Many Schools have been keen to retain the diversity of assessment which they introduced in response to the pandemic into 2022/23 and beyond. Additionally, the LTA is supporting Schools through a variety of assessment design and redesign initiatives, including as part of the institutional Transforming Assessment activity (a key strand within the Learning and Teaching Strategy).

As a consequence, there has been a need to clarify and define different types of assessment for administrative/management and central scheduling purposes, particularly given that pre-COVID distinctions are no longer applicable. This guidance summarises and expands upon the Assessment Planning Assumptions for 2022/23, ie the administrative definitions which will be used to manage assessment, as approved by the Senate Committee for Interim Business and Effectiveness (SCIBE) on 7 June 2022.

These distinctions are used for administrative and policy purposes here; it is recognised that there might need to be further clarification for students in particular around both coursework and exams.

### Assessment Types in 2022/23: Existing Regulations and Policies

The University’s policies and Regulations for taught programmes (eg Regulation A4 Courses, Programmes and Assessment) do not prohibit diversity in form and timing, and the constraints are only as follows:

- All programmes of study (including HW Online) shall contain a balance of various forms of assessment, unless specifically approved by the University Studies Committee;
- In-person, invigilated exams shall be of two or three hours in duration, unless approved by the Global Academic Registrar;
- Exams shall be held in a scheduled Exams and Assessment Diet;
- All courses shall provide opportunities for formative assessment and formative feedback to support learning (this is particularly critical when courses are assessed by a single, end-of-course 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 had been waived for 2020/21 and 2021/22 due to the pandemic, but has been reinstated from 2022/23).

Therefore, there is scope for Schools to continue to offer a diverse array of assessment 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 has replaced a face-to-face exam or coursework which is timed and online (ie that formerly known as “take home exams”) can be included in the exam diet.

### Assessment Types in 2022/23: Policy and Administrative/Management Definitions

#### Policy Statement on the Administrative/Management Definitions of Assessment Types in 2022/23

For the purposes of clarity for students and for staff involved in the management of assessment, in 2022/23 assessment should be differentiated as one of two types: Coursework or Examination. This terminology should be used consistently in all staff and student communications and publications.

The 2022/23 definitions and scheduling of assessment (ie the practical arrangements for organising and managing assessments, and not the pedagogical definitions), as approved by SCIBE on 7 June 2022, are as follows:
Coursework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Type</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coursework</td>
<td>a) Throughout the semester</td>
<td>a) Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Exam and Assessment Diet</td>
<td>b) RAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination</td>
<td>Exam and Assessment Diet</td>
<td>RAS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The definitions of Coursework and Examination are provided on the next page.

### Assessment Types in 2022/23: Coursework

In 2022/23, coursework comprises assignments set during or at the end of a course (including timed online coursework scheduled in the Exam and Assessment Diet) to assess one or more of the learning outcomes. Coursework includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- written assignment, including essay or 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;
- online, under open book conditions and time-limited (similar in format to the take-home exams from spring 2020 to 2021/22).

In 2022/23, coursework assignments can be submitted and/or completed in a scheduled diet of exams/assessment (weeks 13 + 14); this includes all types of coursework and is not restricted to coursework which has replaced a face-to-face exam. Coursework which is online, timed and conducted under open book conditions (ie similar to the former “take home exams”) and is scheduled to be undertaken and completed in an Exam and Assessment Diet will be arranged and managed by Registry and Academic Support (RAS). Coursework which is scheduled throughout the semester, including coursework which is due for submission in Weeks 13-14, will be managed exclusively by each School.

In 2022/23, coursework may be offered in a way that is very similar to the take-home open book exam used in previous sessions during the pandemic, eg a class test or written assignment in response to questions to be completed in a specific period of time and to be carried out online using the University’s VLE.

