlined in this document.

### 11.1 Certificates

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1. The University of Chester issues a number of different types of certificate, dependent upon the type of award or achievement. Full details, including the type of parchment and overt security features used, may be found below as Annex A
2. All parchments are securely stored within Registry Services. In order to ensure quality control, access to the parchments is restricted as detailed in Annex A. Certification for students completing awards with partner organisations remains under the control of University of Chester Registry Services. These access rights are determined and managed by the Deputy Registrar and Head of Student Administration and any queries relating to this should be directed to [s.nelson@chester.ac.uk](mailto:s.nelson@chester.ac.uk)
3. All University certificates incorporate the appropriate level of authentication outlined in Annex A
4. Mandatory wording for each type of certificate is detailed in Annex B. Regardless of the mode, method and location of delivery, the wording of all University certificates is consistent
5. Certification of awards confirmed on or after 1 October 2012 will not include the partner name; the partner's name will appear on the Diploma Supplement, with reference to the existence of the Diploma Supplement included on the certificate in line with QAA guidelines
6. Only certificates for awards including at least 120 credits at Level 6 or above are normally presented at the University Awards Ceremony; certificates for awards which do not allow the recipient to attend the University Awards Ceremony will be dispatched by mail within 4 weeks of the formal confirmation of the award
7. Certificates will not be issued to those in debt to the University

8. Replacement Certificates for University of Liverpool Awards are issued by University of Chester Registry Services in accordance with the agreement between the University of Chester and University of Liverpool. Certificates for awards made prior to 1993 are issued by the University of Liverpool.
9. All certification will be issued in the initial instance without charge. A charge will be made for replacements
10. Only one certificate should be in circulation at any given point. Where a request is made to replace a damaged certificate, the original certificate must be returned prior to a replacement being issued
11. Where a request is made to replace a lost, destroyed or stolen certificate, the full circumstances surrounding the request must be made in writing to the Deputy Registrar and Head of Student Administration. Further information may be requested and the University reserves the right to refuse a request for the replacement of a certificate. Replacement certificates will have the following statement printed on the reverse: 'This document is a duplicate of the original and was reprinted on Day/Month/Year'
12. Where an award is revoked as in Section 1.3(g) of the Principles and Regulations, certification is also revoked and any certificate issued should be returned
13. In circumstances whereby a student's name changes during their programme of study, the University will change the official record, providing acceptable proof of the change of name is provided. Under no circumstances, except where required by law, will the University amend a student's name after the original certificate has been issued.

## 11.2 Diploma Supplements/Higher Education Achievement Reports/Results Profiles

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1. Results remain provisional until they have been confirmed by an Awards Assessment Board, Progression Assessment Board or Examination Committee
2. All students are expected to access results online in accordance with the policy set out in Section 9 of the Assessment Handbook. Hard copies of results profiles requested during the course of a student's studies will only be issued when all results displayed have been ratified by an Awards Assessment Board, Progression Assessment Board or Examination Committee; provisional results will not be issued on an official results profile



3. A Higher Education Achievement Report or Diploma Supplements is issued to all students successfully completing an award of Senate; students leaving their programme having failed to complete an award of Senate are issued with a final profile of results, as are those students successfully completing modules on a free-standing basis.

## Annex A – Certification Descriptors

<b>Certificate Type</b>	<b>Issued by</b>	<b>Signatories</b>	<b>Parchment</b>	<b>Security Features/Guidelines</b>
Certificate of Attendance	Academic or Support Departments	Head of Department or equivalent	As appropriate	University Logo may be included but not the University Crest or Hologram
Certificate of Credit <sup>1</sup>	Registry Services	Vice-Chancellor	120gsm Cream UV Dull	University Logo and Hologram with offset colour-tint University Crest
Final Results Profile/Diploma Supplement/ HEAR	Registry Services	Registrar <sup>2</sup>	120gsm Cream UV Dull	University Logo and Hologram with offset colour-tint University Crest
Awards of Senate	Registry Services	Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor	160gsm Cream UV Dull	University Crest and Hologram, with the Crest also as a central colour-tint. Unique identification number on reverse

