

Code of Practice: Assessment

Academic Governance Approval

Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC)

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1. Aims and Scope and Regulations

1.1 Aims

The Code of Practice - Assessment has been prepared to support the learning, teaching and assessment practices at the Royal Agricultural University thus ensuring the alignment between teaching strategies, intended learning outcomes, assessment components and assessment criteria. Assessments are integral to learning and teaching and should develop students' knowledge and understanding, while measuring attainment.

1.2 Scope

The Code of Practice sets out the principles for the design, communication and implementation of effective assessment and feedback practices at the University. It applies to all credit-bearing taught programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels of study.

The Code of Practice should be read in conjunction with the Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes, the [QAA Advice and Guidance: Course Design and Development \(Nov 2018\)](#) and the [QAA Advice and Guidance: Assessment \(November 2018\)](#).

The aim of the Code of Practice is to ensure the University meets the obligations and expectations placed on it by its students, staff and external regulators by:

- Ensuring assessment methods and criteria are aligned to learning outcomes and teaching activities
- Assessment is reliable, consistent, fair and valid
- Assessment design is approached holistically
- Assessment is inclusive and equitable
- Assessment is explicit and transparent
- Assessment feedback is purposeful and supports the learning process
- Assessment is timely, efficient and manageable
- Students are supported and prepared for assessments
- Assessment encourages academic integrity

This Code of Practice applies to the following awards from the Royal Agricultural University taught at its campuses in Cirencester and Swindon, as well as its Joint Institute for Advanced Agritechology at Qingdao Agricultural University (RAU at QAU) Joint Institute; franchised and validated provision taught at providers in the UK and international:

- Level 4 Certificates
- Level 5 Diplomas
- Level 6 Honours

- Level 7 Masters
- Level 8 Doctoral

1.3 Regulations

The following Office for Students Conditions of Registration are relevant to this Code of Practice:

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- B1** a. The provider must ensure that the students registered on each higher education course receive a high- quality academic experience which includes but is not limited to ensuring that each course:
- is up-to-date;
 - provides educational challenge;
 - is coherent;
 - is effectively delivered; and
 - as appropriate to the subject matter of the course, requires students to develop relevant skills.
-
- B2** The provider must take all reasonable steps to ensure students receive resources and support to ensure a high-quality academic experience for those students, and those students succeed in and beyond higher education; and that effective engagement which each cohort of students takes place.
-
- B4** a. The provider must ensure that qualifications awarded to students hold their value at the point of qualification and over time, in line with sector recognised standards. The provider must ensure that
- students are assessed effectively;
 - each assessment is valid and reliable;
 - academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible;
 - academic regulations are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a way which appropriately reflects the level and content of the course;
 - relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously.
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- B5** The provider must deliver courses that meet the academic standards as they are described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications at Level 4 or higher. The provider must ensure that, in respect of any relevant awards granted to students who complete a higher education course provided by, or on behalf of, the provider (whether or not the provider is the awarding body):
- and standards set appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards;
 - awards are only granted to students whose knowledge and skills appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards.
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2. Assessment Types and Components

2.1 Assessment types

Programmes at the Royal Agricultural University are assessed through the use of different assessment methods across modules of study. Assessments are underpinned by the [QAA's Quality Code Advice and Guidance: Assessments \(Nov 2018\)](#) used to maximise students' learning potential leading to positive outcomes. The goal is for module and programme learning outcomes to be assessed effectively and rigorously through the use of different assessment methods which allows for different skills to be assessed.

Module learning outcomes are aligned to programme learning outcomes. Assessments within programmes and courses apply a range of delivery methods and are utilised, where appropriate, to evidence learning. Individual assessments should be linked to the RAU Graduate Framework and the four employability domains which are Professional Approach, Innovative Business Thinker, Sustainable and Environmental Mindset and Technically Skilled.

All assessments are defined within one of four broad assessment types which are;

- Practical
- Coursework
- Written Exam
- Research

Practical

Practical assessments are delivered live by students at a set time. Academic integrity is maintained through direct observation by one or more assessors. Practical assessments do not need to result in the creation of a tangible product by the student and marking is therefore usually conducted synchronously with the assessment. Marking can take place later where an audio-visual recording of the assessment is made.

Coursework

Coursework assessments are produced by students over a period, without monitoring. Academic integrity is maintained retrospectively, through similarity analysis and academic scrutiny. Coursework assessment is most often written, but not exclusively so, and includes the production of audio and/or visual content. A coursework assessment must result in the creation of a tangible product (physical or digital) by the student.

Written Exam

Written exams are written assessments that are attempted by all students simultaneously. Academic integrity is maintained through monitoring either in-person (via invigilation) or online (via proctoring). Written exams are structured to include one or more of the following question types:

- Multiple choice questions
- Mathematical/statistical questions
- Short answer questions
- Long answer questions (including essay-style questions)

Research

Research assessments seek to evaluate the robustness and transparency of the underpinning original research and data collection that has been undertaken by the student to support their original conclusions.

2.2 Word counts and Assessment weighting

Word counts indicate the length of an assessment component and module specifications and assessment briefs should state a minimum and/or maximum word count. Assessment briefs must provide details of any penalties that will apply to work where word counts are under or over that specified. Normally, work above the indicated word count will not be considered.

The word count normally applies to the main body of text, including tables within the main text. Abstracts, acknowledgements, contents, executive summaries, references, bibliographies, appendices are excluded from the word count but may be submitted as required by the individual assignment.

