



**Queen Margaret
University**
EDINBURGH

HANDBOOK FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome

Thank you for agreeing to be an External Examiner at Queen Margaret University. We hope that you will find the experience rewarding, and look forward to your input.

As you will be aware, the External Examining system has long been the cornerstone of UK quality assurance arrangements. Within this context, the External Examining system has three main purposes, i.e. to:

- assist Queen Margaret University in the comparison of academic standards across awards and award elements;
- verify that standards are appropriate for the award for which the Examiner takes responsibility;
- help ensure that the assessment process is fair and fairly operated in the marking, grading and classification of student performance.

The External Examining system also fulfils the following important functions:

- it supports the enhancement of taught programmes through identification of good practice and innovation;
- it contributes to the information on quality of taught programmes that is publicly available, for example through summary reports on our Quality website.

Each programme that leads to an award of the University has one or more External Examiners who provide informed and appropriate external reference points for the comparison of academic standards as well as objective and impartial judgements on a range of matters.

This Handbook has been developed to provide you with up-to-date information about Queen Margaret University, its assessment practices, and the expectations it has of its External Examiners. It also informs you of what you can expect from the University in support of your role as External Examiner, and lists key professional services contacts. We hope that you find it helpful, and would welcome any suggestions you may have concerning how we might update its contents to meet your requirements.

Irene Hynd
University Secretary
Telephone: 0131 474 0000
email: ihynd@qmu.ac.uk

1 INFORMATION ABOUT QMU

1.1 Background

Queen Margaret University (QMU) was established in 1875, and now occupies a distinctive position within the Scottish Higher Education sector. This distinctiveness comes from its key values of enhancement of quality of life and service to the community.

QMU strives to widen access, both at home and abroad, while at the same time providing a supportive learning environment for all its students. Its graduates are much sought after and employment rates in recent years have been amongst the best in the Scottish and UK sector.

QMU enjoys an excellent reputation for teaching and research, with key strengths in health care, social sciences, theatre arts, media and communication, food and tourism, and many research staff of international reputation.

In January 2007, the Privy Council granted full University Title to Queen Margaret University College, making the institution officially 'Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh'.

1.2 Purpose and values

We see our purpose as helping to create a better society through education, research and innovation, and by providing a supportive and creative learning environment in which students and staff thrive. In seeking to fulfil this purpose, we are clear and realistic about our strengths, focused on strategic goals, persistent in pursuing opportunities and overcoming barriers, and guided by our values.

We are a university that is modern in our outlook and facilities but with a maturity built on a long history of serving the community, both locally and globally, and enhancing its wellbeing. We work in a transparent and inclusive manner and hold to core values in everything we do.

We value **environmental sustainability**: We recognise the severe threats to our environment and will be a sector leader in response. Our modern campus is a great asset in this work.

We value **the individual** and encourage collective support: Each member of staff and each student has their own journey to make and their own contribution to give. Queen Margaret University provides the supportive environment to facilitate this.

We value **intellectual curiosity and the journey of discovery**: We design our teaching and research to facilitate this.

We value **ambition**: We inspire our students and staff to achieve the best that they can. We pursue opportunities, often in partnership and collaboration with others, to transform and influence society for the better and enhance our visibility within the higher education sector and the wider economy.

We value **excellence**: This is embedded in our research, teaching and learning, knowledge exchange and the services we provide. It will be exemplified in the experience of our students, staff and partners.

We value **social justice**: In fact, it underpins our world view. We embrace equality, diversity, inclusion, respect, and supporting our communities. Opportunities and access are open to all and on a fair basis.

1.3 Strategic Plan 2020-25

Our [Strategic Plan for the period 2020-25](#) demonstrates how we will contribute to society's recovery and recalibration following COVID-19. It sets out how we will help create a better society through teaching, learning and innovation. It shows how we will nurture our distinctive person-centred approach to learning, and how we will build on our unique academic portfolio. Promoting creativity, agility, resilience and collaboration, the strategy holds true to the ethos of social justice on which this institution was founded. Our commitment to sustainability will inform all the actions we take.

1.4 Campus

In September 2007, the University relocated to a new purpose built campus at Musselburgh, to the south-east of Edinburgh. This brought all departments together in a single site. [Information about how to get to the campus](#) can be found on our website.

You should note that the building has swipe card controlled access. When you visit, you will need to report to main reception to receive a temporary visitor card. We encourage sustainable travel, using public transport. However, if you come by car, you will need to arrange a parking permit in advance. In both cases, your host Division should assist you in arranging this. Please contact the School Office for advice. Musselburgh railway station is right beside the campus, and the train takes just six minutes from Edinburgh Waverley, so rail is a good alternative means of travel.

2 YOUR APPOINTMENT AS AN EXAMINER

2.1 Criteria for appointment

You have been appointed to an External Examining position having been nominated for approval by the appropriate Programme Committee and approved by the Senate of Queen Margaret University. In coming to a view, the Senate has taken account of the extent to which you:

- have appropriate levels of expertise and experience in relation to the programme to be examined;
- are capable of performing the range of duties required of the role;
- have the capacity to command authority in the field and the respect of colleagues;
- have sufficient recent examining experience, preferably having already acted as an External Examiner, or comparable related experience, to indicate competence in assessing students in the specialist area concerned.

The Senate will also normally have satisfied itself that:

- there are no existing links between you and the programme under examination;
- there are no reciprocal External Examining arrangements between your home department and QMU;
- you have not been a student, member of staff, governor, or an Examiner of a related Queen Margaret University programme in the recent past (normally five years);
- you do not hold simultaneously more than the equivalent of two substantial External Examining appointments;

It is important that you advise the University Secretary if your circumstances change materially and you no longer meet the criteria listed above. In particular, you should notify us of any possible conflicts of interest that arise during your term of office, so we can decide how best to address these, i.e. whether or not they can be resolved.

If you are unsure whether a change in circumstances constitutes a conflict of interest, you should contact staff of the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement for advice using the [generic External Examining email address](#).

2.2 Your period of office

Your offer of appointment will usually confirm that you have been appointed for a period of four years and three months, from September to December of the final year of the programme you are to examine [where the programme follows the standard academic year]. This allows for a three month overlap with your predecessor. Your initial appointment may be extended to a maximum of five years, but you may not be re-appointed until at least five years have elapsed since the end of your last term of office.

2.3 Resignation

We would ask that, should you need to resign from your position prior to the completion of your contract, you provide a minimum of six months' notice and that you complete the academic year in order to maintain continuity of assessment. Exceptions to this are possible, with good reason, but need the approval of the Senate. Letters of resignation should be addressed to the Principal of Queen Margaret University.

2.4 Resolving disagreements

We recognise that, in rare circumstances, either the External Examiner or the Programme Committee may feel that, despite reasonable and timely requests, the other is failing, for no good reason, to comply with the letter or spirit of this Handbook. In these circumstances, the matter of concern may be reported to the Dean of School outwith the normal annual reporting arrangements. The Dean will investigate the matter(s) raised and report back to you and to the Programme Committee as soon as possible. A report will also go to the Senate should any action be required.

If you have serious concerns about quality and standards that cannot be resolved through referral to the Dean, a confidential report may be submitted directly to the Principal who will investigate the matter and report back to you.

In the event that you are dissatisfied with the response to a confidential report to the Principal, as a last resort, you may ask the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to investigate using the [Scottish Concerns Scheme](#). The Scheme should only be used to highlight systemic institutional failure and not for one-off cases of ineffective practice.

