

Guidelines for Examiners and Assessors

These guidelines, which are updated annually by the Executive Committee for Assessment, apply to all examiners and assessors employed by the College for the assessment of students for all awards conferred by the College. The guidelines should be read in conjunction with the [Regulations on the Conduct of Assessment](#)

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1. EXTERNAL FRAMEWORK

The College, like other higher education providers, is expected to have in place processes for the assessment of students which ensure that the following UK Quality Code¹ expectations for standards of awards are met:

- The academic standards of courses² meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.
- The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.

These two expectations are also conditions which need to be met for the College's initial and ongoing registration with the Office for Students.³

Both the UK Quality Code and the Office for Students note that a provider can demonstrate that it meets these expectations/ conditions by, amongst others, ensuring that

- its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks as set out in *The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies* (FHEQ).⁴
- students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.
- it uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.

This guidance document sets out the academic regulations and procedures which the College has put in place to ensure that the summative assessment of students is conducted accurately, fairly and consistently across the College and across years so that the expectations/ conditions set out above are met.

2. OVERVIEW

The following points should be noted by all those involved in the assessment process, whether as examiners, assessors, advisers or administrative staff:

- At no point will a candidate's gender, age, ethnic or national origin, religious or sexual orientation, or other protected characteristics or extraneous factors be discussed or considered in relation to assessment.
- Discussion and decisions regarding candidates must be based only on evidence (such as work submitted for assessment or outcomes of consideration of extenuating circumstances) judged both sufficient and acceptable within the College's Regulations and Guidelines, or in case of doubt, by the Executive Committee for Assessment.
- Department Assessment Board and School Progression and Awards Board minutes are now regarded as public documents so all references should be by candidate number only. Students can request access to (parts of) such minutes as part of a subject access request. Chairs and administrative staff are therefore advised to follow the guidance on the minuting of such meetings on the [Academic Quality and Policy Office](#) website.
- Decisions taken by Boards of Examiners are binding on all members. This means that anyone dissatisfied with the agreed outcome must accept it and not discuss its alleged defects or ramifications outside the board or encourage students to appeal against the decision. This applies equally to Department Assessment Boards and School Progression and Awards Boards. Departmental staff, who do not attend the latter should not be encouraging students to appeal against decisions made by the School Progression and Awards Board should they not agree with the decision.

¹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/>

² The term 'course' as used here refers to a 'programme'.

³ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/securing-student-success-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/>

⁴ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks>

- Work submitted by candidates for assessment, in particular exam scripts, written assignments or dissertations, should be passed between examiners either by hand (including by courier) or by Recorded Delivery. Internal or Intercollegiate mail should not be used. Assessed work must not be taken or sent outside the UK by any examiner (internal or external) except where the marking process would otherwise be unacceptably delayed. In these cases, a copy of the work must be retained in the department. Where work has been submitted and marked online, this can be made available electronically to examiners.

3. INTERNAL MARKING AND MODERATION

○ General principles of assessment

3.1. **Anonymity:** The marking of all summative work should be conducted anonymously unless covered by the general exemptions which were approved by the Quality Assurance and Standards Committee (or its predecessor Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee), or for individual assessments, if approved by the relevant School Education Committee (see [Academic Quality and Policy website](#)). Once the marking process has been completed, candidates can be identified for the purposes of providing feedback. **NB. Dissertations/ projects must be marked anonymously as per the guidance and cannot be given exemption. Please see [College guidance](#) in this regard.**

3.2 **Marking methods:** Section 13 (2) of the *Regulations on the conduct of assessment* outlines the following four ways in which work submitted for assessment can be marked:

(2) *Work submitted for assessment shall be marked using one of the following methods:*

- (a) *single marking, where the work is marked by one Internal Examiner;*
- (b) *single marking with moderation, where the work is marked in accordance with (2)(a) above, except a second Internal Examiner also marks a sample of the work, which shall include a representative sample from all degree classifications and failed work, in order to ensure consistency with the approved marking scheme;⁵*
- (c) *double marking, where the work is marked by two Internal Examiners, or by an Internal Examiner and an Assessor, who shall together agree a single mark for each piece of work;⁶*
- (d) *blind double marking, where the work is marked in accordance with (2)c) above, except the second marker shall not have prior sight of the comments of the first marker.⁷*

It is important that those who are moderating / sampling or (blind) double marking understand the different purposes of these two processes (see footnotes 5 – 7 and relevant paragraphs in Section 3 below).

It is the responsibility of examiners and assessors to reach unambiguous recommendations on marks for individual pieces of work. The methods of marking which can be employed for various groups of students are as follows in line with Section (13 (2)) above:

⁵ **Single marking** with moderation occurs where a second Internal Examiner marks the work/ scrutinises the marks awarded, on a sample basis, to verify that the marks are appropriate and consistent in relation to the assessment criteria for the particular piece of assessment.

⁶ **Double marking** occurs when a piece of assessment is marked by two Internal Examiners, who agree a final mark for the piece of assessment. The second examiner has access to the comments and marks awarded by the first marker.

⁷ **'Blind double' marking**, which is a version of double marking, occurs when neither Internal Examiner has access to the other's feedback and marks when assessing and awarding a mark.

- **First year Undergraduate work** (zero weighted in terms of the degree classification) may be single marked (except when marked by postgraduate research students, see below).
- **Student work counting towards the final assessment (award)** should be double-marked or blind double-marked or single marked with moderation/ sampling as per paragraphs 3.9 – 3.12. Any exceptions to the College guidance require approval by the relevant School Education Committee
- **Oral examinations, presentations and performances** – it is **good practice** to use either a single Internal Examiner to ensure that there is consistency of marking across a single assessment or to have two Internal Examiners present. Ideally there should be a recording but as a minimum where an assessment makes a contribution of more than 20% to the final module mark or is in the final year, it is a requirement to make an audio or video recording of the assessment for moderation by the External Examiner, and to retain copies of any audio visual aids produced by the student.
- **Work (including first year UG work) marked by postgraduate research students** must be moderated by a permanent member of academic staff (internal examiner) according to the College guidelines on moderation. Postgraduate research students should not mark the work of postgraduate taught students. Postgraduate markers must be provided with clear marking criteria/schemes, and should be provided with indicative answers (where appropriate). If teams of markers are involved, an initial 'marking standardisation' exercise with model answers is good practice. It is also expected that postgraduate markers are provided with appropriate training within the academic department and/ or from the Educational Development Centre (see also 3.6 below).