Assessment components that require different forms of submission, including but not limited to, subject specific exercises, skills portfolios, audio visual media, presentations, etc are required to specify the number of submission parts. For example, the expectation for a presentation is 10 slides.

Examinations and other types of assessment, such as presentations, are quantified with a time limit, e.g. 2 hours written exam or 10-minute presentation.

Assessment weightings are used when an assessment has more than one component that are not of equal importance or value to the overall result. For example, if an assessment consisted of producing an academic poster and presenting it for peer review, the content may be assessed by the tutor for 60% of the overall mark, whilst the peer review component may only contribute 40%. Weightings may also be used for assessing group work, to define a relative weighting to individual contribution. Assessment briefs must specify the weighting for different components and how they will be assessed. All students participating in group work must be awarded an individual mark.

Arrangements for assessment setting, completion, marking, moderation and alternative assessments are different for each type of assessment. Module learning outcomes should not normally be summatively assessed more than once unless appropriate.

Typical summative assessments for a 15-credit module could be:

- A single, individual 3,000-word assessment (100%)
- An individual assessment of 1,500 words (50%) plus a 1-hour examination (50%)
- A group (2 to 4 students) presentation of 30 minutes (30%) plus a 2,000 word assessment (70%)
- Pass/Fail assessments are classified as Practicals and have no weighting (write Pass/Fail)

The below word counts, with the exception of the dissertation, and time limits are suggestions only and depend on other assessment components in the same module.

2.3 Assessment Components

The assessment components for each module are detailed in the Module Templates for the relevant module.

Changes to module specifications must be approved as outlined in the Programme Design and Development Code of Practice.

When defining assessment components, a balance must be found between setting clear expectations for students about what is expected, and providing sufficient flexibility for academic staff to develop the assessment brief and ensure the assessment remains relevant within the context of the subject area.

To achieve this balance, the following assessment component descriptions and definitions should be used when describing assessment components on the module template.

Innovation in the design of assessment components is encouraged. Where a proposed assessment does not fall within the current definitions, the module leader should speak to Academic Quality.

The current assessment brief template [can be found in the Academic Staff Centre section on Gateway](#).

The below word counts, with the exception of the dissertation, and time limits are suggestions only and depend on other assessment components in the same module.

*Quercus code

ASSESSMENT TYPE: Practical				
COMPONENT	QUANTI-FICATION	EXAMPLE (i.e. what is on the module spec)	ASSESSMENT FOCUS	DESCRIPTION
Peer review <i>*PEER REVIEW</i>	Not applicable	Peer review	Academic Scientific Professional	An individual peer review of a practical assessment by other students, for example of a presentation.
Presentation <i>*PRESENTATION</i>	Time limit OR Slide limit	Presentation (5 minutes) OR Presentation (6 slides)	Academic Scientific Professional	A live presentation delivered by the student, in-person or virtually. (see 'audio visual media' for presentations which are pre-recorded)
Role-play <i>*ROLE PLAY</i>	Time limit	Role-play (10 minutes)	Professional	A timed role-play between two or more students, or between a student and a third-party participant. The participant must not be the assessor.
Skills observation <i>*SKILLS OBSERVATION</i>	Time limit OR Number of skills	Skills observation (10 minutes) OR Skills observation (5 skills)	Scientific Professional	In person observation of a student demonstrating a skill or technique for example wildlife handling, or demonstration of a laboratory technique.

ASSESSMENT TYPE: Coursework

COMPONENT	QUANTI-FICATION	EXAMPLE (i.e. what is on the module spec)	ASSESSMENT FOCUS	DESCRIPTION
Academic poster <i>*ACAD POSTER</i>	Word count	Academic Poster (500 words) OR Academic Poster	Academic	A traditional academic poster, presenting academic information through a combination of visual imagery, charts and text with consideration for both the content and layout of the poster.
Audio visual media <i>*AUDIO-VIS MEDIA</i>	Time limit OR Slide limit	Audio visual media (5 minutes) OR Video (6 slides)	Academic Scientific Professional	An item of audio and/or visual media including videos, pre-recorded presentations, podcasts etc.
Case study ++ <i>*CASE STUDY</i>	Word count	Case study (2000 words)	Academic Scientific Professional	Can be undertaken individually or as a group assessment in the form of a problem-based inquiry approach requiring identification of potential solutions.
Dissertation <i>*DISS</i>	Word count	Dissertation (BSc 12,000 words, MSc 15,000 words)	Academic	An extended piece of structured writing through which a student demonstrates learning gained from an in-depth analysis or study of a topic using either primary or secondary research techniques. A dissertation is used as a capstone assessment for a degree programme.
Essay <i>*ESSAY</i>	Word count	Essay (1800 words)	Academic	A piece of structured writing through which a student presents an explanation, argument or analysis regarding a specific question or topic using secondary research, or critical analysis.
Grant application <i>*GRANT APPL</i>	Word count	Grant application (1000 words)	Academic	Students are required to use real/adapted versions of different grant application forms to plan a research project. This could be assessed using the published criteria as a basis for the marking criteria
Group Work ++ <i>*GROUP WORK</i>	Marking arrangement	Group Presentation (5 minutes, individually marked) OR Group Professional Practice Report (2000 words), individually marked	Academic Scientific Professional	Any item of assessment where students work collaboratively. <u>All students participating in group work must be awarded an individual mark.</u>