<sup>1</sup> Only for modules as approved by Faculty Boards of Study

<sup>2</sup> Diploma Supplement and HEAR only

## Annex B – Mandatory Wording

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### 1 *Certificates of Attendance*

This Certificate of Attendance has been issued to

*Student's full name*

by the Department of ..... of the University of Chester in recognition of

*name of activity*

*Date*

This Certificate of Attendance does not constitute academic credit<sup>3</sup>

### 2 *Certificates of Credit*

Certificate of Credit

This is to certify that

*Student's full name*

has been awarded a Certificate of Credit in recognition of studies

*Credit Value and Level of Study*

*Module Code and Title*

*Award Date*

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<sup>3</sup> Must appear on all Certificates of Attendance

### 3 *Awards of Senate*

*Full Award Title*

We hereby certify that

*Student's full name*

having undertaken University of Chester approved courses of study, and having satisfied the examiners, was admitted by resolution of the University's Senate to the

*Full Award Title*

*Classification (where applicable)*

on the (date)

Further information regarding this award can be found on the student's Diploma Supplement or Higher Education Achievement Report<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> this statement will appear on the certificates of awards made on or after 1 October 2012



University of  
Chester

# Quality and Standards Manual

## External Examiner Policy Including Chief External Examiner

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Owner:	Academic Services
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## Contents

1. Purpose.....	3
2. External Examiner Role Descriptor .....	3
3 External Examiner Requirements.....	5
4 Nomination and Approval .....	7
5 Appointment.....	7
6 Fees and Expenses .....	8
7 Programme Handbook Information .....	8
8 Extension to Duties .....	8
9 Ending an Appointment .....	9
10 Chief External Examiner Role Descriptor .....	10
11 Chief External Examiner Duties.....	10
12. Master by Research (MRes) Dissertations.....	11

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the External Examiner is to provide independent feedback of programmes and modules. The views of the external examiner are to support the enhancement of academic provision.
- 1.2 External Examiners are normally used where a professional governing body expect a role that is not fulfilled by the External Quality Advisor.
- 1.3 University appoints a Chief External Examiner who supports the work of the those undertaking external oversight by providing comprehensive, independent, and impartial commentary at a university-wide level.

## 2. External Examiner Role Descriptor

- 2.1 External Examiners are responsible for:
  - 2.1.1 Ensuring that the University's award standards are credible, secure, and comparable to those at other UK universities.
  - 2.1.2 Ensuring assessments align with the standards outlined in the FHEQ.
  - 2.1.3 Ensuring that the assessment process, including marking and moderation, is fair and consistent with both national academic standards and the University's regulations AND measure student achievement.
  - 2.1.4 Confirming the comparability and appropriateness of academic standards of assessment tasks at level 5 and above before being released to students.

2.1.5 To provide advice and suggestions on content, structure and assessment and on the teaching and learning strategies. meeting a representative sample of students at least once during their term of office and reviewing student feedback.

2.1.6 Being a member of the relevant Module Assessment Board.

2.1.7 The completion of an annual report.

## 2.2 In addition:

2.2.1 External Examiners are appointed to a subject area.

2.2.2 When a module is shared between programs with different External Examiners, the involved department(s) must select the most appropriate program as the 'home program' of the module. The department must provide clear information on which External Examiner is responsible for which module. Modules can only be reviewed by more than one External Examiner if the assessment is through a dissertation or another negotiated project.

2.2.3 The department must ensure that the External Examiner can access an appropriate sample of work for each completed assessment component. If work is freely accessible online, the External Examiner can review whichever pieces of work they choose as long as they satisfy themselves that they have seen a representative sample. If work is not available online, the department supplies an appropriate sample in consultation with the External Examiner.

