Changes to Assessment: Policy on Approvals and School Decisions

In accordance with the University’s adapted approvals procedures, Schools are able to adapt their assessment methods for 2020/21 without going through their own internal full approval process and without updating assessment information on PAMS (i.e., where these are temporary changes for 2020/21). Schools may set their own internal approvals for assessment changes in 2020/21, including via any specified School committees/groups.

There is no change to the current process in that all changes to assessment:

- are managed and approved at School level in accordance with the standard approval procedures, the Academic Management Structures and the University’s Codes of Practice;
- are ultimately the responsibility of the Head of School, delegated to the Director of Learning and Teaching and overseen by the School Learning and Teaching Committee, and maybe delegated further to the Director of Academic Quality and the School Studies Committee;
- do not require approval by the University Studies Committee;
- are part of the roles of Course Leaders/Senior Course Leaders, Programme Directors of Studies/Senior Programme Directors of Studies and remits of Programme Boards of Studies and Global Course Teams;
- are undertaken by Course Leaders in consultation with all stakeholders as appropriate, such as the entire Global Course Teams and Programme Directors of Studies;
- should meet any PSRB and in-country accreditation requirements as appropriate.

Additionally, the Learning and Teaching Academic Year 2020/21 Group (LTAYG) agreed that changes to assessment changes should be communicated to External Examiners and PSRBs.

If a Course Team wishes to make permanent or to continue for a further limited period (e.g., for 2021/22) any changes to assessment made temporarily for 2020/21, then the standard, School-based approval process must be followed. Assessment information provided in PAMS and in other sources (such as student handbooks) must be updated.

Changes to Assessment: Guidance from the Learning and Teaching Academy

The Learning and Teaching Academy has provided through Responsive Blended Learning (RBL), associated resources, training and sessions, a wide range of support for Schools in planning for and designing assessment in 2020/21. The LTA has also developed a Semester 2 Checklist, which contains useful information on co-ordinating and clearly communicating coursework and assessments. Additionally, there is a suite of Watt Works Quick Guides on Assessment and Feedback.

Changes to Assessment: Guidance on Communicating to Students

If assessment has been changed from the official record on PAMS, this should be communicated to students and should be updated on Vision pages and other key information provided to students. Additionally, the three Student Representative Bodies have recommended that the following guidance on assessment is provided to students:

- clarification on how assessments relate to learning outcomes;
- inclusion of descriptive criteria or a rubric each assessment;
- co-ordination of deadlines for assessments across the course and wider programme to ensure that they are reasonably spread out and students are not being over-assessed;
- clarification on submission methods and signposting to students of guidance on how to use these tools;
- promotion of academic integrity, through resources and integration into the curriculum, and availability of resources on how to properly use referencing;
- information and help on understanding assessment expectations, e.g., through providing exemplars or class discussion of marking criteria.
- information on feedback (date, type and method of availability) and how to engage with feedback to help with subsequent assessments.