++ Where an assessment is completed in a group, the assessment component must be described as 'group' and the

quantification must include whether the assessment is individually or collectively marked . Any component				
Learning log <i>*LEARNING LOG</i>	Word count	Learning log (2000 words)	Professional	List of activities, competencies and outcomes which students check off during a period of learning during placement.
Literature review <i>*LIT REVIEW</i>	Word count	Literature Review (2000 words)	Academic	A piece of structured writing through which a student presents an overview of academic sources which provides a description, summary and critical evaluation of these sources in relation to the research problem under investigation.
Online test <i>*ONLINE TEST</i>	Time limit	Online test (30 minutes)	Academic Scientific Professional	A timed, online quiz which consists of one or more questions including multiple choice questions, long answer questions, short answer questions or statistical/mathematical questions. The rubric for an online test may be similar in format to a formal written exam but online tests are not invigilated. The test may take place at a scheduled time, or may be available for students to complete at any point during a longer period of time; once started the test must be completed within the time limit.
Problem sheet <i>*PROB SHEET</i>	Word count OR Question type	Problem Sheet (short answer questions) OR Problem Sheet (1000 words)	Academic Scientific Professional	An assignment which consists of one or more questions including multiple choice questions, long answer questions, short answer questions or statistical/mathematical questions. The rubric for a problem sheet may be similar in format to a formal written exam but problem sheets are not invigilated or scheduled. Students are given a defined period of time, usually 1 or 2 weeks, to complete the problem sheet and submit their answers.
Professional practice report <i>*PROF PRAC REP</i>	Word count	Professional Practice Report (1000 words)	Professional	A structured piece of writing which imitates, or directly replicates a format which students might expect to undertake when working in the relevant sector.
Research proposal <i>*RESEARCH PROP</i>	Word count	Research Proposal (1000 words)	Academic	A piece of structured writing in which a student summarises a proposed research problem, setting out the central question which will be investigated with reference to current

Research paper <i>*RES PAP</i>	Word count	Research paper (1500 words)	Academic	A piece of structured writing, replicating the format of an academic journal, through which a student demonstrates learning gained from an in-depth analysis or study of a topic using either primary or secondary research techniques.
Scientific report <i>*SCI REPORT</i>	Word count	Scientific Report (2000 words)	Scientific	A structured piece of writing which follows the format and style of a traditional scientific or laboratory report.
Skills portfolio <i>*SKILLS PORTFOLIO</i>	Number of skills	Skills portfolio (6 skills)	Scientific Professional practice	A portfolio which evidences a series of skills, techniques or behaviours this could be presented as a physical item, for example a laboratory notebook, or in a digital format, for example a Moodle Database.
Subject specific exercise <i>*SUBJ SPEC EX</i>	Varies – seek advice from Academic Services	Subject specific exercise (xxx)	Professional	An exercise which imitates, or directly replicates an activity which students might expect to undertake when working in the relevant sector but which is not a structured written report. Examples include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equine ration exercises • Equine synthesis tables • Coding exercises • Circuit design exercises • Calculation exercises • Species identification
Textual visual media <i>*TEXT VIS MEDIA</i>	Word count	Textual visual media (800 words)	Academic Scientific Professional	An item of textual and/or visual media including magazine articles, posters leaflets, infographics or press releases.
Written self-reflection <i>*SELF-REFLEC</i>	Word count	Written self-reflection (500 words)	Academic Scientific Professional	A loosely structured, or unstructured piece of writing through which a student reflects on their own learning and development with regards to a specific activity, for example an individual assessment or a placement.

ASSESSMENT TYPE: Exam

COMPONENT	QUANTI-FICATION	EXAMPLE (i.e. what is on the module spec)	ASSESSMENT FOCUS	DESCRIPTION
Written exam	Time limit	Written exam (2 hours)	Academic Scientific	A formal, traditional, examination which is scheduled and invigilated and

<i>*WRITTEN EXAM</i>			Professional	consists of one or more questions including multiple choice questions, long answer questions, short answer questions or statistical/mathematical questions
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ASSESSMENT TYPE: Research

COMPONENT	QUANTIFICATION	EXAMPLE (i.e. what is on the module spec)	ASSESSMENT FOCUS	DESCRIPTION
Thesis <i>* THESIS</i>	Word count	PhD: 80,000 words MPhil: 40,000 words Excluding appendices	Academic Scientific Professional	A concentrated piece of original research which explains the conclusion that has been reached as a result of undertaking the research project.
Viva Voce <i>* VIVA VOCE</i>	There are no rules concerning the length of time a viva will take. Examiners have discretion to make it as long or as short as they think necessary. Each combination of thesis, student and examiners is unique.		Academic Scientific Professional	Formal examination in which a student answers questions regarding their thesis and research area. Assessment can be conducted by one or more examiners and allows examiners to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine the general field within which the thesis lies; • discuss the thesis in detail; • explore the ideas and the theories proposed in the thesis; • clarify any points of ambiguity; and • satisfy themselves that the thesis is the student's own work

3. Assessment Setting and Scrutiny

3.1 Summative assessment

According to QAA "Summative assessment is used to indicate the extent of a learner's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme" (QAA, 2018). It is the assessment of learning, often completed at

the end of a module, that is usually formal and produces the module mark that will be recorded for each student.

3.2 Formative assessment

As well as summative assessments, modules should also provide formative assessment opportunities. In comparison formative assessment focusses on “learning itself and (on) providing a means by which progress can be made” (QAA, 2018). Formative assessment is sometimes known as assessment for learning. There should be opportunities for formative assessment throughout the module and formative assessment maybe informal (e.g. class activities and discussion etc.) or more formal (self-assessed quizzes, reflective blogs, essays etc.).