- 2.2.4 External examiners must be provided with evidence of internal monitoring.
- 2.2.5 External examiners must not be regarded as third markers and must not be involved with the raising or lowering of individual marks. If there is concern over the appropriateness of marks in the sample, the External Examiner can recommend a review, that is non-binding.
- 2.2.6 The External Examiner cannot make a final decision on any proposed adjustment to marks.
- 2.2.7 External examiners can make a confidential report on any matters of serious concern or sensitivity to the Head of Academic Quality and Standards. Details of how to do this can be obtained from [externalexaminer@chester.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminer@chester.ac.uk).

### 3 External Examiner Requirements

#### 3.1 The nominee will normally have:

- 3.1.1 sufficient knowledge and understanding of the UK sector agreed reference points for the maintaining academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
- 3.1.2 competence of teaching and assessing in the fields covered by the programme of study, including designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures;
- 3.1.3 familiarity with the required standard to achieve the award being assessed;



- 3.1.4 awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
  - 3.1.5 experience in the enhancement of the student learning experience;
  - 3.1.6 relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate;
  - 3.1.7 be engaged in academia. If a nominee is not currently employed by a HEI, a request can be made to appoint an expert working in a related field by contacting [externalexaminer@chester.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminer@chester.ac.uk) with a compelling rationale;
  - 3.1.8 prior experience of engaging as an external examiner, where the nominee has not, a mentor must be appointed.<sup>1</sup>
- 3.2 In addition, and where applicable nominees must:
- 3.2.1 Have the right to work in the UK;
  - 3.2.2 and have a UK bank account;
  - 3.2.3 meet any criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.

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<sup>1</sup> [Guide for mentoring a new EE](#)

3.2.4 The Faculty will undertake these checks.

## 4 Nomination and Approval

4.1 The Head of Department or Programme Leader completes the [Nomination form](#).

4.2 Quality and Standards sub-Committee approves or rejects the nomination.

## 5 Appointment

5.1 External Examiners are appointed for five years.

5.2 Academic Services will inform both the relevant Faculty Business Manager and the External Examiner when the appointment is approved.

5.3 When the appointment is confirmed, the Programme Team must provide the External Examiner with access to the following:

5.3.1 Copies of the relevant programme specification(s) and handbook(s).

5.3.2 Assessment briefs/assessment criteria, marking schemes and marking criteria and samples of scripts and profiles of marks as appropriate to enable them to undertake their duties.

5.3.3 Examples of student feedback and responses.

5.3.4 An annual letter from the Programme Leader or Head of Department, commenting on action taken in response to the previous year's External Examiner report, and/or the relevant extract from the programme CME report addressing this issue (the response must be approved by a senior member of staff in the academic department before being sent to the External Examiner).

5.3.5 Completed monitoring forms (see [Handbook F: Section 5.4](#)).

5.3.6 A list of key dates and periods throughout the year when they will be

required to undertake their duties.

## 6 Fees and Expenses

6.1 External Examiners are paid annually, normally in August.

6.2 Payments require the submission of the annual report.

6.3 Reasonable expenses are paid by the academic department. External Examiners should contact their department to agree any expense activity.

## 7 Programme Handbook Information

7.1 The name, position and institution of the current External Examiner must be included within the relevant Programme Handbook.

7.2 The External Examiner details are for information only and student must not contact an External Examiner under any circumstances. This statement must be included in the Programme Handbook.

7.3 Any External Examiner who is independently contacted by a student must inform the Programme Leader and Academic Services as soon as possible.

## 8 Extension to Duties

8.1 Where a department wants to extend the duties of an External Examiner, it must send a rationale by email to the Head of Academic Quality and Standards (via [externalexaminer@chester.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminer@chester.ac.uk)) explaining:

8.1.1 the reason for the extension to duties;

8.1.2 the suitability of the nominee for the program they will be reviewing (including reference to their subject experience, qualifications, and prior work at an equivalent level).

and confirming:

8.1.3 that the nominee understands the additional time required for the extra work and can undertake this;

8.1.4 the list of module codes the nominee will cover.

