

ACADEMIC QUALITY



Learning and Teaching Policy

Making Changes to Assessment

Changes to Assessment: Policy on Approvals and School Decisions

The University introduced adapted approvals procedures for 2020/21 and 2021/22 due to the impact of the pandemic. Under these adapted processes, Schools were able to change their assessment methods for 2020/21 and 2021/22 without going through their own internal full approval process and without updating assessment information on the Global Curriculum Management (GCM) (ie where these were temporary changes due to the pandemic).

This temporary arrangement ended in August 2022, and from September 2022, Schools were required to re-establish their formal, internal process of approving assessment changes in accordance with the University's [Academic Management Structures](#) (via the School Studies Committee) and then updating assessment information on GCM for 2022/23. This process was agreed by the L+T Academic Year Group (now the Learning and Teaching Academic Operations Committee) at its meeting on 9 February 2022.

As a consequence of changes to the Structure of the Academic Year (eg 2-week assessment diet in April) and the *Transforming Assessment* Initiative, further changes to assessment approaches were made during 2022/23 and 2023/24 and will continue in 2024/25 as Schools continue to engage in a major review and redesign, including addressing overassessment and adopting a programme-level approach to assessment. All such changes likewise have to be approved internally by Schools and updated on GCM.

The University's process for managing changes to assessment requires that all changes to assessment:

- a) are managed and approved at School level in accordance with the [standard approval procedures](#), the responsibilities of those with leadership roles in Schools (as per the [Global Academic Management Structures](#) and [Assessment: School Roles and Responsibilities](#)) and the University's [Codes of Practice](#);
- b) are aligned with the University's [Regulations](#) and [Policies on Assessment](#), providing a balanced approach and including formative assessment/formative feedback;
- c) are ultimately the responsibility of the School's Executive Dean, delegated to the Director of Learning and Teaching (to be known as the Associate Executive Dean (Education and Student Life) from 2024/25) and overseen by the School Learning and Teaching Committee;
- d) are, from the approval perspective, the responsibility of Director of Academic Quality (to be known as the Associate Executive Dean (Academic Quality) from 2024/25), as Chair of the School Studies Committee, and are approved by the School Studies Committee;
- e) do not require approval by the University Studies Committee;
- f) are part of the roles of Course Leaders/Global Course Leaders, Programme Directors/Global Programme Directors of Studies, Heads of Discipline/Department and remits of Programme Boards of Studies and Global Course Teams;
- g) are undertaken by Course Leaders in consultation with all stakeholders as appropriate, such as the entire Global Course Team and Programme Directors;
- h) should meet any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) and in-country accreditation requirements as appropriate;
- i) should be progressed through School Studies Committees in accordance with the specified schedule;
- j) should be updated on GCM no later than by Week 0 of each semester;
- k) should be communicated to students via the VLE no later than by Week 0 of each semester.

See [Assessment: School Roles and Responsibilities](#) for further information on the assessment-related remit of specific role holders in Schools.

The Learning and Teaching Academic Year Group (now the Learning and Teaching Academic Operations Committee) agreed that changes to assessment should be communicated to External Examiners and PSRBs. Requirements for External Examiners to review assessment materials for courses contributing to the final award are set out in the [External Examining Handbook](#), paragraph 3.1 (p.10) (this has been revised following UCQS on 29 June 2022 so that there is no longer a requirement for Externals to review 70% of a course's assessments at the design stage; from

2022/23, there is no percentage specification, rather Schools are to determine an “appropriate and sufficient” selection of assessment components for Externals to review before the Award Board, ie assessment tasks do not need to be considered by Externals before being issued to students). See [Review of Assessments \(Coursework and Exams\) by External Examiners](#) for further information.

It is essential, following approval of changes to assessment, that assessment information is updated in GCM (as GCM is the University’s single source of accurate information on programmes and courses, and will be used for assessment-related information for exam timetabling and the Marks and Grades Project). Other sources (such as student handbooks, information on Canvas) must likewise be updated. Any changes to assessments made following publication of the original assessment information must be communicated directly to students.

Designing Assessment: Guidance from the Learning and Teaching Academy

The Learning and Teaching Academy provides a wide range of support for Schools in planning for and designing assessment, including review and redesign of assessment. Teaching teams refreshing course and assessment design are encouraged to make use of these resources:

- [Curriculum and Assessment Design Toolkit: Assessment](#)
- [Assessment and Feedback](#)
- [LTA Support for Schools](#)

The LTA updates this information each academic year, providing a suite of resources and support for teaching teams in preparation of the start of the session. Check out the LTA SharePoint Hub for [current information](#). Further support and guidance are available from the LTA: LTAcademy@hw.ac.uk

Assessment and Changes: Guidance on Communicating to Students

Once the official record on GCM has been updated, all assessment changes should be communicated to students and should be correct on Canvas pages and other key information provided to students. Additionally, the three Student Representative Bodies have recommended that the following guidance on assessment (and feedback) is provided to students:

- 1) advice and support on time-limited coursework assignments
- 2) advice and support on invigilated in-person exams (exam venue or computer lab) held during the formal Exam and Assessment Diet;
- 3) clarification on how assessments relate to learning outcomes;
- 4) inclusion of descriptive criteria or a rubric each assessment;
- 5) scale of assessment task is proportionate to the weighting;
- 6) 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 and submission dates are not clustered together;
- 7) clarification on submission methods and signposting to students of guidance on how to use these tools;
- 8) promotion of academic integrity, through resources and integration into the curriculum, and availability of resources on how to properly use referencing;
- 9) information and help on understanding assessment expectations, eg through providing exemplars or class discussion of marking criteria;
- 10) information on feedback (date, type and method of availability) and how to engage with feedback to help with subsequent assessments. Students should be notified of coursework which will not be returned within the institutional policy of 3 working weeks, including, for example, projects, dissertations and also summative coursework where the marks will need to be reviewed by a Course Assessment Board prior to release. See [Feedback on Coursework Policy](#) on providing feedback on such assessments prior to the release of results.