Internal moderation and verification of marking standards processes employed by departments should be articulated and understood by all examiners, and clearly documented for oversight by External Examiners as necessary. See 3.9-3.13 below for more detailed guidance on the internal moderation of discursive assessments and incomplete work.

- 3.3 **Illegible handwriting:** Should a piece of assessment be illegible, the Department Assessment Board should follow the College's policy on the marking of such work: (see [Academic Quality and Policy website](#)).
- 3.4. **Marking schemes/criteria:** All markers engaged in awarding a mark for a piece of assessed work, should be provided with an agreed marking criteria or marking scheme. Guidance is available from Disability and Dyslexia Services when marking for students with Specific Learning Difficulties.

Each department is expected to have written **marking criteria** across the full range of marks available (0 – 100) for each type of assessment which students may be given, e.g. one set for the assessment of essays and a different set for the assessment of a presentation.

Given the impact on the final classification for students, appropriate use of marks above 75% and in the range below 40% (UG) or 50% (PGT and final year of the MSci and MEng) should be made in order to differentiate between different levels of achievement in the First Class (UG)/ Distinction (PGT) bands. Similarly markers should appropriately use marks in the failing band to differentiate between marginal and bad fails.

- 3.5 **Stepped marking:** Markers are expected to use the following 'steps' in each failing and passing marking band: X2, X5 and X8. These steps should also be used in each 10% marking band in the first class range, e.g. 72, 75, 78, 82, 85, 88 etc. Marking criteria with an indication of the 'stepped marks' being used must be published in Student handbooks or on Moodle. More details on stepped marking for staff and students are provided on the [Academic Quality and Policy website](#).

Exemptions from stepped marking: Marking schemes are likely to be used in the types of assessments listed below, which are exempt from stepped marking.

- Quantitative assignments, e.g. numerical or multiple choice questions
- Assignments with 'right/wrong' answers, e.g. language tests

- Assignments with a detailed mark scheme under which each question is allocated a specific number of marks or with an auto-graded rubric.

Final marks for pieces of assessment and modules:

- An examination script may include a mix of questions, that is, some 'essay type' answers, some MCQs, etc. In this case stepped marking should only be used where appropriate. The final mark for the examination script as a whole would not in this case necessarily reflect one of the points on the stepped marking scale.
- Where a module consists of a number of pieces of summative assessment, e.g. two essays and an examination with various weightings, the final module outcome mark will not need to reflect a point on the stepped marking scale.
- The *Undergraduate Regulations* and *Postgraduate Taught Regulations* state that,

"Any work (written, oral presentation, film, performance) may not be marked beyond the upper limit set. The upper limit may be a word limit in the case of written work or a time limit in the case of assessments such as oral work, presentations, films or performance. In the case of presentations, films or performance these may be stopped once they exceed the upper time limit."

There is an expectation that markers stop when the limit has been reached. However, the regulations should be read as allowing rather than forbidding the reading or assessing beyond the set limit if the marker judges this to be appropriate in the circumstances.

- When a penalty for late submission(10 percentage marks) is applied to a piece of assessment that has been marked using steps, the resultant mark will reflect a point on the stepped marking scale, e.g. 55% reduced to 45%.

See also 3.16 and 3.17 below for resolving mark differences when double marking to ensure that the final mark is on one of the 'steps'.

3.6 Support for markers: It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Department Assessment Board to ensure that any individual who is not a member of academic staff of the College, e.g. a Visiting Lecturer, postgraduate students who are given responsibility for marking student work, is fully briefed on their role and has the relevant experience and sufficient discipline specific knowledge to provide an accurate, fair and equitable assessment of a student's knowledge, understanding and skills.

It is good practice where more than one member of staff is marking an assessment and/or where new members of staff or postgraduate students are doing so, to hold calibration meetings prior to marking commencing. This is to ensure that there is a common understanding of the requirements of the task and the application of the marking criteria so that inconsistencies can be addressed at this point rather than at the point of internal moderation. Similar approaches are also useful for specific subject areas such as creative disciplines to ensure that there is consistency in classification level descriptors. Where markers are new to assessment it is assumed that departments will provide support/ training as necessary. The Educational Development Centre is also able to provide bespoke training if required.

3.7 Recording marks: Each marker is responsible for keeping a confidential record of the marks s/he has given and any other written comments. The rationale for the marks awarded must be documented so that this can be understood by other Internal Examiners as well as External Examiners. Marks should be clearly indicated on the front of the answer booklet, or equivalent, with the initials of the marker. Where work is marked online departments need to ensure that the quality and quantity of feedback provided on such work is consistent with that provided when hard copies of work are assessed. When External Examiners are given samples of work which have been marked online, markers should make clear where a record of dialogue between internal markers and/or moderators can be found. See also 3.9 – 3.17 below.

Each module is set up in Banner with component marks, which reflect the different elements of summative assessment of the unit, e.g. 50 % essay and 50% examination. The record of marks awarded should be given to the School administrative team as soon as possible to enter into Gradebook. The only exceptions to this are where there are small weekly assignments (e.g. lab reports, language exercises), which collectively account for a percentage of the summative assessment of the module, e.g. 10%. In such cases the final composite mark for these pieces of work should be added to Banner once the final piece of work, e.g. lab report, language exercise for the module has been returned to students.

