Academic Operations
Registry and Academic Support Directorate

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Assessment Procedures – Spring and Autumn 2021

Note: the use of the term ‘School’ has not been changed pending confirmation of Academic Operations structure. References to Schools should therefore be understood as Academic Operations colleagues assigned to work on behalf of the School.

The following guidelines are designed to assist Schools and the Academic Operations division of Registry and Academic Support (RAS) in ensuring the effective operation of undergraduate and postgraduate assessment processes for spring and autumn 2021.

Please read these guidelines carefully: they provide a step-by-step guide to core processes.

The guidelines should be read in conjunction with Regulation 3 (New) – Modular First Degrees (https://www.hw.ac.uk/documents/ordinances.pdf) and the appropriate sections of the taught postgraduate regulations (https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/academic-registry/quality/qa/exam-guidelines.htm).

Step by step guides for the SAS/Banner sub-processes can be found here:

- Note that you may have to log in using your Heriot-Watt username and password.

If you have any queries, please contact:

Amanda Lyness (a.lyness@hw.ac.uk)  Helen Crosby-Knox (h.a.crosby-knox@hw.ac.uk)

1. The Course Assessment Board and the Progression Board

The following section outlines the responsibilities of the Course Assessment Board and the Progression Board.

1.1. Use of Grade E (undergraduate students)

This section provides guidance on the use of Grade E.

1.1.1. Reg 3, (16.2, 16.3) states that Grade E is the minimum requirement for the award of credit points, as determined by the Course Assessment Board, but insufficient to continue study in that subject.

1.1.2. Re-assessment decisions for Grade E should be based on whether the Course is a pre-requisite or not: a Grade E in continuing courses requires re-assessment, a Grade E in non-continuing courses does not (unless specifically required e.g., for exemptions from professional examinations or in the case of subjects which do not continue to the next stage but are nevertheless core to the course in question).

1.1.3. The Course Assessment Board has the discretion to determine the mapping of marks onto Grade E. Specific marks should not be pre-determined for the award of Grade E,
since it is the function of the Course Assessment Board to decide upon the use of Grade E, based on the context of the assessment in question.

1.1.4. Grade E is particularly useful in providing credits for non-continuing courses and, thereby, enabling students to proceed with the requisite credit points and without being required to take a re-assessment in a non-continuing course.

1.1.5. Where students are re-assessed in a course that they originally obtained credit for during the current Academic Session, SAS will automatically remove credits from the first assessment opportunity upon recording the result for the second assessment opportunity.

1.1.6. Where students are re-assessed in a course that they originally obtained credit for during the previous Academic Session, manual intervention is required to ensure that the student is not awarded double credits. Colleagues should refer to the step-by-step guides linked to, above.

1.2. Postgraduate Grades

1.2.1. Paragraph 16 of the taught postgraduate Regulations state the following with regard to grades:
   16.1 "To pass a course a minimum of Grade D is required.
   16.2 To progress to Masters level a minimum of Grade C is normally required in all qualifying courses.
   16.3 To gain credit points for a course a minimum of Grade E is required.
   16.4 Criteria for pass, progression and credit points shall be as specified in the structures for each programme. The University’s Studies Committee may approve criteria above the minimum standards specified in paragraphs 16.1-16.3."

1.2.2. The Course Assessment Board has the discretion to determine the mapping of marks onto grades. Specific marks have not been prescribed for grades, since it is the function of the Course Assessment Board to decide upon the allocation of grades, based on the context of the assessment in question.

1.2.3. Schools must ensure that a mark and grade has been entered on SAS for each course on which a student is registered.

1.2.4. Where students are re-assessed in a course that they originally obtained credit for during the current Academic Session, SAS will automatically remove credits from the first assessment opportunity upon recording the result for the second assessment opportunity.

Where students are re-assessed in a course that they originally obtained credit for during the previous Academic Session, manual intervention is required to ensure that the student is not awarded double credits. Colleagues should refer to the step-by-step guides linked to, above.