There may also be occasions where you determine that a concern is properly a matter for the applicable professional body rather than for QAA.

2.5 Payment of your fees and expenses

Your fees and expenses claim should be submitted along with your annual report. Details of the current fee structure are available from the [Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement](#). The fees claim forms is appended to the External Examining report template. Please note that if you are an Examiner based outside the UK and do not have a UK bank account, alternative arrangements for processing your fees will apply. These will be communicated to you separately.

Claims in respect of examining fees will not be processed until the University has received a sufficiently detailed External Examining report. The Dean of School has responsibility for determining whether the report provides sufficient detail on the programme for which you are responsible. Whilst there is no prescribed length for the report, we may occasionally seek further information, especially where you have identified areas for development.

2.6 Overseas travel

Note that if you are required to travel overseas for an exam board, QMU will normally be responsible for travel arrangements and will cover all expenses. You will be covered by QMU travel insurance. Please notify us if you have any pre-existing medical conditions that might affect your insurance position. We will then be able to check with the insurer how to proceed.

2.7 Termination of your contract

The University reserves the right to terminate the contract of any External Examiner if, in the opinion of the Senate, there has been:

- a breach of confidentiality on the part of the Examiner, or
- the performance of the Examiner, in the context of this Handbook, is judged to be inadequate.

In particular, the following may lead to termination: failure to attend required Boards of Examiners; failure to submit an annual report; and submission of an incomplete report. Decisions to terminate an Examiner's contract are not taken lightly. In all cases, where termination may be necessary, the Dean will undertake a full investigation before submitting his or her recommendation to the Senate.

2.8 Publication of External Examiner details

The University does not currently publish External Examiner names, home institutions or other similar details on its website. However, individual programme teams may include such information in programme materials. Students and other stakeholders may also request information on the name, home institution and particular responsibilities of an Examiner from the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement. We would want to reassure you that such information will only ever be released in line with our usual practice and legal obligations under data protection legislation. In such cases, students and other stakeholders will be advised that they **must not** under any circumstances attempt to make contact with individual Examiners, or seek to influence decisions through such contact or other means.

3 THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S ROLE

3.1 Your duties

As an External Examiner of the University you are expected to undertake all the duties and responsibilities required of you to the best of your ability.

In particular, you must:

- respect the confidentiality of Board of Examiners meetings and materials that they assess – in particular, projects and dissertation work, details of which must not be disclosed to a third party without prior permission;
- attend all Board of Examiners meetings at which your attendance is required, details of which will be communicated to you on confirmation of your appointment;
- submit, no later than 30 September, and preferably three weeks after the relevant Board of Examiners, which normally takes place around May or June, an annual report that addresses, substantively and appropriately, the issues listed in the pro-forma.

Specifically, you are required to:

- be a member of the Board of Examiners, and participate fully in the decision making process;
- endorse the outcomes of the Board through agreement at the meeting, or separately in writing, if you are unable to attend the Board;
- ensure that the recommendations of the Board are consistent with the aims and curriculum of the programme, with Queen Margaret University requirements, and with good practice in Higher Education;
- review the work of all students recommended for failure or for the available category of the award, and to sample student work from each category of award;
- assess and comment on draft examination papers, other assessment instruments, and guide marking schemes;
- moderate the work of the internal examiners; the guiding principle being that you should have enough evidence to ensure that the relative placing of students is fair and impartial.

You may also, at the discretion of the Programme Committee, be asked to:

- assume particular responsibility for work-based learning and practice assessment (where this is the case, details will be communicated to you on confirmation of your appointment);
- meet with student representatives (where this is the case, details will be communicated to you on confirmation of your appointment);
- advise on the operation of the programme, including the design of the continuous assessment components of the programme.

Occasionally, at the discretion of the Student Experience Committee, you may be asked to participate in reviews of institutional regulations and practices. Whilst

there is no formal obligation for you to participate in this type of review, the University welcomes and encourages the involvement of key stakeholders.

3.2 Preparing you for your role

We recognise that, in order to assist you to perform your role effectively, you need to be thoroughly briefed to ensure that you are aware of:

- the expectations of Queen Margaret University regarding your role;
- the regulations governing the programme being examined, including marking practices (e.g. double marking, double marking by sample); arrangements for the sampling of scripts and other assessable work contributing to the final award, including student presentations;
- the assessment structures, assignments and examination papers in relation to agreed learning objectives/outcomes;
- the grading criteria and marking schemes (where applicable);
- arrangements for the access to any work contributing to the final award so as to have evidence that the internal marking has been carried out according to the marking schemes and the classifications are of an appropriate standard;
- principles governing the selection of candidates for viva voce examinations;
- the extent of your authority and role, particularly in relation to the Board of Examiners.

As part of your initial briefing pack, you will be given instructions on where to find all the forms and paperwork you will need in relation to the External Examining role, report, fees and expenses claims. If you have been appointed as an External Examiner with responsibility for multiple iterations of the same programme, for example where this is delivered both in Edinburgh and overseas, you will also receive details of the expectations for comparing practice and performance.

This Handbook is an important part of that process, but you may also expect that, on appointment, you will receive the following from the Programme Leader:

- details of the programme to be examined, its place in the University's overall portfolio, and its main elements, regulations and awards;
- material that sets out the educational intent, learning objectives, marking schemes, assessment strategies and descriptors of grade/classification criteria; this could take the form of the Student Handbook, the Definitive Programme Document, or the Programme Specification;
- an opportunity to meet with staff, either in person or virtually, before formally taking up the role.

You can also expect to receive the Board of Examiners schedule from the School Office.

Arrangements for institution-led induction are agreed through the nomination process and included in the initial briefing pack. In all cases, institution-led induction includes access to online resources, but tailored support may also be provided. The format of tailored induction is dependent on a number of factors,

including your prior experience of External Examining and professional background, especially if this is from outside the Higher Education sector.

Once you are established in post, you may expect to receive updated briefing material on an annual basis, prior to the final assessment diet each year. This will, as a minimum, include:

- Board of Examiners schedule;
- updated report, fees and expenses claim forms;
- any material updated since the previous assessment diet;
- notification of any changes to University regulations.

Materials to assist External Examiners in preparing for their role, and relevant forms for External Examiners are published on the [External Examining pages of our Quality website](#).

3.3 Your rights as an Examiner

In performing your External Examining role, you have the right to take any steps necessary for the proper discharge your duties. You are entitled to:

- have access to all assessed work;
- amend draft examination papers and assessment instruments or to add examination questions in consultation with the appropriate internal examiners;
- attend module and progression Boards of Examiners;
- withhold your endorsement of any recommendation by the Board of Examiners (this must be communicated in writing to the Dean of School together with a clear rationale);
- have submitted by the Board a report to the Senate on any issue where you do not accept the majority view of the Board;
- make recommendations for adjustment to marks for those modules for which you are responsible, but only following moderation of the entire cohort on a specific module.