See Formative Assessment Guidance (Appendix 1) for further details.

3.3 Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

Automated content creation technologies are increasingly prevalent in everyday activities, generating original content in various forms with minimal user input. OpenAI's ChatGPT is the most well-known example, but other systems like Bing Chat, DALL.E, and Google Bard also exist, with new products emerging frequently. These tools can create content for assessments using minimal prompts, offering contextual (re)generation with various "voices" and the ability to develop programs with multiple coding languages.

Further staff guidance on the capabilities and limitations of GenAI, as well as samples of the use and embedding of GenAI into teaching practice, can be found [on the staff pages of the University Gateway](#).

3.4 Assessment submission dates

Module Leaders must liaise with Programme Leaders regarding the setting of assessment submission dates to minimise the “bunching” of assessment work for both students and staff. This includes submission dates for elective modules.

Where possible, submission deadlines for assessments on a Monday or Friday should be avoided, as well as Bank Holidays.

Registry manages the schedule for the setting of examination papers and the running of traditional (examination room based) examinations.

Academic Quality will liaise with module leaders to update the submission weeks on module templates in late Spring each academic year so as to align submission weeks with the teaching weeks of the forthcoming academic year.

3.5 Assessment details

All assessment tasks should be set using the RAU assessment template (see below) or the RAU format for examinations. The assessment brief provides the details of the assessment task requirements, namely; assessment length (words or time), detailed format of the

assessment/coursework (essay, case study, infographic, laboratory report etc.) and whether the task is an individual or group task.

Where group work is included in the summative assessment of a module, group size should be limited to a maximum of six students (smaller group sizes and paired assessments are acceptable). Guidance should be provided in the module specification and assessment brief on how the group is to be managed (particularly regarding the management of problems within the group). Information must also be provided in the assessment brief on how marks will be allocated to group members. Each student participating in group work must be awarded an **individual** mark.

3.6 Assessment scrutiny

New assessments and examinations should be reviewed by a member of RAU academic staff (who is not the person setting the assessment task) prior to the release of the assessment or examination to students. Allocation of staff to modules for the purposes of assessment scrutiny and moderation should be carried out by the Dean of Subject or Programme Leader. Details of the assessment moderation for each module must be recorded using the RAU Assessment Brief – Internal Moderation Form (Staff Centre on Gateway) and uploaded to the External Examiner location on the relevant module Gateway page.

The scrutiny process ensures that assessments;

- match the information on the Module template
- are appropriate for the level of study
- are expressed clearly
- clearly present the marking criteria and allocation of marks for the assessment
- include submission details (date of submission, location of submission portal etc.)

Module External Examiners are required, prior to examinations, to scrutinise examination papers and make comments on their appropriateness for the subject area and level of study.

3.7 Release of assessment information to students

Summative assessments should, following internal scrutiny, be released to students to allow sufficient time for students to address the assessment task. The generic assessment information on the module Gateway page (type of assessment and submission date for each assessment) must be completed a minimum of 2 weeks before the start of the semester/module. Where possible, assessment briefs should be uploaded to the module Gateway assessment page and made available to students at the start of the module.

Details on the assessment task, using the RAU Assessment Brief template, must be accurate and shared with students in Week 1 via the module Gateway assessment page and discussing it with students to help students to understand the marking criteria.

All assessments must be marked and internally moderated within the 20-day marking period before marks are released to students.

4. Assessment Submission

4.1 Assessment submission

Submission deadlines for each assessment component are detailed in the Module template for the relevant module. Changes to module templates must be approved as outlined in the Code of Practice - Programme Design and Development.

Assessments must be submitted by the deadline.

Where assessment submission takes place via Turnitin, an assessment will not be considered 'submitted' unless the student has received a submission receipt.

4.2 Assessment cover sheet

Students are required to complete an Assessment Cover Sheet (available on Gateway) when submitting their work. On the cover sheet they are asked to complete two declarations:

- whether they have/have not an agreed Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP)
- whether they have/have not used Generative Artificial Intelligence tools

4.3 Late Submission

Assessments that are submitted after the deadline must be marked as normal, to ensure students receive proper feedback and in case an extension has been granted. However, the mark entered on Quercus must reflect any cap for missing the deadline.

Where an assessment is submitted within 5 working days of the deadline the academic responsible for marking should update the assessment status in Quercus to "late – capped at 40" and enter a gross mark of "40" or lower if the uncapped mark would be below 40. The uncapped mark should be added as a note on the assessment (e.g. "uncapped mark = 67%").

Assessments that are submitted more than 5 working days after the deadline should be entered on Quercus as a gross mark of "0" and will be treated as a non-submission.

Assessments granted an extension may have their full mark entered on Quercus, so long as submission was within the new deadline, or capped accordingly after that deadline.

4.4 Non-submission

Assessments that are not submitted will receive a mark of 0%.

Where an assessment is not submitted the academic responsible for marking should update the assessment status in Quercus to "Out of time 0 (zero) marks" and enter a gross mark of "0".

4.5 Exceptional circumstances

Where there are exceptional circumstances, students can submit a request for an extension (coursework only) or a deferral via the Student Portal.

4.6 Extensions

Extensions can only be approved for coursework assessments.

Where an extension is approved the assessment submission will be extended by 10 working days. The extension does not change the University's policy regarding late-submission and non-submission (above).

Coursework submitted by an approved extension deadline will be marked as normal and is therefore uncapped.

4.7 Deferrals

Deferrals can be approved for any assessment (exams, coursework and practical assessments).

Deferrals will be approved for coursework, only where the circumstances are likely to extend beyond 10 working days.