1.3. The Course Assessment Board

1.3.1 The Course Assessment Board considers the results of the course assessment and returns a decision in the form of a grade in the range of A-F for each student. Note: “P” (passed) is not permitted as an alternative to the HAPS grades, either for continuing students or for graduating students. A grade in the range of A-E should be selected if credits are to be awarded.

1.3.2 Where decisions on degree classification are based on marks then Schools should adopt a formal system to map the raw mark that appears on the script to the final mark that is used for decisions.
1.3.3 The Course Assessment Board meets after the appropriate diet of examinations or after the assessment has been completed.

1.3.4 The Course Assessment Board prepares a concise report for consideration by the Progression Board, which should include brief statements on:
- The assessment results
- The profile of grades
- Unusual course results (see guidance at 1.4 below)
- A commentary on student performance, particularly failure rates
- Remedial action for current and future students where performance has been less than expected
- A commentary on content, teaching and assessment methods.

1.4. Guidance for Course Assessment Boards: Unusual Results

1.4.1 Exam Boards should consider all exam results to ensure that all students are treated fairly and should ensure that consistent standards are being used when making academic judgements. As part of this process Exam Boards should consider in detail unusual results.

1.4.2 Following considerable discussion across the University it has been agreed that where the %E+F grades for a course exceeds a given threshold or if the %A+B is less than a given threshold then the results should be considered further.

The threshold for each year of study is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Maximum %E+F</th>
<th>Minimum %A+B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4.3 Schools may also wish to consider cases where there is a high level of absenteeism, where there is excessive bunching of results (low standard deviation), a high average or other features of the results which cause concern to the Exam Board.

1.4.4 Action by the Exam Board

1. For each Course that is considered by the Exam Board to have unusual results and for all Courses where the thresholds for action have been crossed the Board should decide:
   i. Whether or not any adjustment of the grades or marks is appropriate
   ii. The remedial action to be taken. Such as
      a. Provide remedial teaching or student support prior to re-sit examinations
      b. Agree changes to the syllabus or teaching methods for subsequent years
      c. Refer students to the Academic Skills Service (within the Careers Advisory Service) or other Central services for additional support

2. The decision (for each Course) should be recorded in the minutes of the Exam Board

1.4.5 Action by the Course Leader prior to the Exam Board

1. In anticipation of the discussion that will take place at the Exam Board, Course Leaders should consider before the Exam Board meeting whether or not the course results are unusual.
2. If, upon further reflection, the Course Leader decides that there should be an adjustment of the grades (or marks) then this adjustment should be made and should be recorded on the Course Report form.

3. Where the results submitted to the Board are unusual then the Course Leader should suggest the nature of any remedial action in order not to delay the decisions of the Board

1.5. The Progression/Award Board

Consideration of Results at Board Meetings

1.5.1. Assessment results considered by the Progression Board should be presented on the ARR (GS060) in the form of both marks and grades, in accordance with the requirements of HAPS. Results ratified on the basis of marks only, whereby grades are applied after the Board at the point of entering data onto SAS and producing the ARR for Academic Operations, are not valid (raised repeatedly by Deans and their observers at Progression Boards).

Modifications to Grades

1.5.2. HAPS does not permit any adjustment of marks, except where a mark is being used to make a judgement such as the degree classification (see 1.3.2 above): if the Board accepts that circumstances require a modification to results, the grades boundaries should be adjusted and not the original marks (raised repeatedly by Deans and their observers at Progression Boards).

1.5.3. The Progression Board confirms the grades determined by the Course Assessment Board; only in exceptional circumstances can these grades be adjusted and the justification for any modifications must be recorded in the minutes/formal record of the meeting.

A standard template for Progression Board minutes is available at: https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/academic-registry/quality/qa/exam-guidelines.htm, document 16a.

1.5.4. Amendments to grades of service courses (ie courses which are taught/owned by another School) should be made only in exceptional circumstances by the Progression Board of the parent School and require approval from the School offering the service Course in question.

Discretionary Award of Credits

1.5.5. The use of the discretionary award of credits is explained in the paper, Guidelines on the Use of the Discretionary Award of Credits (issued with this circulation).