3.4 Your External Examiner's report

You are required to report annually to the University on the conduct of assessment just concluded and on issues related to assessment, including:

- the adequacy of information supplied on the programme, including its aims and learning objectives and methods of assessment;
- whether the aims and programme structure meet the needs of students;
- whether the stated learning objectives for the programme are appropriate to the subject matter, the level of the programme and the students;
- whether the examination, together with any other forms of assessment used, adequately covered the learning objectives;
- whether you are satisfied with the methods of assessment;

- whether you are satisfied with the details of the assessment process, including, where appropriate, the marking schemes and allocation of marks, the criteria for degree classification and schemes for the award;
- the conduct of placement or other practice based assessment, where appropriate;
- whether the teaching and learning methods are appropriate to the programme;
- the administration of the examination and any form of assessment used;
- such matters as time available for scrutiny of scripts and other student work, the format of the information provided on the marks awarded by internal examiners, and the impartiality with which the process was conducted;
- whether the marking by internal examiners is broadly appropriate in terms of standards, consistency and internal moderation;
- the standard of students' work associated with the various degree classifications or pass/fail borderline(s) in comparison with other institutions of which you have knowledge;
- the overall performance of candidates, including pass rates and honours degree classification profiles;
- the procedures followed at the meeting(s) of the Board of Examiners;
- whether or not you have been consulted in the last year by the department on proposed changes to courses or on the introduction of new courses;
- the programme's areas of strength, and areas that require to be further developed;
- strengths and weaknesses of knowledge, understanding and skills demonstrated by students.

On completion of your tenure, you are also asked to provide a summary of your overall experience of the role, including development of the curriculum, changes to assessment and feedback practice and student performance since you took up post.

A copy of the report pro-forma is attached at Appendix two of this Handbook. The report should be completed online and sent electronically to our [generic External Examining email address](#).

Using this address will ensure that a member of staff from the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement answers your mail promptly.

You will note that the form provides you with the opportunity to tick a number of boxes, as well as the opportunity to provide comments on aspects of the assessment process and student performance. Please complete all sections of the form on which you are invited to comment.

Please note that in completing your report, you should not refer directly to individual students by name or matriculation number. You should also not refer directly to individual staff. We would also ask that you provide as full a written report as possible, even although you may have provided a verbal report at the Board of Examiners. As the reports serve an important enhancement function within the University, we particularly encourage Examiners to identify examples of good practice, which might be disseminated to programme teams.

3.5 What happens to your report?

Once you have submitted your report, its receipt will be acknowledged by staff of the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement. Copies will be circulated to the Programme Leader, Head of Division, Dean of School and School Manager. Copies will also be sent to the Principal and University Secretary.

A response to your report will be provided by the Programme Leader, who is also responsible for addressing the issues identified in the report. If the matters you have raised are serious, you may expect that they will be addressed immediately. Otherwise, they are dealt with as part of the Annual Monitoring process. In either case, the Programme Leader will provide you with a written response, detailing action taken, or action to be taken.

The appropriate Programme Committee(s) will, additionally, consider your report at the start of the academic session, with action taken reported by the Programme Leader in the Programme's Annual Monitoring Report. Programme Committee scrutiny ensures that Class Representatives have input to discussion and decision about actions taken in response to Examiners' feedback. Each response is reviewed and requires approval from the Dean of School or the Dean's nominee (typically the Head of Division) before being sent to the External Examiner. Whilst it is usual for Examiners' recommendations to be implemented, there may be occasions where, after due consideration, it is decided to pursue an alternative course of action. In such cases, a full explanation of the reasons for not implementing the recommendation(s) will be provided.

Reports and responses to Examiners are normally provided in full to all students on the Programme for which you are responsible through the Virtual Learning Environment. The only exception to this would be where there is content that needs to be redacted, for example because an individual student or staff member is identifiable from the content.

Your report also contributes to the production of an annual institutional report on External Examiner reports. This is considered by the Student Experience Committee, which has responsibility for ensuring that issues with institutional implications are addressed or remitted to other committees as appropriate.

The annual report includes a summary of examples of good practice in learning, teaching, and assessment identified by Examiners. This allows for institutional consideration of identified examples with the potential to impact on the student experience.

The annual report, or sections thereof, is disseminated by staff of the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement to the following: QMU staff; QMU students; External Examiners.

We recognise that our External Examiners give important feedback on the operation of our academic portfolio, and timely receipt of reports allows us to take early action to address any issues raised. For this reason, it is vital that you meet the deadline for submission of reports and forms, i.e. no later than 30 September,

and preferably within three weeks of the relevant meeting of the Board of Examiners. For programmes with a standard calendar this allows the team to consider the report and take action before the start of the next academic year.

4 ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Our [Assessment Regulations](#) are available in full from the Quality website (please follow the hyperlink then click on the 'Regulations' tab). Many QMU programmes follow the Assessment Regulations in their entirety. However, programme specific regulations also apply for some of our programmes. Often, but not exclusively, this is the case where there is a placement component. Sometimes regulations are informed by Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements.

You will receive, under separate cover, information on the regulations governing the assessment for the programme you are examining. However, the following **extract** outlines the key elements and underlying principles governing assessment at QMU. There is no expectation that Examiners are familiar with the detail of the full regulations provided separately from this Handbook. However, it would be important that you familiarise yourself with the following key extracts.

General Provisions

- 4.1 The authority for approving programmes and granting awards rests with the Senate.
- 4.2 An award is conferred upon satisfaction of the following conditions:
 - the candidate was a registered student of the University at the time of his or her assessment and has fulfilled all financial obligations to the University;
 - the candidate has completed a programme approved by the University as leading to the award being recommended, and
 - the award has been recommended by a Board of Examiners convened, constituted and acting under regulations approved by the Senate.
- 4.3 Assessment is a matter of judgement, not simply of computation. Marks, grades and percentages should not be treated as absolute values but as symbols to be used by examiners to communicate their judgement of different aspects of a student's work, in order to provide information on which the final decision on a student's fulfilment of programme objectives may be based.
- 4.4 A student's circumstances may influence the procedures for assessment and the consequences of assessment but not the standard of performance expected in a module assessment, or at the end of a programme.
- 4.5 If a student cannot be assessed by the prescribed method for the module, reasonable adjustments will be detailed within an Individual Learning plan. Variations may include the following:
 - a) an extension of the normal registration period for completing an award;
 - b) extra time being allowed for examinations or assessments;

- c) alternative or modified assessments;
 - d) use of scribes in assessments;
 - e) use of viva voce assessment;
 - f) use of appropriate aids (such as word processor, Braille, tape-recorder, large print scripts etc.).
- 4.6 Except where a programme is specifically exempt, all students in undergraduate levels one and two whose first language is not English are eligible for 25% extra-time in examinations.
- 4.7 To pass an undergraduate module, a student must obtain at least 40% overall, and at least 30% in each component of assessment as specified in the module descriptor. To pass a postgraduate module, a student must obtain at least 50% overall, and at least 40% in each component of assessment as specified in the module descriptor. This regulation applies to the first attempt at the module only. Regulations for reassessment and repeat of modules are detailed below.
- 4.8 Where a student is reassessed in an undergraduate module at a second attempt or repeats an undergraduate module in its entirety, the maximum mark that can be achieved for the module is 40%. Where a student is reassessed in a postgraduate module at a second attempt or repeats a postgraduate module in its entirety, the maximum mark that can be achieved for the module is 50%. The nature and extent of the failure will not affect the student's right to be reassessed.
- 4.9 A piece of written work that exceeds the specified word limit by 10% or more will receive a maximum mark of 40% (50% at postgraduate level).
- 4.10 Any student who submits work to be assessed after the assessment submission date, without the prior agreement of the Programme Leader and the Module Co-ordinator, or without good or agreed cause, will have marks deducted according to the following criteria:
- if submitted, in a first diet, after the deadline but up to and including 6 days after the deadline) a maximum mark of 40% can be achieved for undergraduate programmes and a maximum mark of 50% for postgraduate programmes
 - if submitted, in a first diet, 7 days or more (including on the 7th day after the submission deadline) a mark of 0% will be awarded
 - if coursework is submitted after the deadline for a reassessment a mark of 0% will be awarded.
- 4.11 Decisions on a student's continued registration are made at the end of each academic year, after re-assessment results are known.