3.8 **Status of marks:** Once marks have been determined by the marker(s) these will be subject to change only during the moderation process by the External Examiner(s) should s/he identify systematic discrepancies in the marking. In such cases the work may need to be remarked by Internal Examiners or scaling applied in line with the guidance in Section 4 below. Marks **must not be changed** before or at the Department Assessment Board or the School Progression and Awards Board as part of the classification process (i.e. borderline marks must not be arbitrarily raised in order to improve a candidate's academic profile for classification purposes).

○ **Single marking with moderation**

3.9 The internal moderator should, where practicable, be independent of the marking process, that is, should not be one of the markers who has assessed the work being moderated. The internal moderator is provided with a complete mark-sheet from each marker and a sample of the assessed pieces of work. The sample from each marker must include the full spread of the marking range, with at least one representative piece of assessment from every class, including fails. The sample should constitute a minimum of 10 % of the total number of pieces of work from each marker or a minimum of 5 pieces of work, whichever is the larger. Where there are fewer than 10 students, all assignments should be moderated. The moderator's job is to check that the marks awarded by the marker(s) reflect the department's marking scheme and, where there is more than one marker, that marks are internally consistent between markers. Internal moderation should, where possible, be completed before work is returned to students.

3.10 If the moderator believes that the marks from a marker are not in agreement with the department's marking criteria, a further 10% of the pieces of work from that marker should be scrutinised. Where 10% would be a very small number, the sample size should be sufficient for proper scrutiny to take place. If this scrutiny reveals a systematic discrepancy from departmental norms (each department should set its own guidance on what might constitute a systematic discrepancy in the mark distribution for the sample as a whole), **the moderator may apply systematic changes to the entire run of scripts, ensuring that where appropriate, as per 3.5 above, the marks are moved to a lower or higher step.** These changes must be discussed with the Chair of the Department Assessment Board and the Module Leader (where the module leader is not the moderator).

3.11 If the moderator believes that a marker's marking is inconsistent, so that systematic changes would not produce a fair outcome, the work from that marker must be double-marked. The Chair of the Department Assessment Board should arrange for an additional marker in such cases; the moderator is to oversee the double-marking process and the agreeing of marks with the first marker, ensuring that all decisions are clearly documented.

3.12 The moderator is to supply a brief report commenting on the practice of assessment in this module in relation to departmental norms and standards. If systematic adjustments or double-marking were deemed appropriate to bring marks in line with the marking criteria, the adjustments that were made must be clearly outlined and justified in the report (see also 3.11 above). This report should be sent to the Chair of the Department Assessment Board and included in the materials sent to the External Examiner.

○ **Marking of Incomplete Work**

3.13 If a piece of assessed work lacks required components or is more than 30% below the validated minimum word limit for the assignment, it is considered incomplete. An examiner marking incomplete work will award a mark based on the extent to which the learning outcomes for the whole assignment have been met with reference to

the marking criteria for the piece of assessment. If possible, the examiner should identify in the feedback to the student which learning outcomes have not been met.

○ **Double marking and Blind Double marking**

3.14 Where departments choose to blind double mark, which is often the case for final year dissertations/ projects, both Internal Examiners should provide feedback on the work and award a mark. Where marks differ there should be an indication and justification of how the final mark was agreed. Each Internal Examiner should initial the paper when marking a hard copy or put initials where appropriate when marking online. All of this information should be provided to the External Examiner. See also 3.7 above.

3.15 Where double marking occurs, but is not blind (e.g. in case of failed assessments, or just as part of the marking process), it should be clear how any mark differences have been resolved.

3.16. As the College has now moved to stepped marking the final agreed mark for individual pieces of assessment should reflect one of the 'steps' in the grade scale (assuming the piece was not exempt from stepped marking). This means that where an examination script includes a mix of questions, that is, some 'essay type' answers, some MCQs, etc. only the answers which were subject to stepped marking would be double marked. There should be clear evidence that double marking has taken place rather than the second Internal Examiner simply affirming the mark of the first Internal Examiner. As above, External Examiners should be provided with the first and second mark, both Internal Examiners' comments, and an indication and justification of how the final mark was agreed where there is a difference. Each Internal Examiner should initial the paper when marking a hard copy or put initials where appropriate when marking online. See also 3.7 above.

3.17 Where marks between first and second markers differ, such a difference must be resolved in one of the following ways:

- Where the difference is up to and including ten percentage points of the total marks, the markers may average the two marks. Where the averaged mark is not x2, X5 or x8 the two markers need to agree an appropriate mark on the stepped marking scale
- Where the difference is more than ten percentage points a third internal marker will be asked to assess the work using the stepped marking scale.
- Where one marker has awarded a passing mark and the other a failing mark and the average is a failing mark close to the minimum pass mark, a third marker must be used. See also 4.5.

4. MODERATION OF (MARKING) STANDARDS AND PROCESSES BY THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER(S)

○ **Purpose**

4.1 The task of the External Examiners is primarily to confirm standards using their experience in assessment within the UK Higher Education sector at undergraduate and/or postgraduate level, in reference to stated learning outcomes and national benchmarks. To this end they endorse the marking and moderation processes operated by the department:

- to ensure that the assessments set are fair and test the learning outcomes of the module;
- to assure consistency of marking (i.e. to ensure that the marks given are a fair assessment of the work submitted by candidates and that the work has been marked in line with relevant and appropriate marking criteria/ schemes);
- to identify and resolve inconsistencies arising from the assessment;
- to ensure that standards across current and previous cohorts are maintained;
- to ensure that the award of marks is in line with national benchmarks.

Where concerns arise, it is expected that these are raised in the first instance with the Chair of the Department Assessment Board who may discuss the matter with AQPO with respect to steps that might need to be taken.

4.2 The purpose of external moderation is not to revise marks for pieces of individual student work submitted as part of a sample for the moderation of a piece of assessment, e.g. exam or coursework. If mark changes are deemed necessary, the work submitted by all the candidates should be reviewed. The primary role of the External Examiners is to confirm the standard of marking and moderation as outlined in 4.1 above.

○ **Process**

4.3 External moderation is carried out by the External Examiners, supported by the Chair or Deputy Chair of the Department Assessment Board and the Secretary, who are responsible for recording decisions taken by the External Examiners and reporting on them at the meeting of the Department Assessment Board.