Decisions on Progress, Re-assessment and Repeat

1.5.6. The Progression Board returns a decision on progress or award for each student. See Section 3, below and Document 2: Guidelines on Decisions and Decision Codes Spring/Autumn for details.

1.5.7. Undergraduate students
   (a) have one re-assessment opportunity, which must be taken at the Autumn diet, in the case of both continuing and non-continuing courses. There are no re-assessment opportunities for final stage courses.
   (b) The Progression Board can allow a student to be re-assessed in a non-final stage qualifying course, for credit purposes only. The mark gained at the first attempt shall contribute to the degree (see Reg. 3. 15.4).
   (c) In the case of extenuating circumstances, the Progression Board may permit a further two assessment opportunities; a fifth opportunity requires approval by the University’s Studies Committee. Justification for additional opportunities must be recorded in the minutes/formal record of the meeting.
1.5.8. **Postgraduate students**

(a) are automatically entitled to one re-assessment in a maximum of three taught courses (resit opportunities in more than 3 taught courses and/or in the dissertation/project are at the discretion of the Progression Boards). Schools must specify their re-assessment diet when they return their ARRs to Academic Operations.

(b) In the case of extenuating circumstances, the Progression Board may permit a further one assessment opportunity; a fourth opportunity requires approval by the University’s Studies Committee. Justification for additional opportunities must be recorded in the minutes/formal record of the meeting.

1.5.9. After a second, unsuccessful assessment attempt, the Progression Board has the authority to allow a student to repeat a course or to take an alternative course. Repeat or taking an alternative course requires full attendance and provides: **UG** - two further assessment opportunities (including one re-assessment); **PGT** - at least one further assessment opportunity (or two, including re-assessment if programme regulations permit). Justification for repeat must be recorded in the minutes/formal record of the meeting. **Full course fees must be paid** unless there are extenuating circumstances.

### 2. Marks and Grades

Please refer to the SAS/Banner step-by-step sub-processes for guidance on Marks and Grades and Academic History:


### 3. Decisions and Decision Codes

Please refer to Document 2: Decisions and Decision Codes – Spring/Autumn

3.1 Re-assessments for all courses by **undergraduate students**, including non-continuing courses, should be taken in the autumn diet.

3.2 After the conclusion of the taught component of a **postgraduate** programme, the spring Progression Board should select either an award decision or a progression/re-assessment decision. After the conclusion of the dissertation/project component, the autumn Progression Board should select an award decision.

3.3 Schools must ensure that at least one individual in attendance at the Progression Board is fully conversant with the principles of HAPS and the range of decision codes. A Dean of the University, Associate Dean or Deans’ Representative should also be in attendance. In addition, Schools can seek advice from Academic Operations before or after the Progression Board.

3.4 For the processing of award and progression decisions, SAS guidance documents are available: to the step-by-step guides linked to, above.

Please note that completion (74), non-graduating (00) and exit (50, 51) decisions should be entered as an 'award' code in FSS.

3.5 **IMPORTANT NOTE: AWARD DECISIONS NOT CONSISTENT WITH PROGRAMME OF STUDY**

If a code is entered in Faculty Self Service (FSS) or in SHADEGR (Degree and Other Formal Awards) for an award that is different to the programme that a student is enrolled on, the programme in SHADEGR Curricula Tab must be changed to the programme code relevant to the award eg:
• if a student is enrolled on MA in Management with Marketing (C1DM-BMM) but is awarded a BA in Management ordinary degree (code 32), the programme code must be changed to CI2M-ZZZ

• if a student is enrolled on MSc in Quantity Surveying (D3Q7-QSU) but is awarded the PG Diploma (code 45), the programme code must be changed to D3Q5-QSU.

This applies to all instances where normally a lower is award is recommended; MA to BA, MPhys to BSc, MChem to BSc, MEng to BEng, MSc to PG Dip/Cert, BSc to Cert/Dip Higher Education etc.

Please follow SAS Sub Process P0350, steps 1-4 and 8-9.

**Note:** If the action detailed above is not carried out, students will be informed of the incorrect award title when online results are released. Automated detection of this will be included in the error/warnings on the School Error Report (GS065).