Progression

- 4.12 The only decisions available to a Board of Examiners considering progression and award are:
- a) Continue – passed all assessments
 - b) Required to be reassessed in the failed module(s) before continuing

- c) Continue – but required to be reassessed in the failed/deferred module(s) in next academic year
- d) Continue – but required to repeat the failed module(s) in next academic year
- e) Offered opportunity to repeat the entire level in next academic year before continuing
- f) Offered opportunity to repeat failed module(s) in next academic year as a part-time student before continuing
- g) Continue in part time registration (applies to part-time students only)
- h) No re-assessment allowed – required to withdraw from course
- i) Decision deferred – outstanding assessments as a first diet
- j) Decision deferred – outstanding re-assessments
- k) Recommendation to the Senate for specific awards

Re-assessment

- 4.13 Re-assessment is permitted in order to allow a student to make good an initial failure. The Board of Examiners may at its discretion allow an undergraduate student to be re-assessed in up to 80 credits in any one academic year. The Board of Examiners may at its discretion allow a postgraduate student to be re-assessed in up to two thirds of the taught modules on a programme as a second attempt, and one third as a third attempt.
- 4.14 The Board of Examiners shall decide on the form of the reassessment (e.g. written examination, viva voce, or an additional assignment), taking into account the nature of the failed module and the nature of the failure. This may differ from the format of the first assessment and need not be the same for all students provided equity of experience is maintained. The Board of Examiners can allow for full or partial reassessment of the components as appropriate. Reassessment can take the form of a reworking or a new assessment, as determined by the Board of Examiners.
- 4.15 Normally, a student may not be given more than three attempts at any module.
- 4.16 A candidate for reassessment is not entitled to be reassessed in components that are no longer part of the programme. A Board of Examiners may, at its discretion, make such special arrangements as it deems suitable in cases where it is inappropriate for students to be reassessed in the same elements, or by the same methods as at the first attempt.
- 4.17 A student who is reassessed for a module failure in an undergraduate module, where there are no clear extenuating circumstances, shall be awarded no more than 40% on passing the reassessment. A student who is reassessed for a module failure in a postgraduate module, where there are no clear extenuating circumstances, shall be awarded no more than 50% on passing the reassessment.
- 4.18 All reassessment results shall be based only upon performance in reassessments; no marks may be carried forward from a student's first attempt at the assessments. To pass an undergraduate module at reassessment, a student must achieve at least 30% in each reassessed component and a weighted average of at least 40%. To pass a postgraduate module at reassessment, a

student must achieve at least 40% in each reassessed component and a weighted average of at least 50%.

- 4.19 A student who has been absent from an assessment, or who has performed badly due to illness or other cause, shall be allowed to take the assessment, and it shall be treated as a first assessment, subject to the reason for absence or poor performance being acceptable to the Board of Examiners or the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

5 MARKS, GRADES AND LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE

5.1 Assessment is primarily a matter of academic judgement, and the computational structure is designed to facilitate consistent judgements.

5.2 A student's overall performance on an **undergraduate** module will be given marks within one of seven grades as follows:

Grade	Mark	Corresponding Honours classification
A*	80% -100%	first class
A	70% -79%	first class
B	60 – 69%	upper second
C	50 – 59%	lower second
D	40 – 49%	third class
E	30 – 39%	fail
F	0 – 29%	fail

5.3 A student's overall performance on a **postgraduate** module will be given marks within one of six grades as follows:

Grade	Mark	Award classification
A*	80% -100%	Distinction
A	70 – 79%	Distinction
B	60 – 69%	Merit
C	50 – 59%	Pass
D	40 – 49%	Fail
E	0– 39%	Fail

5.4 These grades should be used in a consistent fashion at all levels of assessment whether it is judging a student's overall performance; a cohort's performance, a module grade, or a piece of assessed coursework.

5.5 The criteria for each of the grades above are listed in the Appendices.

5.6 Normally subjects will be assessed using marks and grades. However, in exceptional circumstances subjects may be assessed using grades only. This will be recorded in programme regulations.

5.7 If an **undergraduate** subject is assessed using a grade only, then the following grade-to-mark conversion scheme shall be used for the purposes of computation:

Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F
Mark	85	75	65	55	45	35	15

5.8 If a **postgraduate** subject is assessed using a grade only, then the following grade-to-mark conversion scheme shall be used for the purpose of computation.

Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Mark	85	75	65	55	45	20

In most cases, the mark is set at the midpoint of the band. However, it is proposed that the mark at Grade A* should be limited to 85 to reflect the comparatively few marks likely to be awarded over 90%.

- 5.9 If appropriate, examiners may adjust the raw marks attained by students in individual subjects, but the basis of the scaling must be reported to the Board of Examiners who will be asked to endorse the scaling.

6 AWARD

- 6.1 To gain an undergraduate award, a student must normally be a registered student at the University for at least one academic year. Minimum registration periods for postgraduate awards are set out in University's registration regulations.

To qualify for the following awards the student must fulfil the subject specific requirements for the name of the award and:

Cert HE	120 credit points of which a minimum of 100 are at SCQF level 7 or higher
Dip HE	240 credit points of which a minimum of 100 are at SCQF level 8 or higher
Degree	360 credit points of which a minimum of 100 are at SCQF level 9 or higher
Honours degree	480 credit points of which a minimum of 220 are at SCQF level 9 and 10, including at least 100 at level 10
Graduate Certificate	60 credit points, at minimum of SCQF level 9
Graduate Diploma	120 credit points, at minimum of SCQF level 9
Postgraduate Certificate	60 credit points of which a minimum of 40 are at SCQF level 11 and no credits below SCQF level 10
Postgraduate Diploma	120 credit points of which a minimum of 100 are at SCQF level 11 and no credits below SCQF level 10
Masters degree	180 credit points of which a minimum of 160 are at SCQF level 11 and no credits below SCQF level 10
Integrated Masters	600 credit points of which a minimum of 120 are at SCQF level 11

- 6.2 The classification of the award of the Degree with Honours will be based on the marks obtained in SCQF level 9 (20%) and SCQF level 10 (80%). Weighted aggregate scores will be rounded to one decimal place. The classification will be based upon the average mark obtained by combining the weighted results of all modules studied at SCQF levels 9 and 10. Any modules undertaken below SCQF level 9 and any modules taken whilst on an exchange arrangement will not be counted towards the Honours calculation.

Where a student has accumulated more than 120 credits at SCQF level 10, a maximum of 120 credits will be counted at SCQF level 10 for the purpose of the Honours calculation. All core modules at SCQF level 10 will count towards the Honours classification. The optional modules in which the student achieved the highest marks will be included in the calculation of the Honours classification. Additional optional modules at SCQF level 10 with lower marks will be counted towards SCQF level 9.