## 9 Ending an Appointment

9.1 Where the External Examiner and the department have not engaged, normally within a

three-month cycle, both the External Examiner and the University can end an appointment at any time.

9.2 If an External Examiner wishes to end their appointment, they must notify [externalexaminer@chester.ac.uk](mailto:externalexaminer@chester.ac.uk).

9.3 Academic Services informs the External Examiner in writing if their appointment is terminated.

9.4 Examples for ending an appointment are:

- changes in circumstances or demands, for example workload allocation, within the academic department;
- the External Examiner's failure to submit, or where requested resubmit, a report within the agreed time limit;
- the External Examiner's failure to carry out their responsibilities appropriately;

- a conflict of interest arises during the External Examiner's term of office;
- changes in the relationship between the External Examiner and the department.

9.5 The Head of Academic Quality and Standards, or representative, makes the decision to discontinue an appointment, after speaking with relevant members of the academic department.

## 10 Chief External Examiner Role Descriptor

10.1 The University appoints one Chief External Examiner who supplements the role of the University's External Examiners and provides oversight of External Quality Advisors. The Chief External Examiner provides independent and impartial comment at an overarching, University-wide level.

10.2 The Chief External Examiner reviews and considers any aspect of the University's assessment processes and reports annually on these to Quality and Standards sub-Committee.

10.3 The Chief External Examiner is nominated by Academic Services and approved by Quality & Standards sub-Committee.

10.4 The Chief External Examiner will oversee the work conducted by External Quality Advisors and may be asked to fulfil elements of the role where an External Quality Advisor becomes unavailable.

## 11 Chief External Examiner Duties

11.1 The Chief External Examiner must:

- 11.1.1 attend at least two Awards Assessment Boards (AABs) a year. Normally, the Chief External Examiner attends the December and June AABs;
- 11.1.2 submit an annual report;
- 11.1.3 engage with improving assessment practice and related procedures (this can include review of existing processes and commentary on proposals for new procedures);
- 11.1.4 review activities relating to the conduct of the University's assessment processes. The Chief External Examiner chooses which activities they want to engage in depending on the particular issues or areas they are keen to review. For example:
- reviewing a sample of External Examiner reports, External Quality Advisor reports, Chair's Action forms from AABs and/or any other relevant documentation.
  - attending Module Assessment Boards.

## 12. Master by Research (MRes) Dissertations

12.1 The External Quality Advisor or External Examiner assigned to the programme should normally give oversight of any taught provision of the MRes. However where this is not possible, A Master by Research Examiner may be appointed to provide external scrutiny of a single dissertation or project.

12.2 In all appointments, the [External Examiner Nomination - Master by Research Dissertations form](#) must be completed.

12.3 The fee for a Master by Research Examiner is £125.



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# Quality and Standards Manual

## External Quality Advisor Policy

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## Contents

### Contents

1. Purpose .....	3
2. External Quality Advisor Role Descriptor .....	3
3. Appointing an EQA .....	5
4. Fees and Expenses .....	5
5. Programme Handbook Information.....	5
6. Discontinuation of Appointment .....	6



## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the External Quality Advisor (EQA) is to act as a critical friend in the ongoing development and enhancement of the department/subject area's provision. In addition, the EQA will provide an independent and impartial perspective of the University's assessment process at an overarching, department/ subject wide level.
- 1.2 EQAs replace the role of External Examiner except where these are required by a professional governing body or other compelling reason.