### 4. Assessment Results Report (ARR - GS060) and School Error Reports (SER GS065)

4.1 After the meetings of the Progression Boards, a copy of the ARR (GS060), signed off by the Chair of the Board and the External Examiner where appropriate, must be returned to Academic Operations by the deadline dates shown below (section 5).

4.2 The ARR must contain grades for all courses and a decision on progress/award for all students, including exchange and other non-graduating students.

4.3 For each ARR, Schools must produce a new School Error Report (GS065). The SER can be easily run in OBI Publisher and must use the same parameters as the ARR (GS060).

4.4 Schools should note that existing checking mechanisms must still be carried out however the SER will detect automatic errors/warnings. **The SER must not be returned with the ARR if errors have not been resolved unless authorisation has been provided.**

4.5 For the purpose of checking award recommendations prior to graduations, Schools should not return ARRs to Academic Operations for 'All codes' but should return ‘All award codes’ separately to 'All progression codes'. The *preference for all ARRs is to be run by programme and year of study.*

### 5. Deadlines for Graduating Students

5.1 Submission of Assessment Results Reports (GS060) and School Error Reports (GS065) to Academic Operations

Academic Operations must receive the signed off ARR and SER by:

**Spring Diet Examinations**
- 4 June 2021 all graduating UG/PGT students *(Summer graduations)*

**Autumn Diet Examinations**
- 15 October 2021 all graduating UG/PGT students *(Winter graduations)*

5.2 Release of Online Results *(for students graduating in Summer and Winter)*

Academic Operations will release all final results online to graduating students by:

**Spring Diet Examinations**
- 18 June 2021 all graduating UG/PGT students *(Summer graduations)*

**Autumn Diet Examinations**
- 22 October 2021 all graduating UG/PGT students *(Winter graduations)*
Please note that Academic Operations releases results online within the specified deadlines and not necessarily on the day that ARRs/SERs are submitted. Therefore, although ARRs/SERs may be submitted earlier than the deadline dates, the results may not be released until that date.

6. Deadlines for Continuing Students

6.1 Submission of Assessment Results Reports and School Error Reports to Academic Operations

Academic Operations must receive the signed off ARR and SER by:

**Spring Diet Examinations**
- 25 June 2021 all continuing UG/PGT students
  
  *(for postgraduate students ‘continuing’ refers primarily to MSc students who are proceeding to the dissertation/project)*

**Autumn Diet Examinations**
- 20 August 2021 all continuing UG students
- 27 August 2021 all continuing PGT students

6.2 Release of Online Results

Academic Operations will release all final results online to continuing students by the following deadlines:

**Spring Diet Examinations**
- 2 July 2021 all continuing UG/PGT students

**Autumn Diet Examinations**
- 27 August 2021 all continuing UG students
- 3 September 2021 all continuing PGT students

Please note that Academic Operations releases results online within the specified deadlines and not necessarily on the day that ARRs/SERs are submitted. Therefore, although ARRs/SERs may be submitted earlier than the deadline dates, the results may not be released until that date.

7. Assessment Results Released Online

7.1 The online results page contains details of courses taken, grades and credits awarded and a decision (with explanation) on progression or award. Please see Section 8.1 for notes on the format of assessment marks and grades.

  *Note: the online results page will also contain the percentage mark for each course*

7.2 All results will be released online (as authorised by Schools on the School Error Reports).

7.3 The online results page will contain a link to information on graduation, re-assessments and enrolment.

8. Updating SAS; Producing ARR Reports (GS060); Producing SER (GS065) Reports

8.1 Format of Assessment Marks and Grades on SAS

SAS will only accept marks and grades in the following format *(also see 8.7 below).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A percentage mark in the range 0 – 100 and a grade in the range of A-F</td>
<td>mark/grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent from the entire Course assessment</td>
<td>ABS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical certificate for absence/incomplete assessment</td>
<td>MC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synoptic Course in absence of provisional mark and/or grade</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exemption from assessment in the subject</td>
<td>EX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade made invalid due to Discipline Committee (Academic Operations to enter)</td>
<td>IG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade made where alleged misconduct has been identified pending outcome</td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.2 Incorrect Course Registrations

In the case of students whose records display incorrect course registrations, SAS Users in Schools should ‘drop delete’ the courses. Please refer to SAS sub-process “General Student P0186 Add and change a student's course or section” which is available on the web and attached as Appendix 4 to Document 1: "SAS-Undergraduate and Postgraduate Exam Procedures, Spring/Autumn”.