70 and above

First Class

≥60% and <70%	Second Class: Upper division
≥50% and <60%	Second Class: Lower division
≥40% and <50%	Third Class

- 6.3 The award of an Ordinary Degree can include an award with distinction, in cases where the average mark for the 120 credits (or equivalent) at SCQF level 9 or above is 65% or higher. Any modules undertaken below SCQF level 9 and any modules taken whilst on an exchange arrangement will not be counted towards the distinction calculation.
- 6.4 The award of taught Masters Degrees and Postgraduate Diplomas may include an award with distinction or merit. The award of Postgraduate Certificate is without distinction or merit. A distinction is granted automatically if the weighted average mark (each module being weighted in relation to its size) - is 70% or over. A merit is granted automatically if the weighted average mark (each module being weighted in relation to its size) - is 60% or over. Only modules undertaken at SCQF level 11 will be used in the calculation for distinction or merit.
- 6.5 When granted an award a student will automatically be de-registered and must reapply if they wish to proceed to a higher or different award.
- 6.6 Where a student is admitted to the University at level four the classification will be based entirely on grades achieved during level four studies.
- 6.7 Where a student is admitted to a level and given additional credit at that level gained externally, the grades from that credit may contribute to the classification where the credit is at the appropriate SCQF level and where marks are available. Otherwise the classification will be based on grades gained entirely within the University. Any modules taken whilst on an exchange arrangement will not be counted towards the classification.

Decision on award classifications and distinctions in borderline cases

Undergraduate degrees

- 6.8 All weighted average marks falling 0.5 per cent or less below the classification or distinction boundary are automatically reclassified at the higher level.
- 6.9 All weighted average marks falling between 0.6 per cent and two percent below the classification or distinction boundary are deemed borderline cases.
- 6.10 For Honours degrees the final classification is determined by the marks across all SCQF level 10 credits. Borderline cases where any 60 or more credits (core or elective modules) are achieved in the classification above the boundary will be awarded the higher classification of degree.
- 6.11 For Ordinary degrees the final award is determined by the marks across SCQF level 9 credits. Borderline cases where any 60 or more credits (core or elective modules) are achieved in the distinction category (65% or above) will be awarded the degree with distinction.

- 6.12 Additional viva voce examinations involving the External Examiner should not be used in the consideration of borderline cases.

Postgraduate degrees

- 6.13 All weighted average marks falling 0.5 per cent or less below the distinction boundary are automatically reclassified at the higher level.
- 6.14 All weighted average marks falling between 0.6 per cent and two percent below the distinction/merit boundary are deemed borderline cases. In these cases the award of distinction/merit is determined by consideration of marks across all SCQF level 11 credits contributing to the Programme.
- 6.15 For standard 180 credit Masters programmes, borderline cases where 90 credits or more (core or elective modules) at SCQF level 11 are marked at 70% or above will be awarded the distinction.

For standard 180 credit Masters programmes, borderline cases where 90 credits or more (core or elective modules) at SCQF level 11 are marked at 60% or above will be awarded the merit.

- 6.16 For standard 120 credit Postgraduate Diploma programmes, borderline cases where 60 credits or more (core or elective modules) at SCQF level 11 are marked at 70% or above will be awarded the distinction.

For standard 120 credit Postgraduate Diploma programmes, borderline cases where 60 credits or more (core or elective modules) at SCQF level 11 are marked at 60% or above will be awarded the merit.

- 6.17 For non-standard Postgraduate Diploma and Masters programmes, i.e. Postgraduate Diploma Programmes rated at more than 120 credits, or Masters programmes rated at more than 180 credits, borderline cases where 50% or more of the total credits at SCQF level 11 are marked at 70% or above will be awarded the distinction. Exceptionally, programme specific regulations may be defined for such programmes, to be agreed at the point of validation or review.

For non-standard Postgraduate Diploma and Masters Programmes, i.e. Postgraduate Diploma programmes rated at more than 120 credits, or Masters programmes rated at more than 180 credits, borderline cases where 50% or more of the total credits at SCQF level 11 are marked at 60% or above will be awarded the merit. Exceptionally, programme specific regulations may be defined for such programmes, to be agreed at the point of validation or review.

- 6.18 Additional viva voce examinations involving the External Examiner should not be used in the consideration of borderline cases.

7 QMU BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

Operation and powers

- 7.1 The Senate appoints a Board of Examiners for each programme leading to an award of the University or for each level of a programme.
- 7.2 The Senate is the ultimate authority in the University for the ratification of academic decisions and may, in extreme circumstances over-rule a Board of Examiners. Normally, it will refer matters of concern back to the Board of Examiners for reconsideration.
- 7.3 Decisions by the Board of Examiners that fall outside programme regulations but which are within the University general assessment regulations shall be fully documented in the minutes of the Board of Examiners. Any proposals regarding changes to regulations arising from these decisions shall be referred to the Student Experience Committee.
- 7.4 Where there is a tiered system of Boards of Examiners the subsidiary Board has the authority to moderate and confirm marks and grades for each of the modules for which it is responsible, and determine the form and timing of any re-assessment offered. The main Board of Examiners has the authority to reconsider the decisions in light of the student's profile.
- 7.5 The main Board of Examiners is responsible for determining:
- a) whether the student remains in registration;
 - b) the conditions governing the student's progression;
 - c) the award for which the student is eligible.
- 7.6 In large complex programmes, subsidiary Boards of Examiners may take responsibility for certain aspects of a programme, and report and make recommendations to the main Board of Examiners.
- 7.7 A Board of Examiners exercises its judgement in reaching decisions on individual candidates. It is responsible for interpreting the assessment regulations for the programme, in the light of the University's requirements and good practice in Higher Education, and its academic judgement is not lightly questioned or overturned.
- 7.8 Appeals by students against the decisions of Boards of Examiners are subject to University procedures and practices, as set out in the [Academic Appeals procedure](#) (please click on the 'Regulations' tab to access the procedure).
- 7.9 The decision by the Board of Examiners must have the assent of the full Board. Where there is significant disagreement within the Board, or where the External Examiner is not in agreement with the Board's overall decision, the matter will be referred to the Senate.

- 7.10 The focus of the Board of Examiners will be on the students (as individuals and as a cohort), the module and the programme. In making decisions on assessment and progression, the Board of Examiners will take account of:
- the performance of each individual student on a module by module basis leading to recommendations as laid down in the definitive document concerning progression, re-assessment, repeat, withdrawal or final award;
 - the grades achieved in the current academic year in comparison with previous years;
 - the distribution of grades and outcomes in similar programmes in other departments and other institutions;
 - reports from staff on any special circumstances affecting student performance;
 - whether every marginal or fail case has been given full consideration for every possible alternative programme of action open to the Board according to the programme and/or University regulations;
 - any scaling that has been applied to the marks or grades for an individual, or a module, either by the examiner or the Board of Examiners;
 - any deviation from the programme regulations and/or the University general assessment regulations by the Board of Examiners, leading to a change in progression status or final classification; all deviations from the University's general assessment regulations should be referred to the Student Experience Committee for decision;
 - any comments the Board may wish specifically to make to any of the following: Programme Committee; School Academic Board; Student Experience Committee; or the Senate.
- 7.11 Decisions on extenuating circumstances for individual students should be approved in advance of the Board of Examiners in line with University guidelines. Details of individual cases should not be discussed at the meeting of the Board of Examiners.
- 7.12 All cases of suspected academic misconduct (including plagiarism) should be investigated by the Programme Leader and the Dean of School in line with the University's general assessment regulations on academic misconduct. Investigations should be made in advance of the Board of Examiners and certainly no later than seven days following the meeting of the Board of Examiners. Where the allegation has been upheld, a summary of action taken should be recorded in the Board of Examiners minutes and on the electronic student record for future reference.