## 2. External Quality Advisor Role Descriptor

- 2.1 The role is designed to be flexible and will operate differently within departments both in terms of the grouping of programmes for allocation to an EQA and the areas the EQA may focus on to review.
- 2.2 The role should be approached as a process of ongoing review and enhancement over the duration of the EQA's term of office (a period no longer than five years).
- 2.3 Where an EQA is engaged they entirely replace the role of external examiner.
- 2.4 Departments are provided with [additional guidance](#) which includes a calendar of activities.
- 2.5 The main duties of an EQA are as follows:
  - 2.5.1 An initial meeting at the start of the academic year with relevant members of the subject area to identify key themes and priorities for review and agree activities to take place during the year and term of office.
    - 2.5.1.1 During this meeting the EQA must be provided with the name(s) and contact details of their key contact(s) in the academic department.
  - 2.5.2 Involvement in calibration exercises *prior* to assessment.
    - 2.5.2.1 The calibration policy can be found on the [EQA Information SharePoint page](#).
    - 2.5.2.2 Marked work must be made available to the EQA for the purposes of reviewing assessment, marking and feedback where this has been an agreed activity.
    - 2.5.2.3 EQAs will be required to review examples of student work following marking and internal moderation in order to assess the effectiveness of the calibration exercises.
    - 2.5.2.4 EQAs are not required to sample student work for moderation or to approve marks prior to MABs as part of their duties and should not be asked to review work for this purpose.
  - 2.5.3 The following meetings are required at least once an academic year with:
    - 2.5.3.1 groups of students (to include open meetings not just appointed student representatives/students selected by the dept) including review of student feedback and how the team intend to make use of it

- 2.5.3.2 members of staff from the department/subject area to include staff from partner colleges where appropriate
- 2.5.3.3 the EQA may also wish to request meetings throughout the year with any other individual/groups of staff for example Registry and Academic Services.
- 2.5.3.4 Additional meetings should be agreed with the department and the EQA based on need and the schedule of activities

2.5.4 Review activities that include:

- 2.5.4.1 oversight of data relating to the student experience and employability
- 2.5.4.2 scrutiny of outcomes
- 2.5.4.3 review of programme documentation
- 2.5.4.4 in-person visits to view facilities/visit partner colleges.

2.6 The operational expectations of the EQA are as follows:

- 2.6.1 Providing advice, guidance and feedback on their review and enhancement activities throughout the year so that it may be acted on at a point in the cycle where it may impact the experience of current students.
- 2.6.2 Completion of pulse surveys at regular intervals throughout the academic year.
- 2.6.3 Completion of an annual report at the end of every academic year.
- 2.6.4 Liaising with other EQAs as and when required.
- 2.6.5 Providing a handover to the incoming EQA at the end of their term of office.
- 2.6.6 Undertake any other review activities as directed by the University.

2.7 The key areas of oversight of the EQA, consistent with the [Office for Students Conditions of Registration](#), include:

- 2.7.1 It is not expected that the EQA will have oversight of all of these areas on an annual basis but that all areas will be reviewed over the duration of their term of office.
- 2.7.2 Academic Experience (Condition B1)
  - 2.7.2.1 Confirm that course content within their area of responsibility:
    - 2.7.2.1.1 Are up to date (B1.1) R1
    - 2.7.2.1.2 Provides educational challenge (B1.2) R2
    - 2.7.2.1.3 Is coherent (B1.3) R3
    - 2.7.2.1.4 Requires students to develop relevant skills (as appropriate to the subject matter) (B1.5) R5
- 2.7.3 Resources, Support and Student Engagement (Condition B2)
  - 2.7.3.1 Provide comment on:
    - 2.7.3.1.2 Opportunities for students to contribute to the development of their academic experience (B2.4) R12
- 2.7.4 Assessment and Awards (Condition B4)
  - 2.7.4.1 Confirm that within their area of responsibility:
    - 2.7.4.1.1 Students are assessed effectively (B4.1) R16
    - 2.7.4.1.2 Assessment is valid and reliable (B4.2) R17

- 2.7.4.1.3 Academic regulations are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the applicable programme (B4.4) R19
- 2.7.4.1.4 Relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously (B4.5) R20