8.3 Permitted Input to Resit Column

8.3.1 Automatic Updates (applying to both the direct input and upload methods)
- Grades A-D will automatically populate “N” in the resit column
- Grade F will automatically populate “Y” in the resit column
- Grade E will automatically populate “Y” in the resit column

8.3.2 For Grade E, “Y” should be overwritten with “N” in the resit column if a resit is not required.

8.3.3 For Grade D, “N” should be overwritten with “Y” in the resit column if a resit is required.

8.3.4 For Grades E and F, ABS or MC, “X” no further assessment opportunities available can be overwritten by “Y” if the Progression Board has agreed that the student in question should be given additional assessment opportunities.

8.4 Invalid Grade

If the Discipline Committee has decided that a student’s results must be made null and void, Sub Process P0305: Change Final Grades after rolled to AH for Discipline cases should be followed and can be found here:


(Academic Operations is responsible for amending grades to IG following decisions of the University’s Discipline Committee)

8.5 Investigation Pending

In cases where an alleged misconduct has been identified and prior to any penalty being imposed Schools should enter the mark as 0 and the grade as IP. Investigation Pending as a result of alleged examination irregularity and work should not be marked until the outcome of investigation/disciplinary action has been agreed. Schools will be able to identify cases of alleged misconduct as answer books will be marked ‘IP’ by invigilators and an incident report form will have been returned to the School. (not applicable for 2020/21 take home exams). Once the outcome is known SAS Sub Process P0305 should be followed (see link above)

8.6 Resit Flags

If there is an amendment to a course grade after it has rolled to AH, users need to consider the resit flag. The resit flag will not be automatically updated and this will need to be updated manually.

8.7 Useful Notes and Reminders

8.7.1 Prior to return of the signed ARR/SER, Schools should ensure that the report contains the following information and that errors/warnings have been actioned or corrected:
- Decision code for each student (either progression or award), using the specified codes
- Grades for all courses, including those taken in other Schools (no blank spaces should be left).
8.7.2 The mark of '0' (zero) and Grade F should not be used to denote absence from the entire course assessment; use “ABS” in both columns (unless MC is appropriate).

8.7.3 “ABS” should not be used if a student has only partially completed the assessment; Grade F must be used in all cases of partial completion, unless there are medical circumstances, where MC would be used.

8.7.4 There should be no instances of NS - grades for all courses which are synoptically linked must be entered (ie NOT just the first in the chain).

8.7.5 Incorrect course registrations should be corrected prior to the ARR being run. NR should not be used as a mark or grade for incorrect course registrations, see 8.2 above.

8.7.6 Re-assessment decision for Grade D (PG) and Grade E - the default “Y” should be overwritten with “N” if no resit is required.

8.7.7 “P” (passed) should not be used as a grade: a grade in the range of A-E should be selected. If the student is exiting with an award, DC can be used if the Board does not have enough information (eg because of medical circumstances) to select a grade in the range of A-E but wishes credit points to be awarded.

8.7.8 All non-numerical results entered in the marks column on SAS will be automatically replicated in the grades column.

8.7.9 Where APL credits are awarded “EX” should be entered for both the mark and grade.

8.7.10 Discretionary credits: the original mark should be retained; DC should be entered in the grade field, overwriting the original Grade F. Refer to Document 3: Guidelines on Discretionary Award of Credits.

8.7.11 If a student with a Medical Certificate is eligible for an award, but does not have the requisite credit points, the Board can award the requisite credit points by two means. In such cases, MC should not be entered in the Grade field since MC does not carry any credits, rather a grade (A-E) or “DC” (see Document 3: Guidelines on Discretionary Award of Credits and Document 7: Guidelines on Medical Certificates under the HAP system.