Where a deferral is approved the assessment will be delayed until the relevant deferral deadline, as set in the Academic Calendar.

Deferred assessments will be marked as normal and are therefore uncapped, so a new assessment brief, for coursework and exams, requiring a new, original piece of work, should be used to avoid any unfair advantage.

Definition of Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional circumstances are defined as circumstances which are;

- Unavoidable – the circumstances are beyond the student's control
- Unforeseen – the circumstances arose suddenly and could not have been predicted
- Serious – the circumstances are having a significant impact on the student's learning experience

Applications for extensions and deferrals will only be approved where it is demonstrated that the circumstances meet all three criteria.

Examples of exceptional circumstances may include;

- Serious short-term illness or injury, usually requiring medical attention from a GP or other doctor
- Temporary, acute worsening of a long-term disability, including mental health condition
- Death of a close relative/friend
- Victim of serious crime
- Participation in national/international sporting or cultural events

Examples of circumstances which are not considered exceptional may include;

- Minor illnesses
- Unawareness of assessment dates and deadlines
- Transport difficulties
- Holidays

Documentary evidence

Applications for extensions and deferrals will only be approved where independent documentary evidence is provided. The exact type of evidence will vary depending on the circumstances.

Examples of acceptable independent documentary evidence may include;

- A medical certificate authorised by a GMC registered doctor
- A hospital admission report or appointment letter
- A birth certificate, or death certificate issued by an official Registrar
- A letter from a BACP accredited therapist
- A police crime report and incident number

Process for requesting and approving extensions and deferrals

Requests for extensions or deferrals must be made through the Student portal. Requests must be made by the student and must be submitted before the assessment deadline. Requests that are submitted after the assessment deadline will be rejected.

Documentary evidence must be submitted via email to extensions@rau.ac.uk as soon as possible. Where documentary evidence is not provided the request will be rejected.

Requests will be considered against the criteria for exceptional circumstances (above). Where there is clear precedent for a request to be accepted or rejected then the decision will be made by an Officer in the Registry Team. Where there is no clear precedent, or the circumstances of a case are more complex, the case will be reviewed and a judgement will be made by the Director of Academic Services.

Where an extension request is approved, the Registry Team will update the assessment status in Quercus to "Extension" and add a note on the assessment. Academic Services will communicate the outcome to the student and module leader.

Where a deferral request is approved, the Registry Team will update the assessment status in Quercus to "deferred" and add a note on the assessment. Academic Services will communicate the outcome to the student and module leader.

Where an extension or deferral request is rejected, the Registry Team will add a note to the main student record. The Registry Team will communicate the outcome to the student and module leader.

Where a request for an extension or deferral cannot yet be considered, as the documentary evidence has not yet been submitted, the academic responsible for marking the assessment should mark the assessment as normal, under the University's policy for late-submission or non-submission as appropriate. If an extension or deferral is subsequently approved this will be updated by the Registry Team.

Students requesting further extensions to a module that has already been granted an extension will not be permitted.

Decisions made regarding exceptional circumstances are final. This does not affect a student's ability to submit an academic appeal following publication of their results.

4.8 Resits (previously Referrals)

If students did not submit the required assessment, submitted it more than 5 working days after the deadline, or received a score below 40% for their first sitting, they would normally be granted a resit and repeat the assessment without reattending the module's teaching elements. Resits are capped at 40%, or the relevant adjusted weighting if only part of the assessment is repeated. Unless there was a specific unseen element to the assessment that would give an unfair advantage if taken later than other students, resits should be set to the same assessment brief as the original.

Extensions are not permitted for resit submissions under any circumstances. The 5 working day grace period for late submissions does not apply to resit assessment deadlines.

For undergraduate programmes, including Foundation Degrees, the number of permissible resits will be limited to 50% of the student's total registered module credits in any academic year, which will be over and above any resit credits relating to a work-based learning or placement module.

For postgraduate programmes, the maximum number of permissible resits will be 50% of the student's total registered module credits of the taught programme in any academic year, with the Master's dissertation, agreed equivalent research-based project or combination of a research methods module and a Masters dissertation or agreed equivalent research-based project being considered independently of the taught module requirements.

For students studying on a part-time basis, the maximum number of permissible resits will be restricted to 50% of registered module credits or a maximum of 30 module credits, whichever is the greater, subject to a maximum of 60 credits in any one level.

5. Assessment Marking and Moderation

Assessments must be marked in accordance with guidance provided in the RAU Regulations for Taught Programmes and in accordance with any additional marking criteria and information on mark allocation provided in the assessment brief. The standard form of marking is single marking plus internal sample moderation, some modules (e.g. dissertations) may be double marked.

The timeframe for marking, including internal moderation, is 20 days.

It is the responsibility of the Module Leader to mark, or where there is more than one marker, manage the marking of assessments. Markers should avoid using borderline marks (those ending in a "9") for assessments where the module has a single summative assessment.

Where a module is assessed using two summative assessments composite marks ending in a “9” should be avoided if possible.

Markers should review the Turnitin similarity scores of assessments submitted online as part of the marking process and should provide feedback comments where the similarity score is higher than 20% (i.e. is the 20% similarity score due to high use of quotes/references and therefore not an indicator of possible plagiarism or does the assessment require further investigation – see student misconduct policy).

Moderation of a sample of the assessment must be completed before release of the marked work to the students.