Composition

- 7.13 The typical composition of a main Board of Examiners concerned with student progression and awards is as follows:
- **Convener:** Dean or Head of the Division in which the programme is based (unless the Head of Division is also programme/subject leader, wherein alternative arrangements are made).

- **Internal Examiners:** Members of staff with assigned responsibility for the assessment of those components of the programme on which the Board of Examiners is taking decisions.
 - **Programme/Subject Leader**
 - **Year/Level Tutors**
 - **External Examiner(s) [see paragraph 7.14 below]**
 - **Co-optee(s):** at the discretion of the Convener of the Board of Examiners
 - **Secretary:** Appointed by the University Secretary
- 7.14 External Examiners must attend Boards of Examiners concerned with decisions on progression and awards. External Examiners may be invited to attend subsidiary/module Boards of Examiners.
- 7.15 For those Boards of Examiners that External Examiners are required to attend, the agreement of all External Examiners is required to ratify the decision of the Board. In the case of award recommendations made by Convener's action, the criteria for the proposed award(s) are determined at the appropriate Board of Examiners. If such criteria have not been determined in advance, Convener's Action in respect of awards must have the written agreement of External Examiners.
- 7.16 All student work must normally be moderated by the relevant External Examiner(s) prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners. This applies to both subsidiary and main Boards of Examiners.
- 7.17 The membership of the re-assessment meeting of the Board of Examiners will include the Convener, all Internal Examiners responsible for the assessment of the modules involved in the re-assessments, and at least one External Examiner.
- 7.18 Where an External Examiner is unable to attend a main Board of Examiners due to unforeseen circumstances, and where no other External Examiner is present at the meeting, written confirmation of their agreement with the marks and the progression/award recommendations must be sought. Written confirmation of decisions will not be released to students until full agreement of the External Examiner(s) has been received. Secretaries to Boards of Examiners must ensure that the written comments of External Examiner(s), who are unable to be present, are detailed in the minutes of the Board of Examiners.

8 KEY CONTACTS

Should you require any further information or advice, please contact the person detailed below:

Assessment regulations and progression requirements	June Ross, Assistant Secretary, Registry and Academic Administration , Tel: 0131 474 0000
Boards of Examiners and Examination arrangements	June Ross, Assistant Secretary, Registry and Academic Administration , Tel 0131 474 0000
External Examiner's contract	Dawn Martin, Assistant Secretary, Governance and Quality Enhancement , Tel: 0131 474 0000
External Examiner's report	Lucy Hinds, Quality Enhancement Officer , Tel: 0131 474 0000
Fees and expenses	Stacey Barnes, Divisional Project Manager , Tel: 0131 474 0000

If in doubt, the [generic External Examining mailbox](#) can be used for all queries.

APPENDIX ONE

The full academic structure of the University is set out below.

School	Principal Officers	Divisions / Subject Groups
Arts Social Sciences and Management	Dean: Professor David Stevenson School Manager: Sheena Watson	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business, Enterprise and Management• Media, Communication and Performing Arts• Psychology and Sociology
Health Sciences	Dean: Professor Fiona Coutts School Manager: Jenny Ansett	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dietetics, Nutrition, Biological Sciences, Physiotherapy, Podiatry and Radiography• Nursing and Paramedic Science• Occupational Therapy and Arts Therapies• Speech and Hearing Sciences• Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD)

External Examiner's Report Form 2021-22

Instructions for completion

Deadline: Reports should be submitted annually, preferably within three weeks of the semester two Board of Examiners (this normally happens in June). All reports must be submitted by 30 September 2022 at the latest, with the exception of reports for programmes that do not operate on a standard academic cycle. You are reminded that it is a contractual requirement to submit an annual report and without it you cannot be paid.

Information required: Please comment in sufficient detail for academic staff and other readers to assess the quality and standards of the provision. Linked programmes may be combined into one report but separate programmes should each have their own report. Please check with the Head of Division, if you are unsure.

Format: Please complete the report form electronically. [Email the completed report as a Microsoft Word file to our generic External Examining email address.](#) The submission of a Word, rather than a PDF file, means that we can detach your fee claim form before we disseminate the report more widely.

How reports are used: External Examiner reports are used to help QMU assure the quality and standards of its taught programmes. Reports also serve an important enhancement function. Reports are shared widely within QMU and considered by the Principal and other senior staff, as well as the teaching team. Reports are usually made available in full to all students on the University's Virtual Learning Environment. In some cases, a summary of the report will be made available instead. This applies only where the report includes sensitive or confidential information. It is important that students are not named in reports, and also that no matriculation numbers are included. [You will find further details on our External Examining webpages.](#)

Fees and expenses: Complete the fee claim form at the end of this report and submit it along with the report as a Microsoft Word file. If the fee payment will be made to a bank account out with the United Kingdom please also complete the details on the last page of this report. Fees are claimed annually. Expenses may be claimed as they are incurred, and must be submitted within three months of the date of expenditure. [The expenses claim form can be downloaded separately from our website.](#)

The report form is available in alternative formats. [Please contact us at our generic External Examining email address if you would like further details.](#)

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT 2020-21

Examiner's name	
Programme	

SUMMARY

Please provide an overview of positive practice and recommendations in the space below. Each of the boxes will expand as required. This summary will provide 'at a glance' information for a wider audience than the teaching team. Teams are expected to share reports with students. As a minimum, we will make this summary available on our Virtual Learning Environment, but more usually we will share your full report with all students on the programme.

Recommendations to be addressed urgently

Other recommendations

Positive practice – Please highlight up to three features of positive practice that you would like to share with the Programme Team and wider University community. Such examples might include good practice in teaching, programme content, assessment or feedback that has been implemented in response to COVID-19.

1 CURRICULUM

Please answer the following questions by ticking the appropriate answer. Any comments may be made below.

		<i>Please tick:</i>		
		YES	NO	N/A
a)	Did you receive a copy of the Definitive Document and/or Student Handbook for the Programme?			
b)	Was the information you received on the Programme adequate?			
c)	If you requested any other information on the Programme, was this provided to your satisfaction?			
d)	Do you have any major concerns about the design of the programme?			
e)	Do you have any major concerns about the content of the programme?			
f)	Do the aims and structure of the Programme meet the needs of the students?			
g)	Is the programme aligned with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)?			
h)	Do the learning outcomes reflect any national benchmarks applicable to the subject area?			
i)	Does the programme (continue to) reflect any relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements?			

Please provide further information relating to the above questions. It would be helpful if you could comment on the appropriateness of the overall aims, structure and content. Please include strengths and suggested areas for development, as appropriate.

2 ASSESSMENT

Please answer the following questions by ticking the appropriate answer. Any comments may be made below.

		<i>Please tick:</i>	YES	NO	N/A
a)	Did you receive adequate information relating to QMU regulations and assessment procedures?				
b)	Are the assessment processes and schemes for classification and progression clear?				
c)	Did you receive all the draft exam questions and other assessment instruments with sufficient time to review?				
d)	If not, was this agreed with you previously?				
e)	Was due consideration given to your feedback on draft exam questions and other assessment arrangements?				
f)	Were exam questions and other assessment instruments of an appropriate standard and quality?				
g)	Were the methods of assessment appropriate to the learning outcomes of the Programme, content and students involved?				
h)	Were adequate arrangements made for students with special needs?				
i)	Did you receive an appropriate sample and range of scripts and other work?				
j)	Were you given the opportunity to see the scripts of all appropriate borderline cases?				
k)	Were you satisfied that the marking undertaken by the internal examiners was appropriate in terms of standard and consistency?				
l)	Were the scripts marked in such a way to enable you to understand the rationale for the marks awarded?				
m)	Were you satisfied with the quality of feedback provided to students by internal markers?				
n)	Where applicable, were suitable arrangements made for you to observe and moderate placement performances?				
o)	Where applicable, were suitable arrangements made for you to				

observe and moderate practical performances?