4.4 The moderation process starts with the oversight of assessment tasks and examination papers by External Examiners in line with their duties as set out in Section 6 (5c (iii)) of the *Regulations on the conduct of assessment*. They approve draft examination **papers for all examination periods including for resit/ First Sit assessments in the Summer Vacation Assessment Period** and new or amended summative coursework assessments which constitute more than 20% of the final grade for a module. In cases where students develop their own titles, they have oversight of assessment guidelines. This is to ensure that the assessments represent a fair and reliable test of the learning outcomes of the module.

4.5 The results for all modules must be sample moderated by the External Examiners (including First Year work), in order to ensure that standards are maintained and to give the External Examiners an overview of the entire course. Consideration should be given to ensure that work which is less readily accessible (such as student blogs, Moodle fora, marks awarded for class participation, and practice-based work) can be moderated by External Examiners as appropriate. See 4.9 for details of the sample that is to be provided.

The moderation process by an External Examiner must not be confused or conflated with internal marking and moderation or with award classification. It should take place **after** the candidates' work has been marked by Internal Examiners, and before the meeting of the Department Assessment Board. In order not to create a conflict with their role as moderators of standards, it is essential that External Examiners are not involved in the marking process. Although there is an expectation that all mark differences are resolved within the internal marking team, the *Regulations on the conduct of assessment* permit External Examiners to be involved in exceptional cases where there is still disagreement over a mark after it has been referred to a third internal marker.

4.6 To assure themselves of the consistency of marking across current and previous cohorts and to identify if there are any inconsistencies External Examiners should:

(i) compare the average mark of the modules and the profile of marks for modules which they have been asked to moderate across the current session, in order to identify any module-specific variances in the performance of candidates;

(ii) compare the average marks and the profile of marks for the same module over the current and previous two sessions (or if the module did not run in the previous academic session the marks and profiles for the last two occasions on which the module was taught).

4.7 Marks for assessments within a module or for a module as a whole should not normally or routinely be scaled unless the department has a policy in place approved by the Executive Committee for Assessment. Assessments should be set in such a way that marks awarded reflect different levels of achievement. However, where inconsistencies in either one of the areas noted in 4.6 above are discovered, further investigation should be made into, for example, the forms of assessment used, whether these test the learning outcomes of the module adequately and the way the module was taught. Exceptionally, inconsistencies may arise where there are errors within the examination paper that have an undue negative or positive impact on results for the assessment and module overall. In cases such as these, the Chair of the Department Assessment Board will discuss the situation with the Internal Examiners and the External Examiner and reach agreement on the most appropriate action to be taken, which may be by scaling the marks in question. Any one-off scaling process agreed must be fully

documented in the minutes of the Department Assessment Board meeting in the event of any query/ appeal relating to the scaling. Advice on scaling should be sought from the relevant Senior Academic Quality Manager.

Where a rationale is given for variance from established norms (e.g. underdevelopment of core skills such as linguistic or mathematical ability prior to admission to the College), a strategy for addressing the problem for future cohorts must be included in the Departmental Annual Review Report.

4.8 External Examiners are to be encouraged, as part of their support and quality assurance role, to meet Internal Examiners during or after the moderation process to discuss the reasons for any decisions taken and to discuss particular modules.

Documentation and Information for External Examiners

4.9 The External Examiners should be provided with the following for both the main examination period and the Summer Vacation Assessment period:

(i) a **sample of the work** submitted by candidates for each module. Where there are several components in one module, it would be useful to see the work from students across the module rather than samples from different students. There is no need to provide samples of every element of a module that counts towards the final assessment (although it would be good practice to have these available should they be requested) but rather the work which counts substantially, that is, worth more than 20% (e.g. scripts from written papers, projects or major items of coursework), sorted in rank order. Guidelines to determine the sample are as follows:

- A minimum of 10% of the total number of pieces of work with a minimum requirement to review 5 pieces of student work per assessment. In the case of cohorts with 10 or fewer students, it would be appropriate to moderate all pieces of work rather than a sample. The sample must include work in each grade class, where possible.

NB The choice of sample is for the judgement of the (Chair of the) Department Assessment Board. It should, however, be consistent, where appropriate, across modules and External Examiners should know what to expect. The External Examiners may also ask to see other items of assessed work to aid their work.

Where pieces of work submitted as part of the sample have been subject to an investigation of academic misconduct (unproven) this should be clearly noted on the piece of work.

- (ii) a **mark sheet for each module**, sorted in rank order displaying the average mark and the profile of marks. External Examiners should also be provided with a graphical presentation of distributions, e.g. a histogram to show the range of marks obtained. These can be generated through an Infoview Report.
- (iii) summaries displaying the average mark and the **profile of marks for modules in the previous two sessions** (this material should be collected annually by the Chair of the Department Assessment Board).
- (iv) details of **the work set** e.g.: exam paper, essay or task title.
- (v) **marking criteria** (and course handbook if deemed useful) or marking schemes.
- (vi) link to the departmental webpages, Moodle pages or the College's [Module \(course unit\) catalogue](#) for the relevant **module specifications** and to the [Academic Quality and Policy Office website](#) for the relevant **course specification(s)**.

- (vii) link to the relevant [College academic regulations](#).

5. DEALING WITH STUDENT EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

○ Notification of Extenuating Circumstances

5.1 Student Administration will send an e-mail to students reminding them of the process and deadline for submitting extenuating circumstances for consideration by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee at relevant points throughout the year, for example but not limited to, January, May / June examination period, the Summer Vacation Assessment period (August / September) and before PGT Exam Boards meet in the Autumn term. Save for very exceptional cases, Student Administration will not accept extenuating circumstances after the published deadline. The [Extenuating Circumstances – Guidance for students](#) sets out and provides examples of what would and would not be deemed acceptable circumstances and the supporting evidence that it is felt reasonable for students to provide in support of their request. The email will make it clear that the process applies to all circumstances which a student thinks may have had a detrimental effect on his/her studies or academic performance, including illness, personal difficulties and disruption to the conditions of study or assessment. The e-mail will also make clear that if students have circumstances which continue to affect them over the period of study and for which it would not be appropriate to register with Disability and Dyslexia Services they should notify the Extenuating Circumstances Committee each year and submit up-to-date supporting documentation where appropriate.