The moderation of assessment marks must be completed for module assessments in accordance with RAU regulations and should cover all assessment components of a module and should span the full range of marks awarded. Module Leaders are responsible for making a sample of marked work available to the Moderator (usually via Gateway) *in time for the marks to be moderated* before they are released to students. The work samples and the marks awarded should be recorded on an internal moderation form that should accompany the sample to the moderator.

Academic staff should note that the main aim of moderation is to provide assurance that module assessment marking criteria, the marks across the full set of assessment tasks for the module and the academic standards of the award have been applied correctly. “It is not about making changes to an individual’s marks” (QAA, 2018).

The Moderator and Module leader must complete the Module Assessment Moderation Form for all module assessments and upload it to the External Examiner location on the module Gateway page. The current Module Assessment Moderation Form [can be found in the Academic Staff Centre section on Gateway](#).

The External Examiner will review the module marking process and the marks awarded and communicate any comments to the Module Leader and Programme Manager via the Module Boards and the External Examiner Report. Further information on the role of the external examiner is available via the External Examiner Pages on Gateway and the Code of Practice E: External Examiners.

Procedures for Double Marking

Where a single piece of assessment is presented for the achievement of 30-credits or more, and marked by one individual, such as an undergraduate or postgraduate dissertation, the work should be double marked. The second marker should assess the work independently without sight of the mark or feedback from the first marker. The two markers will then agree an appropriate final mark for submission to the examination board.

Where first and second markers cannot agree a final mark, a third marker will be employed on the same basis as the second marker and with both the first and second marker they shall determine a final mark to be presented to the Programme Board through discussion. It is the responsibility of the University to ensure all cases of disagreement on marks are resolved internally prior to the submission of sample assessments to an External Examiner. However, in particularly difficult cases it is appropriate to involve the External Examiner as an adjudicator. This should be conducted in advance of any examination board such that a final mark is always presented.

6. Assessment Feedback and Feedforward

Assessing student learning outcomes: Assessment, feedback and feedforward must be based on the module learning outcomes (LOs) and key terminology used from LOs in feedback/feedforward to students to justify the grade awarded. Feedback and feedforward should be high quality, constructive and framed positively and sensitively to enhance students' future learning, motivation, success and satisfaction.

Summative assessment feedback should be provided within 20 working days of submission and should identify areas of strength within the submission and areas for further improvement. This 20-day period includes the time required for moderation.

As a minimum, assessment feedback to students should include direct reference to the RAU Marking Criteria for the relevant level of study plus at least one form of qualitative feedback that provides students with "feed-forward" comments designed to help them improve future submissions. For example, work submitted via Turnitin could be marked using rubrics linked to RAU Marking Criteria plus either qualitative summary text, qualitative comments within the assessment text or recorded feedback comments (all possible via Turnitin).

Traditional examinations (those taking place in an examination room) do not require formal written feedback.

To note: the marking criteria have been updated for September 2024 onwards.

7. Return and Recording of Marks

For all online assessment submissions, the Module Leader is responsible for ensuring that the assessment submission portal (e.g. Turnitin, Moodle etc.) is set up to release marks and feedback to students by the required time and date. For assessments that are not submitted online (i.e. class-based presentations) marks should be released to students via Quercus by the required time and date.

Marks should not be released to students until they have been moderated. Marks and feedback should normally be released to students within 20 working days of the assessment submission date.

Moderated marks must be uploaded to Quercus by the dates provided by Registry. Information on accessing and uploading information to Quercus is available on the Academic Staff Centre Pages on Gateway.

In addition, the following staff guides can be found on the Staff Centre pages on Gateway:

- Frequently asked questions: Marking and Feedback
- Frequently asked questions: Assessment and Examinations

Appendix 1: Formative Assessment Guidance

The following guidance is based on the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code – Advance and Guidance (Assessments) (November 2018)

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/advice-and-guidance>

In accordance with QAA terminology, formative assessment is developmental in nature and assists students with their learning and reflective practice through the provision of ongoing feedback. It allows tutors to monitor student learning and put in place intervention practices if required. Formative assessment refers to a range of both formal and informal assessment procedures conducted during the learning process. They enable and support modification to both teaching and learning activities and to improve student attainment (Crooks, 2001).

Formative assessment, when designed well, assists students with learning and guides them towards their summative assessment. It enables students to identify their strengths and weaknesses, enables them to manage their learning in a structured manner. At the same time, it provides tutors and the university with information about the areas students are struggling with so that support can be put in place.

Formative assessment can be tutor led, peer or self-assessment. Formative assessments are part of classroom activities and usually carry no grade, which in some instances may discourage the students from doing the task or fully engaging with it. The activities can be used to assess whether learning occurs and allows for teaching methods and resources to be adapted or changed if required.

Developing formative assessment

Formative assessment should be constructively aligned with learning outcomes (Biggs and Tang, 2007). It should be explained to students what formative assessments are and how they will benefit them to achieve their summative assessments through the module learning outcomes.

An over-reliance on summative assessment at the conclusion of an element of study gives students a grade, but does not provide them with enough feedback that will help them develop and improve before they reach the end of the module/programme. Therefore, achieving a balance between formative and summative assessments is important, although one that students don't always fully grasp and/or take seriously. Formative assessments provide an effective and risk-free environment in which students can learn and experiment. They are also suitable for peer reviews.

In addition:

- Use different formative assessments for different module content to keep students engaged;
- Explain how formative assessment lead students to their summative assessment;
- Provide students with feedback on their formative assessment and feedforward on how they can develop further to fill gaps in knowledge and skills;
- Use marking criteria and rubrics consistently;
- For summative assessments, ensure feedback aligns with the grades given.