- p) Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board of Examiners to Senate?
- q) Were you satisfied with the administration of the assessment process?
- r) Did you attend the meeting(s) of the Board of Examiners? (if no, please disregard questions s and t below)
- s) Were you satisfied with the extent to which you were able to participate as a full member of the Board of Examiners?
- t) Were you satisfied with the procedures of the Board of Examiners?

Please provide further information relating to the above questions, including strengths and suggested areas for development, as appropriate. If you have been involved in clinical placement assessment, please comment explicitly on your role and the conduct of the assessment.

3 STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Please answer the following questions by ticking the appropriate answer. Any comments may be made below.

		Please tick:	YES	NO	N/A
a)	Was student work compatible with the stated aims and objectives of the Programme?				
b)	Was the quality of student work as you would have expected in a Programme at this level?				
c)	Was student work comparable with that of their peers at other institutions?				
d)	Were you satisfied with the quality and nature of teaching and learning as indicated by student work examined?				
e)	Were you satisfied with the distribution and classification of awards?				
f)	Was the distribution of grades and classification of awards comparable with other institutions?				
g)	Does the Programme provide sufficient opportunity for students to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that is required to pass?				
h)	For Examiners responsible for different iterations of the same programme at QMU and overseas: Are standards of work across the different iterations broadly comparable?				
i)	If not, are you satisfied that steps have been taken/are planned to reduce the performance gap?				

Please provide further information relating to the above questions. It would be helpful if you could comment on strengths and weaknesses of knowledge, understanding and skills demonstrated by students.

4 FOLLOW-UP TO PREVIOUS YEAR'S REPORT

Please answer the following questions by ticking the appropriate answer.

		Please tick:		
		YES	NO	N/A
a)	Were any specific recommendations suggested to the Team in your report for last year?			
b)	Did you receive a written response to your last report?			
c)	Was this provided within approximately ten weeks of submission of the report?			
c)	Were your recommendations addressed by the Programme Team?			

Please provide further information, as you consider appropriate on the response to your previous year's report.

5 FURTHER COMMENTS

Please add any further comments on the course or programme and its assessment processes, identifying any particular areas of strength or areas for development. If you are an Examiner for a programme that is regulated or accredited by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body, please use this space to address any matters that might be of interest to that Body and which fall within your remit as an Examiner. It is recognised that such matters will vary across professions.

6 OVERVIEW OF PERIOD OF TENURE (to be completed only by Examiners submitting their final report to QMU)

Please provide an overview of your period of tenure as Examiner for QMU. You are asked to comment on your overall experience of the role, including development of the curriculum, changes to assessment and feedback practice and student performance since you took up post. Please also include any points that you would like to highlight to your successor or suggestions that might assist the University in developing its procedures for External Examining.

EXTERNAL EXAMINER CONTACT DETAILS

Please confirm your contact details – you are asked to provide a business (rather than home) address where possible

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Signature **Date.....**

(if you have an electronic signature, please include it)

UNDERGRADUATE GENERAL MARKING CRITERIA BY GRADE AND LEVEL

Approved by the University Senate on 30 June 2021

Applicable to all new and existing modules being delivered from September 2021 onwards

Grade A* 80% and above Outstanding performance, exceptionally able – pass

- Articulates an outstanding understanding and interpretation of the relevant information, key theories and concepts presented by the assessment
- Demonstrates outstanding knowledge of appropriate reading through extensive references to appropriate scholarly sources
- Shows outstanding problem solving, creativity, originality, critical thinking, analysis and evaluation
- Presents outstanding discussion in a logical, connected and progressing structure, and valid conclusions
- Displays an outstanding ability to appraise evidence and synthesise concepts, knowledge and theory
- Shows an outstanding reflexive awareness of value judgements and assumptions embedded in the subject or discipline

Grade A 70-79.9% Excellent performance – pass

- Articulates an excellent understanding and interpretation of the relevant information, key theories and concepts presented by the assessment
- Demonstrates an excellent knowledge of appropriate reading through frequent references to appropriate scholarly sources
- Shows excellent problem solving, creativity, originality, critical thinking, analysis and evaluation
- Presents excellent discussion in a logical, connected and progressing structure, and valid conclusions
- Displays an excellent ability to appraise evidence and synthesise concepts, knowledge and theory
- Shows excellent reflexive awareness of value judgements and assumptions embedded in the subject or discipline

Grade B 60-69.9% Very good performance – pass

- Articulates a very good understanding and interpretation of the relevant information, key theories and concepts presented by the assessment
- Demonstrates a very good knowledge of appropriate reading through references to appropriate scholarly sources
- Shows very good problem solving, creativity, originality, critical thinking, analysis and evaluation
- Presents very good discussion in a logical, connected and progressing structure, and valid conclusions
- Displays a very good ability to appraise evidence and synthesise concepts, knowledge and theory
- Shows very good reflexive awareness of value judgements and assumptions embedded in the subject or discipline

Grade C 50-59.9% Good performance – pass

- Articulates a good understanding and interpretation of the relevant information, key theories and concepts presented by the assessment
- Demonstrates good knowledge of appropriate reading through some references to appropriate scholarly sources
- Shows good problem solving, creativity, originality, critical thinking, analysis and evaluation
- Presents a good discussion in a logical, connected and progressing structure, and valid conclusions
- Displays a good ability to appraise evidence and synthesise concepts, knowledge and theory
- Shows a good reflexive awareness of value judgements and assumptions embedded in the subject or discipline

Grade D 40-49.9% Satisfactory Performance – pass

- Articulates a satisfactory understanding and interpretation of the relevant information, key theories and concepts presented by the assessment
- Demonstrates satisfactory knowledge of appropriate reading through some references to appropriate scholarly sources
- Shows satisfactory problem solving, creativity, originality, critical thinking, analysis and evaluation
- Presents a satisfactory discussion in a logical, connected and progressing structure, and valid conclusions
- Displays a satisfactory ability to appraise evidence and synthesise concepts, knowledge and theory
- Shows satisfactory reflexive awareness of value judgements and assumptions embedded in the subject or discipline

Grade E 30-39.9% Unsatisfactory performance – fail

- Articulates partial understanding and interpretation of the relevant information, key theories and concepts presented by the assessment
- Demonstrates partial knowledge of appropriate reading through limited references to appropriate scholarly sources
- Shows insufficient problem solving, creativity, originality, critical thinking, analysis and evaluation
- Presents limited discussion of logical, connected and progressing structure with incomplete conclusions
- Displays a limited ability to appraise evidence and synthesise concepts, knowledge and theory
- Shows insufficient reflexive awareness of value judgements and assumptions embedded in the subject or discipline

Grade F 0-29.9% Unsatisfactory performance - fail

- Articulates little or no understanding and interpretation of the relevant information, key theories and concepts presented by the assessment
- Demonstrates little or no knowledge of appropriate reading or references to appropriate scholarly sources
- Shows ineffective or no problem solving, creativity, originality, critical thinking, analysis and evaluation