5.2 If a student has only raised matters informally, it remains the student's responsibility to submit a written request in order for his/her circumstances to be considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee. When students raise matters informally, it is advisable for them to be reminded of the formal procedures.

5.3 All applications for Extenuating Circumstances should be submitted centrally to the Extenuating Circumstances Committee via Student Administration. If accepted, Student Administration will notify all relevant School Progression and Awards Boards for that student, in order for an outcome to be decided. Where students are taking intercollegiate modules at other colleges of the University of London, Student Administration will notify the other Colleges if the application is accepted.

5.4 Students with circumstances which have long-term implications should be registered with the Disability and Dyslexia Services, who will assess any needs students might have and arrange for appropriate support, e.g. extra time, room on own. The required support will be outlined in a memorandum from Disability and Dyslexia Services to the School/department. The student should only submit extenuating circumstances to the Extenuating Circumstances Committee where there are circumstances unrelated to the condition for which they are registered and / or there is a material change to their condition, for which the reasonable adjustments would not constitute sufficient mitigation. (NB: see also 5.10).

○ Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances

5.6 Evidence of extenuating circumstances will be considered by a College committee as set out in Section 4 of the [Regulations on the conduct of assessment](#).

5.7 The Extenuating Circumstances Committee will consider:

- (i) whether the candidate has submitted sufficient evidence and in an acceptable form;
- (ii) whether the evidence matches the time period in the application
- (iii) the severity of the circumstances
- (iv) the regulatory options available to the Department Assessment Board for their consideration .

5.8 The Extenuating Circumstances Committee will consider every case where a student has submitted a request for consideration of extenuating circumstances, including those submitted during the year. The committee will undertake an earlier sorting of requests so that the Extenuating Circumstances Committee can focus its attention on the more difficult cases, e.g. if a student has already been given an extension because of extenuating circumstances. A written record of all cases will be kept, which includes the information considered, whether the application was accepted or rejected and the regulatory recommendations provided for consideration by the Department Assessment Board.

5.9 Care must be taken to ensure that where a Department Assessment Board decides that no action can be taken at the time but that consideration should be given at the point of classification (e.g. circumstances notified in the second year of an undergraduate degree course), that this outcome is returned to the Extenuating Circumstances Committee so this can be carried forward in order to notify the classifying School Progression and Awards Board.

5.10 The majority of students with disabilities will have registered with the Disability and Dyslexia Services at the start of their studies and have been given reasonable adjustments during the year and at the point of assessment. No further action will be taken in those cases, provided that the adjustments were implemented and the student has not raised material concerns. However, it can happen that a student's disability is diagnosed part-way through the course, or that a student does not report a long-term illness or condition until the very end of his/her studies. In such cases it is not the expectation that the examiners re-mark the student's work from previous years. Marks awarded in previous years cannot be changed. If the Extenuating Circumstances Committee is made aware of the situation above, they will forward this information to the Chair of the Department Assessment Board. In all cases the Extenuating Circumstances Committee/Department Assessment Board/ School Progression and Awards Board has a duty to consider in retrospect:

- (i) whether the student has been substantially disadvantaged compared to students without the same disability;
- (ii) whether the substantial disadvantage was caused by College provision (e.g. teaching and assessment methods; arrangements for attendance and submission of work);
- (iii) what steps could be taken at this stage to counteract any disadvantage;
- (iv) whether it would be reasonable to take those steps.

Under the terms of the Equality Act (2010), the College is required to take positive steps (make reasonable adjustments) to take account of students' disabilities so that they can fully participate in their studies and other benefits, facilities and services provided by the College. Decisions about what reasonable adjustments are appropriate are made on a case-by-case basis. Disability and Dyslexia Services and Senior Academic Quality Managers are able to assist when considering such cases.

5.11 Under no circumstances should adjustments be made to the marks for individual pieces of work to compensate for the possible impact of extenuating circumstances on a student's performance. The Extenuating Circumstances Committee will advise of the regulatory options available to the Department Assessment Board. The possible options and criteria are also detailed in the relevant [Academic Regulations](#).

5.12 In line with the regulations [Approval and Suspension of College academic regulations](#) the School Progression and Awards Board can decide to make a recommendation for the regulations relating to the assessment of a candidate to be suspended if it is agreed that the options available in the College regulations do not permit an adequate response to a candidate's extenuating circumstances which have been accepted by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee. The process to follow and details on case law are set out on the [Academic Quality and Policy Office](#) website.

5.13 The ***Undergraduate Regulations*** permit departments to award students a First Sit (FS) or a First Sit for Repeat/Resit (FR) where they have either not completed a piece of assessment, (e.g. did not hand in an essay, did not

take an examination) or where they have completed an assessment but it is clear from the mark awarded that the student's performance was severely affected by documented extenuating circumstances deemed acceptable by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee.

Students normally have only **three opportunities** to take a piece of assessment, e.g. missed first attempt, actual first attempt and another attempt. In exceptional circumstances, the School Progression and Awards Board may make an application under s 4 of the Approval and Suspension of College Academic Regulations to allow for an additional attempt. Where students miss their first two attempts at a piece of assessment due to extenuating circumstances the Department **must** set up a meeting with the student to explore the reasons for this and to ensure that the student is advised appropriately, e.g. the department may advise the student to explore with Disability and Dyslexia Services what support is available and will, in line with 5.5 above, advise Disability and Dyslexia Services of this, or the Department may advise the student to interrupt until they are in a position to make a further attempt at the assessment.

