In 2020/21, RBL has encouraged a much greater diversity of assessment than traditional face-to-face formats and additional to the Take-Home Exams format introduced as part of the emergency response to COVID in 2019/20. This diversity, including a blurring between take-home exams and coursework assessments, eg assignments scheduled for completion over a three-day period or coursework deadlines set in the weeks of the exam diet, has led to a lack of clarity over what is permitted and when in assessment.

### Assessment Types in 2020/21: Existing Regulations and Policies

The University's policies and Regulations for taught programmes (eg Reg 3, Reg 9, Reg 18, Reg 38, Reg 44, Reg 48/48A, Reg 51, Reg 53) do not prohibit diversity in form and timing, and the constraints are only as follows:

- All programmes of study shall contain a balance of written exams and other forms of assessment, unless specifically approved by the University Studies Committee;
- Exams shall be of two or three hours in duration, unless approved by the Academic Registrar;
- Written exams shall be held in a scheduled diet of exams;
- All courses shall provide opportunities for formative assessment;
- Assessments contributing to the overall final mark/grade shall assess the specified learning outcomes;
- The forms of assessment and weighting shall be specified in the Course Descriptor (this has been waived for 2020/21);

Therefore, there is scope for Schools to offer a much more diverse array of assessment through RBL without being constrained by institutional regulations or policies. For example, coursework assignments can be completed in a scheduled diet of exams; there is no restriction that stipulates that only coursework which is a substitute for a face-to-face exam can be included in the exam diet.

### Assessment Types in 2020/21: Policy Definitions

#### Policy Statement on Assessment Types in 2020/21

For the purposes of clarity for students and for staff involved in the design and management of assessment, in 2020/21 assessment should be differentiated as one of two types: Coursework or Take-Home Exam. This terminology should be used consistently in all staff and student communications.

In 2020/21, all examinations are being run as Take-Home Exams (unless there are specific requirements from PSRBs or accreditation authorities), as approved by the Senate Committee for Interim Business and Effectiveness (SCIBE). The parameters for Take-Home Exams have likewise already been approved by SCIBE as follows:

- A take-home exam is an exam taken remotely and alone by students in their own space (eg at home), by downloading the paper and uploading answers via Vision, the University’s VLE;
- Each exam is taken under “open book” conditions, meaning that students have access to notes, course material, and the internet to consult during the exam;
- The majority of take-home exams are open for 24-hours (although the exam will require the normal 2 or 3 hours of effort) between the exam paper being made available via Vision, and the deadline for submitting a completed exam script;
- A small number of exams will have a much shorter time period, eg 2 hours to complete the answer and then 30 minutes for uploading; these are known as Timed Take-Home Exams;
- Take-Home Exams contribute to the final mark/grade for a course and are held in the scheduled diet of examinations and are timetabled centrally by Registry and Academic Support.

In 2020/21, coursework comprises assignments set during or at the end of a course to assess one or more of the learning outcomes. Coursework includes, but is not limited to, the following:
• written assignment, including essay
• report
• dissertation (an extended piece of written work, often the write-up of a final-year project)
• portfolio (a collection of work that relates to a given topic or theme, which has been produced over a period of time)
• project output (output from project work, often of a practical nature, other than a dissertation or written report),
• set exercise (questions or tasks designed to assess how knowledge is applied, and analytical, problem-solving or evaluative skills).
• class tests (written or computer-based) of knowledge or interpretation that are not carried out under take-home exam conditions.

Assessment Types in 2020/21: Coursework and Tests

In 2020/21, coursework assignments can be completed in a scheduled diet of exams (weeks 13 + 14); this includes all types of coursework and is not restricted to coursework which is a substitute for a face-to-face exam (existing Regulation). In this instance, coursework will be arranged and managed exclusively by the School and not by Registry and Academic Support.

In 2020/21, coursework may be offered in a way that is very similar to a take-home exam, eg a class test/web test to be completed in a specific period of time and to be carried out using the University’s VLE. If any such tests (which are not take-home exams*) involve large group assessment being delivered via the VLE, Information Services requires advance notification to ensure an appropriate capacity is in place.

*If a test of any sort is being held in the scheduled diet of exams during 2020/21, for the purposes of clarity, this should be arranged as a centrally timetabled take-home exam.

Assessment Types in 2020/21: Guidance on Communicating Assessment Types to Students

As is standard practice, Schools should clearly communicate all assessment types to students (eg via the Programme Handbook or Course Descriptors or overviews on Vision), but should pay particular attention to changed arrangements for 2020/21 which are different from the norm.

For example, students would reasonably expect the exam diet to be kept free of coursework assignment deadlines; however, with fewer exams than previously and more coursework-type assessments, it is more practical for Schools to use the full semester (including assessment weeks/exam diet) for spacing out assessment deadlines. However, Schools should take steps to ensure that any coursework assignments due for completion in an exam diet are scheduled in such a way as to minimise clashing and bunching of assessment deadlines (see separate summary on Assessment Scheduling in 2020/21).