2.8 EQAs may review and comment on the following areas where appropriate:

2.8.1 Academic Experience (Condition B1)

2.8.1.1 Whether course content within their area of responsibility:

2.8.1.1.2 Is effectively delivered (B1.4) R4

2.8.2 Resources, Support and Student Engagement (Condition B2)

2.8.2.1 Resourcing and academic support (B2.1 - B2.3) R6-R11

2.8.3 Student Outcomes (Condition B3) R13-15

2.8.4 Assessment and Awards (Condition B4)

2.8.4.1 Academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible (B4.3) R18

2.8.5 Sector Recognised Standards (Condition B5)

2.8.5.1 Any standards set appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards (B5.1) R21

**2.8.5.2** Awards are only granted to students whose knowledge and skills appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards (B5.2) R22

### 3. Appointing an EQA

3.1 EQA appointments run in line with the academic year and last for a maximum period of five years.

3.2 New EQAs should be appointed during the final year of a current EQAs term of office to enable a handover to take place.

3.3 Policies, guidance and forms relating to appointment of an EQA can be found on the [EQA Information site](#).

### 4. Fees and Expenses

4.1 All information relating to fees and expenses can be found on the [EQA Information site](#).

### 5. Programme Handbook Information

5.1 The following statement must be included in student handbooks:

5.1.1 The University engages External Examiners (EEs) and External Quality Advisors (EQAs) to both assure the quality and standards of our provision and enhance academic activity.

Under no circumstances are students permitted to independently contact an EE or EQA. If the student wishes to engage formally with the quality management process, there are appropriate

mechanisms in place at the University of Chester, further guidance on which can be obtained from the AS section on Portal.

5.2 Where helpful, Teams may wish to include the following information,

5.2.1 From September 2023 the University is creating a new role of External Quality Advisor (EQA) as an additional form of external scrutiny. Whilst External Examiners will continue to be utilised where there is a professional body requirement the rest of our provision will be covered by EQAs.

EQAs provide an alternative but still rigorous approach to ensuring the University's assessment processes are fit for purpose with an emphasis on enhancement. EQAs submit an annual report in a similar way to our external examiners.

5.3 The key differences between the EE and EQA roles can be seen in the table below:

<i>Key Differences</i>	
<i>External Examiners</i>	<i>External Quality Advisors</i>
<i>Cover a single or small number of programmes within a narrow area</i>	<i>Normally cover a subject area or several programmes within a wider area</i>
<i>Annual review of processes</i>	<i>Ongoing review, usually over a five-year period</i>
<i>Fixed duties as set out in role descriptor</i>	<i>Flexible role with input to be agreed between the EQA and subject area</i>
<i>Consistent with requirements for external scrutiny set out by QAA</i>	<i>Emphasis on areas covered by the Office for Students B conditions of registration</i>
<i>Assure marking and assessment processes through moderation of student work and approval of marks prior to MABs.</i>	<i>Assure marking and assessment processes via ongoing review and oversight of calibration activities.</i>

## 6. Discontinuation of Appointment

6.1 Both the EQA and the University have the right to end the appointment at any stage.

6.2 An EQA wishing to end their appointment should notify [external\\_oversight@chester.ac.uk](mailto:external_oversight@chester.ac.uk) at the earliest opportunity.

6.3 Academic Services will inform the EQA in writing if their appointment is being discontinued.

6.4 The decision to discontinue an appointment may be made for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to:

- 6.4.1 changes in circumstances;
- 6.4.2 failure to complete an activity including completion of a pulse survey within the agreed time limit;
- 6.4.3 if the EQA fails to carry out their responsibilities appropriately;
- 6.4.4 circumstances where a conflict of interest has arisen during the EQA's term of office;

6.4.5 changes in the relationship between the EQA and the department.

6.5 The decision to discontinue an appointment will be taken by the Head of Quality and Standards, or representative, in discussion with relevant members of the academic department.