Samples of formative assessment:

- Short online quizzes at the end of class
- One-minute reflective questions/papers (pose a question at the beginning of class and students have one minute at the end to write their answer)
- Group or pair discussions
- Draft essay reviews by tutors or peers
- Peer reviewed research proposals
- Student marking activities where students use the module marking rubric to mark their own or peer work
- Concept maps
- Compare and contrast two components of what is being learnt to help them demonstrate knowledge and understanding
- Elevator pitch

To engage students in formative assessment:

- Clearly explain the rationale behind formative assessment – make it clear to students that through engaging with formative tasks they get to gain experience with their assessments, risk-free, and can develop far stronger skills in order to obtain better grades in the summative assessments.
- Create a link between summative and formative assessment – design formative assessments in such a way that they contribute to the summative task. This lowers the workload on the students and provides them with necessary feedback to improve their final performance. An example of such assessment is producing an essay plan, a structure of a literature review, part of the essay or bibliography.
- Lower the number of summative assessments and increase the number of formative assessments – yet do not allow one single summative assessment to carry too much weight in the final grade.

References

- Crooks, T.J. (2001). The validity of formative assessments: Paper for the annual conference of the British Educational Research Association, Leeds, UK
- Biggs, J. & Tang, C (2011). Teaching for quality learning at university: What the student does.

Appendix 2: Learning, Teaching and Assessment support for Students with Dyslexia and additional needs

Definition of dyslexia

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) has adopted the Rose (2009) definition of dyslexia: Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speeds. Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities. It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points. Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia.

At the Royal Agricultural University (RAU) we have a significant number of students with a diagnosis of dyslexia and/or additional needs. A student with additional needs will have a Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP), put in place by the Enable Team, and when submitting assignments should attach a Reasonable Adjustment Plan Declaration sheet to their submission for academics to take into consideration for assessment, marking, feedback and feedforward. For support with any students with additional needs, please email: enable@rau.ac.uk

Learning and Teaching

- Lecture materials/ presentations/ notes (not on white background) should be available pre-lecture to allow time for dyslexic students to read through before a session

Slow processing may mean they need to read the notes through several times to ensure they make sense. Cursive text tends to blend letters together for dyslexic students, so use a sans serif text such as Arial. We use Tahoma across the University which is also a suitable font. Presentations/notes should not be on a white background (for dyslexic students or anyone with eye sensitivity). The text appears too stark and makes focusing difficult; often text 'moves around' for dyslexic students. Slides should not contain a lot of text and images should be used where possible.

For more info about this see: <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/advice/employers/creating-a-dyslexia-friendly-workplace/dyslexia-friendly-style-guide#:~:text=Use%20sans%20serif%20fonts%2C%20such,may%20request%20a%20larger%20font>

- Share past assignments

Share examples of appropriate assignments in sessions, which have been redacted and agreed to be used by the student who wrote the assignment

- Students should not be expected to 'copy from the board'

Copying from a presentation or white board, due to slow processing, is a considerable

challenge for dyslexic students, which is why part of their DSA adjustments is a recording device. Recording will be listed on their adjustments on Module Look-Up on Quercus.

- Avoid 'spotlighting' students with dyslexia/additional needs

Due to slow processing, students with dyslexia often find word finding a challenge, which can occur when spotlighted in a lecture and can result in reluctance to attend in person and to low self-esteem. If posing a question, ensure a few minutes thinking time is given and avoid spotlighting students with dyslexia/additional needs.

- Reading lists should highlight key texts to avoid dyslexic students struggling to find the essential references

A large amount of text is very daunting for dyslexic students; hence they should be guided to where the key information can be found where possible (i.e. specific texts/books/chapters). Students with additional needs also have the option of registering for Bookshare through the Library where they can access reading matter in a medium that supports their needs. This can include audible books or the means to adjust background colour or text size/ font.

- Key/subject specific word lists should be made available

Key word lists should be available at the beginning of the module and benefit *all* students. Alternatively, key words could be shared as part of the advance notes.

- Teaching should be multi-sensory with regular rest breaks

Multi-sensory teaching helps to keep students engaged and for dyslexic students means they are not constantly focusing on a presentation. There should be regular breaks as students with additional needs tire quicker than students who are not dyslexic.

- A variety of assessments should be included across a programme

For example, oral presentations/exams, which are individually assessed, are often beneficial to students with dyslexia and additional needs

- Recording of lectures

Where possible, publishing lectures on Gateway acts as an additional resource to dyslexic students.

It enables them to revisit a lecture as many times as they need and allows them to match presentation notes with their recording. Students with a DSA approved recorder will record lectures for their own personal use.

- Grace extensions

Some students, who have complex needs (based on their diagnostic assessment), may have been granted a Grace Extension. This means that they work towards the original deadline, but should they not be able to complete the work on time they have a further 10 days without being penalised. They must still go through the official Extension process. Students

with this adjustment will be recorded on Quercus. If a further extension after the grace period is required, a further extension request must be submitted with new evidence.

- Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology is an umbrella term that includes assistive, adaptive and rehabilitative devices for people with disabilities and also includes the process used in selecting, locating and using them.

We have a range of assistive technology catering both hardware and software needs:

Read&Write - our literacy support tool that offers help for everyday tasks, with tools to meet the needs of different learners – e.g. reading text out loud, understanding unfamiliar words and proofreading written work.

Sensus Access - SensusAccess is an easy to use tool to convert documents, readings, slides, lecture notes or webpages into audio, braille or eBook formats. It is available to both staff and students from within Gateway or the web. No downloading is required.