5.14 The *Undergraduate* and the *Postgraduate Taught Regulations* permit students who miss an in-class assessment, particularly when this is during the Autumn term, to be given the opportunity to take this test at a later date in the term (rather than waiting for the May exam period). For in-class tests in the Spring term the test can be given at a later date, or the Department Assessment Board can scale the other marks for the module up (if less than a third has been compromised), award a First Sit in the summer (UG) or defer assessment till the summer (PGT). Should the department wish to offer the student a further opportunity to take the test during the term the following protocols must be put in place:

- (i) The department needs to make clear which tests may be offered at a later date in the term.
- (ii) The student need to be informed of the requirement to submit extenuating circumstances using the College's [Extenuating Circumstances form](#) and following the [Extenuating Circumstances - Guidance for students](#) by a set deadline which should be arrived at in negotiation with Student Administration.
- (iii) The extenuating circumstances will be considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee the UG/PGT Course lead and the Chair of the Department Assessment Board and a record kept, as would be the case with applications for an extension to an essay.
- (iv) The 'replacement' assessment must be the same format as the original. Alternative assessments cannot be set. A record of any such assessments that have been given need to be reported to the School Progression and Awards Board in June.

6. RESITS/ FIRST SITS – AVAILABILITY AND DESIGN

6.1 **UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS:** The *Undergraduate Regulations* permit departments to award students a First Sit (FS) or First Sit for Repeat/ Resit (FR) where the first or second -attempt at a piece of assessment is missed or where it is clear that the student's performance on the first attempt was severely affected by extenuating circumstances deemed acceptable by the College. Students who are given an outcome of FS or FR will normally take their First Sit attempt in the summer rather than in the following academic year. If they take their First Sit in the summer then departments can, should they so wish, set an alternative assessment in line with **Appendix C: Guidance on the Availability and Design of Resit/ First Sit Assessments**. If students are only able to take their First Sits in the following academic year, e.g. in cases where they have ongoing extenuating circumstances which prevent them from taking a First Sit in the summer, they should complete the validated assessment set for the module as set out in the relevant module specifications. Alternative assessments cannot be set for examinations/ assessments in May / June unless the student has a disability and the alternative assessment has been agreed by Disability and Dyslexia Services and the Executive Committee for Assessment.

6.2 **POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT STUDENTS:** For Postgraduate taught students departments should follow the guidance in **Appendix C: Guidance on the Availability and Design of Resit/ First Sit Assessments**. Departments can set alternative assessments for students taking resits or deferred assessments in the summer; however, students resitting in or deferring to the following academic year are required to take the validated assessment for the module(s) they are resitting / deferring as set out in the relevant module specifications. Alternative assessments cannot be set for examinations / assessments in May / June unless the student has a disability and

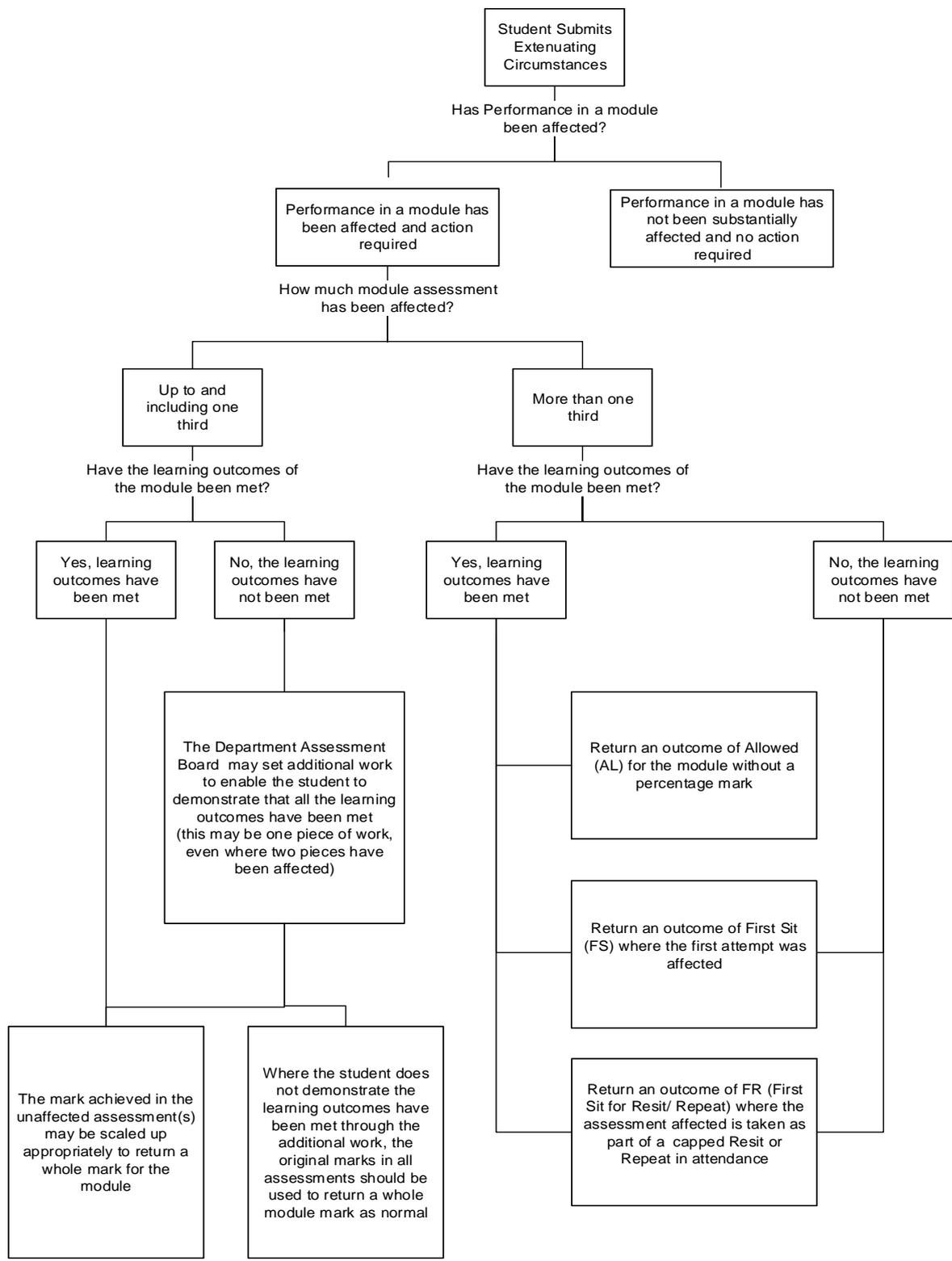
the alternative assessment has been agreed by Disability and Dyslexia Services and the Executive Committee for Assessment.