Schools should ensure that, in their management and scheduling of assessment, that coursework throughout the semester is proportionate and balanced. See separate Summary Paper on Coursework Scheduling 2022/23.
Assessment Types in 2022/23: Exams

As above, the take-home open book exams which were used during the pandemic (both 2-3 hour or 24-hour window formats) are being categorised in 2022/23 as “coursework”, specifically as timed, online coursework, and will continue to be scheduled as before by RAS.

In 2022/23, the term “exams” refers to the pre-pandemic format of a 2-3 hour, in person, invigilated assessment held in an approved exam venue. The key difference from pre-pandemic is that the exam need not be restricted to hand-written format, but can be conducted online (in an invigilated, University approved computer lab) and need not be limited to unseen/closed book, but can be open book. All exams will continue to be scheduled as previously by RAS.

Assessment Types in 2022/23: 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 Canvas), but should pay particular attention to changed arrangements for 2022/23 which are different from the last few years, especially since the term “take home exams” has been discontinued and replaced by “timed, online coursework” and since “exams” are now defined as invigilated, in person assessments held at an approved exam venue/computer lab (either open or closed book and either hand-written or conducted online).

Students might reasonably expect the Exam and Assessment diet to be kept free of coursework assignment deadlines; however, with fewer in person 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, since RAS will be arranging all timed, online coursework and exams being held in the Exam and Assessment Diet, Schools should take steps to ensure that coursework is scheduled in such a way as to minimise clashing and bunching of assessment deadlines (see separate Summary Paper on Assessment Scheduling in 2022/23).

Invigilated, In Person Exams at an Approved Exam Venue/Computer Lab

The University communications (as issued on 25 May 2022) to students about 2022/23 highlighted that the Exams and Assessment Diet would include in person exams (as well as online coursework). Many students will be anxious about a return to invigilated, in person exams, particularly as only UG Y5 will have experienced a full year of such exams, with UG Y4 having experienced only one diet. They may also be concerned about the different format of such exams, eg open book or unseen. There could be further concern about the combination of invigilated exams and timed online coursework, both of which will take place in Exams and Assessment Diets, and the need for clarity around the differences and expectations of these two types of timed assessments.

Therefore, it will be critically important that Schools should provide further information, guidance and support on assessment, particularly the types of assessment scheduled for completion in the Exams and Assessment Diet, and ensure that students are aware of the deadlines for all types of assessments, including penalties applied for late submission (see separate Summary Paper on Coursework Submission in 2022/23 and separate Summary Paper on Timed, Online Coursework in 2022/23).

Volume of Assessment in 2022/23

Feedback from students and some External Examiners and anecdotal evidence at the LTAYG have highlighted that over-assessment continues to be an area of concern across Heriot-Watt generally. This is a long-standing issue for the University and so Schools should be mindful of the impact on both students and staff (the latter particularly in relation to workload and wellbeing given the volume of marking, Exam Boards etc).

Volume of assessment could become an even more critical matter: in 2023/24, the University will move to a 2-week Exam and Assessment Diet in April (currently 4 weeks) and a 5-day Exam and Assessment Diet in August (currently 7-10 days). In an effort to reduce, the number of in person exams and timed, online coursework in these two periods, there could be an unintended consequential increase in the volume of other forms of assessment.

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

- Course and Assessment Design Top Tips
- Assessment and Feedback FAQs and Resources
Additionally, there is a suite of Watt Works Quick Guides on Assessment and Feedback. Further support and guidance are available from the LTA: LTAcademy@hw.ac.uk. The LTA also supports programme-level assessment design, and has produced a Watt Works Quick Guide on taking a programme-level approach to assessment and feedback.

As part of the Transforming Assessment initiative (a key strand within the Learning and Teaching Strategy) and in responding to NSS 2022 on Assessment and Feedback on Assessment, there will be a further suite of resources and support provided by the LTA, including in undertaking assessment redesign in preparation for the aforementioned shift to a 2-week April diet and a 5-day August diet from 2023/24.