- Presents ineffective or no discussion of logical, connected and progressing structure with incomplete conclusions
- Displays little or no ability to appraise evidence and synthesise concepts, knowledge and theory
- Shows little or no reflexive awareness of value judgements and assumptions embedded in the subject or discipline

POSTGRADUATE GENERAL MARKING CRITERIA BY GRADE AND LEVEL

Approved by the University Senate on 30 June 2021

Applicable to all new and existing modules being delivered from September 2021 onwards

Grade A* 80% and above Outstanding performance, exceptionally able – pass

- Articulates an outstanding critical understanding and interpretation of the relevant information, principal theories, concepts and principles presented by the assessment
- Articulates an outstanding critical understanding that integrates most, if not all, of the main areas of the specialist discipline
- Demonstrates outstanding, extensive, detailed and critical knowledge, informed by current discipline developments
- Displays an outstanding ability to critically appraise scholarship and evidence, and synthesise concepts, knowledge and theory
- Applies a range of specialist and/or professional skills, techniques or practices aligned with the discipline
- Demonstrates an outstanding ability to communicate knowledge (written, verbal, practical, visual)
- Demonstrates an outstanding critical awareness of the scope and application of disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship
- Shows an outstanding reflexive awareness of value judgements and assumptions embodied in the subject
- Demonstrates outstanding originality, creativity or innovation in the application of knowledge and / or practice
- Displays outstanding potential to undertake research or be a leading practitioner within a specialist area

Grade A 70-79.9% Very good performance – pass

- Articulates a very good critical understanding and interpretation of the relevant information, principal theories, concepts and principles presented by the assessment
- Articulates a very good critical understanding that integrates most of the main areas of the specialist discipline
- Demonstrates very good, extensive, detailed and critical knowledge, informed by current discipline developments
- Displays a very good ability to critically appraise scholarship and evidence, and synthesise concepts, knowledge and theory
- Applies a range of specialist and/or professional skills, techniques or practices aligned with the discipline
- Demonstrates a very good ability to communicate knowledge (written, verbal, practical, visual)
- Demonstrates a very good critical awareness of the scope and application of disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship
- Shows a very good reflexive awareness of value judgements and assumptions embodied in the subject
- Demonstrates very good originality, creativity or innovation in the application of knowledge and / or practice

- Displays very good potential to undertake research or be a leading practitioner within a specialist area

Grade B 60-69.9% Good performance – pass

- Articulates a good critical understanding and interpretation of the relevant information, principal theories, concepts and principles presented by the assessment
- Articulates a good critical understanding that integrates some of the main areas of the specialist discipline
- Demonstrates good breadth, detailed and critical knowledge, informed by current discipline developments
- Displays good ability to critically appraise scholarship and evidence, and synthesise concepts, knowledge and theory
- Applies a range of specialist and/or professional skills, techniques or practices aligned with the discipline
- Demonstrates a good ability to communicate knowledge (written, verbal, practical, visual)
- Demonstrates a good critical awareness of the scope and application of disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship
- Shows a good reflexive awareness of value judgements and assumptions embodied in the subject
- Demonstrates good originality, creativity or innovation in the application of knowledge and / or practice
- Displays good potential to undertake research or be a leading practitioner within a specialist area

Grade C 50-59.9% - Fair performance – pass

- Articulates a fair critical understanding and interpretation of the relevant information, principal theories, concepts and principles presented by the assessment
- Articulates a fair, critical understanding that integrates a few of the main areas of the specialist discipline
- Demonstrates a fair breadth, detailed and critical knowledge, informed by current discipline developments
- Displays a fair ability to critically appraise scholarship and evidence, and synthesise concepts, knowledge and theory
- Applies a range of specialist and/or professional skills, techniques or practices aligned with the discipline
- Demonstrates a fair ability to communicate knowledge (written, verbal, practical, visual)
- Demonstrates a fair critical awareness of the scope and application of disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship
- Shows a fair reflexive awareness of value judgements and assumptions embodied in the subject
- Demonstrates fair originality, creativity or innovation in the application of knowledge and / or practice
- Displays fair potential to undertake research or be a leading practitioner within a specialist area
- Submission/assessment meets the standards of SCQF Level 11

Grade D 40-49.9% Unsatisfactory performance – fail

- Partial knowledge, understanding and interpretation of the relevant information, principal theories, concepts and current discipline developments
- Partial understanding of the breadth and depth of the discipline
- Limited ability to critically appraise scholarship and evidence, and synthesise concepts, knowledge and theory
- Insufficient application of specialist and/or professional skills, techniques or practices aligned with the discipline
- Demonstrates insufficient ability to communicate knowledge (written, verbal, practical, visual)
- Demonstrates a limited critical awareness of the scope and application of disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship
- Shows insufficient reflexive awareness of value judgements and assumptions embodied in the subject
- Partial demonstration of originality, creativity or innovation in the application of knowledge and / or practice
- Displays limited potential to undertake research or be a leading practitioner within a specialist area
- Submission/assessment does not meet the standards of SCQF Level 11

Grade E 0-39.9% Unsatisfactory performance - fail

- Little or no understanding and interpretation of the relevant information, principal theories, concepts and current discipline developments
- Little or no understanding of the breadth and depth of the discipline
- Inaccurate appraisal of scholarship and evidence, and synthesise concepts, knowledge and theory
- Ineffective application of specialist and/or professional skills, techniques or practices aligned with the discipline
- Ineffective communication of knowledge (written, verbal, practical, visual)
- Demonstrates little or no critical awareness of the scope and application of disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship
- Consistent lack of reflexive awareness of value judgements and assumptions embodied in the subject
- Little or no demonstration of originality, creativity or innovation in the application of knowledge and / or practice
- Displays little or no potential to undertake research or be a leading practitioner within a specialist area
- Submission/assessment does not meet the standards of SCQF Level 11

FEES AND EXPENSES

1. Scale of fees

For information on the current fee structure, please contact the [Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement](#).

2. Payment Procedures

All External Examiners require to be paid through the University payroll. Deductions are made from payments in accordance with PAYE regulations.

3. Travel and Subsistence

Travelling expenses incurred in the performance of examining duties are refundable.

Mode of transport to the campus

QMU encourages sustainable travel wherever possible. Musselburgh train station is directly outside the University building (under five minutes on foot). The University is also well served by local buses. Public transport is the preferred mode of travel, and the University will pay second class fares for all journeys. The University does not authorise first class travel, unless there are very exceptional circumstances, which would need to be agreed in advance with the Deputy Principal. The rate for External Examiners who are not in a position to use public transport is 40p per mile, up to the value of the second class fare.

If it is not possible to use public transport, the full mileage rate (including claims above the value of the second class fare may exceptionally be approved. This needs to be agreed in advance with the relevant budget holder. For further details, please contact the [Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement](#).

Timescale for submission of expenses

All expenses claims must be submitted within three months of the work being completed. Claims submitted after this date will not be accepted.

Subsistence rates

The maximum daily subsistence rate depends on the length of period of absence from home. For periods of absence between 4 and 8 hours (covering at least one normal meal time) the maximum rate is £15. For periods of absence of longer than 8 hours (covering at least two normal meal times), the maximum rate is £30. Receipts must be provided for all expenditure. You are asked to note that the University does not authorise expenses claims in respect of alcoholic drinks for any of its employees. This includes External Examiners, who are treated as temporary employees for the duration of their contract. Claims for Travelling and Subsistence should be submitted on the External Claimants - Claim for Travelling and Subsistence Form.