- 6.3 Where a department offers students the possibility of taking external modules as part of an institutional agreement, it should be made clear in the agreement and then to students whether summer resits will be offered in such modules.

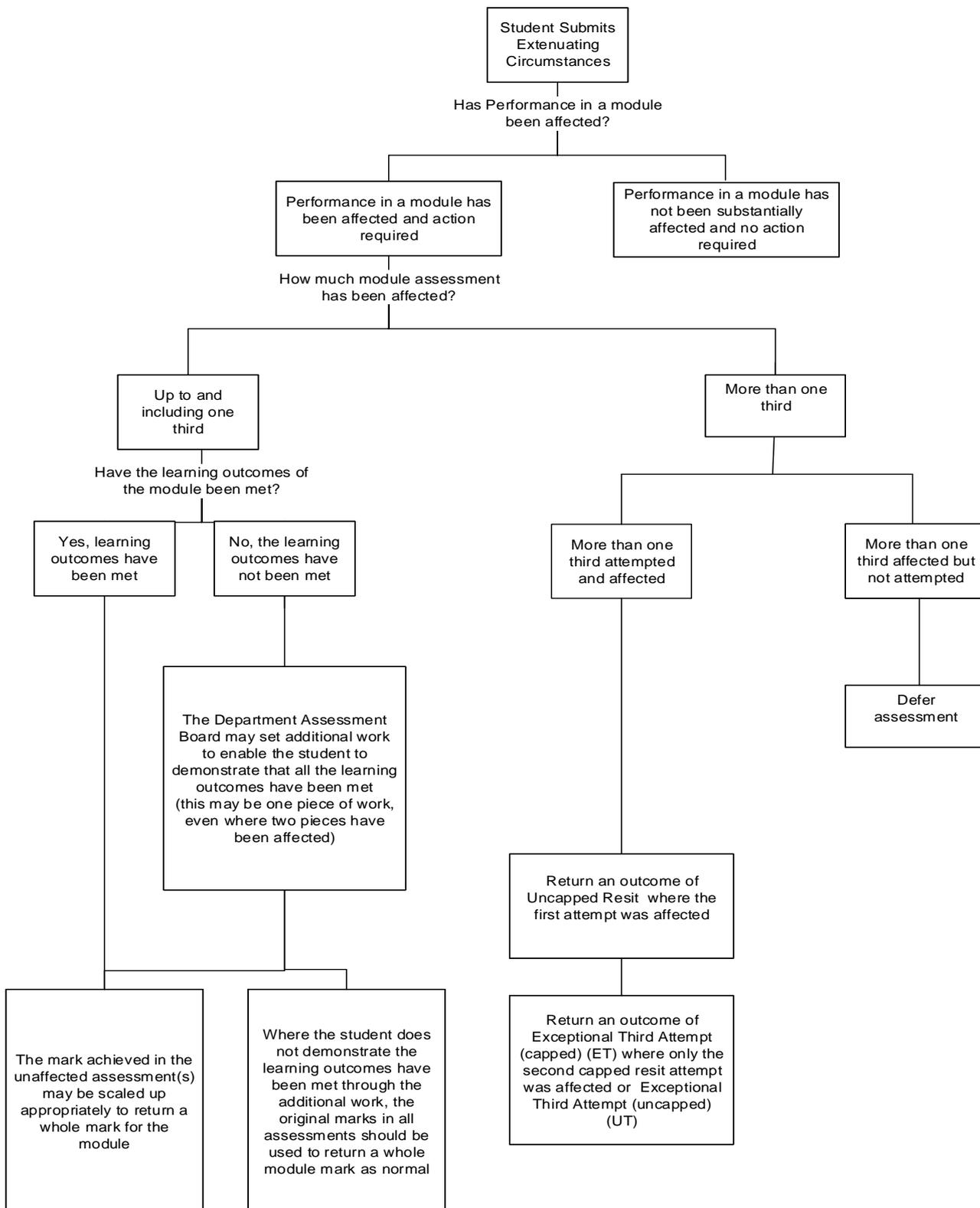
7. CLASSIFICATION OF CANDIDATES

Decisions on award classifications are to be based only on moderated marks which are no longer subject to change and on evidence of extenuating circumstances deemed eligible for consideration. Candidates will normally be classified routinely using the appropriate scheme outlined in the College Regulations. These are covered in Section 19 of the *Undergraduate Regulations* and Section 15 of the *Postgraduate Taught Regulations*.

APPENDIX A: FLOWCHART FOR CONSIDERING EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES AND POSSIBLE OUTCOMES (UG)



APPENDIX B: FLOWCHART FOR CONSIDERING EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES AND POSSIBLE OUTCOMES (PGT)



APPENDIX C: GUIDELINES ON THE AVAILABILITY AND DESIGN OF RESIT/ FIRST SIT ASSESSMENTS

1. There are up to three options for students who do not pass a module on the first attempt and **who do not have extenuating circumstances**:
 - **Repeat** the entire module in the following year;
 - **Resit in the following Academic Year** only those pieces of assessment which have been failed;
 - **Resit in the Summer** (August/ September) only those pieces of assessment which have been failed (for first and second year students who satisfy the criteria set out in the College regulations and for postgraduate taught students).

Where a piece of assessment has not been attempted, a mark of zero will be awarded for that piece and will be treated in the same way as an assessment that had been attempted and a mark of zero achieved.