MindGenius - Mind Genius is a mind mapping tool that aids with assisted learning needs and can be used to support students with course work, literacy and developing strategies to cope with specific Assisted Learning difficulties.

Windows 10/ 11 - Windows 10 / 11 has a range of accessibility tools, including a narrator, high contrast colour and windows speech recognition.

Office 365 - Microsoft's immersive reader is built-in to OneNote, Word, Outlook and Edge. It enables students to manipulate the text to improve comprehension, including enhanced dictation; focus mode; immersive reading; font spacing and short lines; parts of speech; syllabification; and comprehension mode. Microsoft Word has inbuilt dictation software, enabling speech-to-text.

Internet Browsers - Most modern internet browsers now have integrated accessibility tools. A list of features which Chrome, the RAU's chosen browser, has available can be found [here](#).

More information - All information about Assistive Technology at the RAU can be found here: <https://gateway.rau.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=1347>

Assessment

During assessment, please adhere to this guidance regarding Considerate Assessment, Marking, Feedback and Feedforward for students with additional needs. The considerations below should be made for students who submit a Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP) Declaration sheet. If the inconsistency is a competency, however, then it should be marked accordingly. Students who have a RAP for spelling/ grammar should not be marked down for grammatical errors as long as the sentence makes sense. (Students do have the option of proofreading support from the Enable Team). If work has poor grammar, punctuation or spelling, students should be referred to the Enable Team and a team member will meet with them. This is particularly relevant at hand-in of a first piece of formative assessment or summative assignment.

Proofreading – Students with dyslexia are offered proofreading support from the Enable Team before submission, however many students choose not to take up this offer.

Marking

Phonetically plausible spelling - Focus on what the student is trying to say/ argue rather than on the errors
Capital letters incorrectly placed - Concentrate on understanding the point even if there are mistakes in the text
The same word spelt in different ways/ multi-syllabic words disordered/ Confusion with words that sound the same but have different meanings - Disregard minor spelling syntax errors as long as the meaning can be ascertained
New vocabulary/ subject-specific words misspelt - Disregard minor spelling errors if meaning can be ascertained. Ensure students have a subject-specific vocabulary list at start of module
Full stops, commas, apostrophes missing/ speech marks and brackets incomplete/ spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG) errors - Do not penalise students if sentence makes sense
Work not up to expected academic standard Focus on marking the content according to the appropriate level descriptor and the module intended learning outcomes
Simplistic written language in comparison to verbal expression - Focus on what student is trying to communicate rather than the errors
Confusion in using arithmetic signs - Focus on marking content unless a competency standard or 100% accuracy is essential. Face to face support may be required.

Feedback and Feedforward – <i>to be framed positively for all students</i>
Incorrect choices made on spellcheck which result in a similar word but incorrect meaning - Encourage students to check meaning in feedback/ feedforward
Spell check produces American spellings - Encourage student to correct language on Language Tab in feedback/ feedforward
Long sentences used/ incomplete or conjunctions overused - Give example of where to break sentence and encourage student to check sentence makes sense in feedback/ feedforward
Run on sentences or short sentences lack links with those proceeding or following - Give example of how to link sentence and encourage student to check sentence makes sense in feedback/ feedforward
Punctuation in citations and references omitted/ Reference list not in alphabetical order - As a competency, sign post to Library Referencing document and offer examples
Verb confusion, such as, with subject, tense and negative forms - Encourage student to check sentence makes sense in feedback/ feedforward
Inappropriate use of contractions and possessive nouns - Model correct use and encourage student to check sentence makes sense in feedback/ feedforward
Prepositions omitted or mistaken/incomplete comparisons/ mixing of similar words/ choice of pronouns and possessive pronouns/ use of plurals/ missing articles - Encourage student to check sentence makes sense/ proofread in feedback/ feedforward. Reading work aloud can highlight sense of sentence
Document presentation appears poor or rushed - Share examples of appropriate assignments in sessions, which have been redacted and agreed by the student who wrote the assignment

<p>Difficulties in recording ideas and knowledge in sequence/ order and flow of information muddled/ repetition of ideas - Recognise points of interest, acknowledge research attempts in feedback/ feedforward. Offer alternatives words. Signpost to Vocabulary list</p>

<p>Mental arithmetic without memory aid difficult - Face to face feedback with examples may be required</p>
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Additional guidance for markers

1. Marking relates to the assessment criteria, the ideas, knowledge and understanding of the subject content and analytical and evaluative or other skills and not the technicalities of spelling, grammar and punctuation (**unless specified as a learning outcome/competence standard**)
2. Marking should be consistent across the programme/ all programmes
3. Marking criteria should be explicit in the module guide, assignment brief, the virtual learning environment and assessment marking grids
4. Focus on positively looking for ideas, understanding and knowledge, rather than errors
5. Give an example in feedback/ feedforward
6. For comments on spelling, punctuation and grammar, select a sample section rather than correcting the entire assessment and inform the student of your approach
7. Ensure positives are highlighted and constructive comments are given about what is good, as well as how it can be improved. Improvements needed should also be framed positively
8. Feedback and feedforward should be clear, positive and explicit. Use straightforward language - e.g. "The text is not clear at this point" followed by "Do you mean..?" rather than "Does not make sense"
9. Feedback and feedforward should be offered in written format. It should be typed and added as comments. It should be free of errors, well-presented and accessible - possibly bullet pointed for clarity.
10. A face-to-face tutorial should be provided if required, to discuss the comments in a face-to-face appointment/ Teams session.