2. There is one further option **ONLY FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS WHO HAVE EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**, namely, First Sit/First Sit for Repeat/ Resit in the Summer and possibly in the following academic year only for a piece of assessment that has not been completed or where the standard of the completed assessment has been severely affected by extenuating circumstances. Marks for pieces of assessment failed or not completed and NOT affected by extenuating circumstances cannot be taken as a First Sit. The marks for such work will be carried forward and included in the calculation of the final module outcome once the First Sit has been completed. This may therefore result in the student failing the module, despite the First Sit opportunity.

Postgraduate students who fail to complete a piece of assessment for consideration at the June examination board due to extenuating circumstances should be given a deferral of assessment and complete the missed assessment, in the original format (missed exam – exam in SVAP; missed piece of coursework – coursework in SVAP).

3. Principles which apply to all Resits

The purpose of a resit is to give a student an opportunity to pass a module without having to attend the module again. This means that in order to qualify for a resit, the student must already have satisfied the requirements for attendance and submission of work on the module in order to return an outcome of Fail. Departments should provide academic advice to a student who has failed, as there are often practical considerations which mean that students are unable or unwilling to repeat a module in attendance, even though it would be to their benefit.

Resits operate on the basis that the student is given an opportunity to redeem **ALL** elements of the assessment which s/he failed on the first attempt, whether in-course assessments or end of year examinations, whilst marks in elements which the student has already passed are carried forward. By contrast, students who *repeat* must satisfy afresh all the requirements for attendance and submission of work on the module. No marks can be carried forward.

4. Principles which apply to all First Sits/ First Sits for Repeat/ Resits (FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY)

The purpose of a **First Sit/ First Sit for Repeat/ Resit** is to give a student an opportunity to pass a module without having to attend the module again. This means that in order to qualify, the student must already have satisfied the requirements for attendance and submission of work on the module, or else these must have been waived **to a limited extent** in line with guidance from Disability and Dyslexia Services. Departments should provide academic advice to a student who has been awarded First Sits in a number or modules and, in particular to a student who has been awarded a First Sit for the second time for a particular piece of assessment (see also 5.13 above).

First Sits operate on the basis that the student is given an opportunity to redeem **ONLY** pieces of assessment which s/he has either failed to complete or where the standard of his/her performance was severely affected by extenuating circumstances deemed acceptable by the College. Marks (passing and failing) for pieces of assessment not affected by extenuating circumstances are carried forward. Although it is anticipated that students will take First Sits over the summer, there may be instances where, due to ongoing ill health or personal circumstances, a First Sit is only taken in the next academic year (see 5 below).

5. Standard Resits/ First Sits or First Sits for Resit/ Repeat in the following academic year

Students who take a standard resit or take a First Sit in the following year must be assessed by the normal method which has been approved for the module. For example, on a module which is assessed on the basis of two coursework essays and an end of year examination, a student who fails both the examination and one essay would have to take the examination again and submit a further essay. This requirement restricts the availability of resits/ First Sits to circumstances in which assessment tasks can be replicated even though the student is not actually attending the module. For example, it may not be possible to offer a resit/ First Sit to a student who has failed a practical or collaborative element of the assessment. In such an event the student will have to repeat the module afresh in order to redeem the failed module.

It is also inevitable that a module will change in some way each time it is delivered. For the most part these will be incremental changes which have limited impact on student assessment. However, there may be more significant changes, because the module either has been revalidated, or was originally validated to provide some flexibility in the module content. **The implications of this for resitting students as well as those who are exceptionally taking First Sits in the following academic year must be considered, in case the extent of change has been such to require separate assessment tasks and/or examination papers to be set from those for students taking the module in its present form.**

6. Summer Resits and First Sits/ First Sit for Resit/ Repeat (the latter only for Undergraduate students with extenuating circumstances)

Students who take a Summer resit/ First Sit in the Summer Vacation Assessment Period (SVAP) may be assessed by the normal method which has been approved for the module, or by an alternative method. If alternative assessment is used, this must involve some additional assessment activity which constitutes a justifiable and efficient assessment of the intended learning outcomes for the module.

In accordance with (3) above, the alternative assessment for resits/ First Sits/ First Sit for Resit/ Repeat must replicate or provide a substitute for **all** elements of the assessment which the student failed on the first attempt or which have been affected by extenuating circumstances respectively. If this is not possible, a resit/ First Sit/ First Sit for Resit/ Repeat cannot be offered. It is important that the intended method of assessment is explained to students from the outset. Students should also be made aware of any assessments which are exempt from Summer resits, as approved by the relevant School Education Committees.

Where students are eligible for Summer Vacation Assessments, the form that this takes must be the same for all students sitting a Summer resit or First Sit, and it should normally be consistent across a degree course. Students should be informed in writing, following the School Progression and Awards Board meeting, what form their assessment will take and, in the case of a resit, its contribution to the final resit module mark.

Departments need to ensure that when alternative assessments which involve the submission of coursework, a submission deadline is set within the official College Summer Vacation Assessment Period so that the work can be marked and the results considered by the College Summer Vacation Assessment Board for undergraduates or by the relevant Autumn term School Progression and Awards Board in the case of summer resits for postgraduate taught students.

Forms that Summer Vacation Assessments may take are outlined below:

A. Failed Examination and Failed all or most of Coursework

- Option 1: Resit Exam and Resit Coursework at original weightings. The coursework may take a different form to the original piece and a number of coursework elements may be combined into one piece of assessment. Marks for passed elements are carried forward
- Option 2: Resit Exam only, scaled up to cover those elements failed. Passing marks are carried forward

B. Failed Examination and Passed all or most of Coursework

- Option 1: Resit Exam at original weighting, coursework marks carried forward from first attempt (passing and failing marks – would need to be made explicit to students)
- Option 2: Resit Exam scaled up to cover failed examination and any failed coursework. Marks for passed elements are carried forward.

C. Passed Examination and Failed Coursework

- Option 1: Resit Coursework at original weightings, examination mark carried forward from first attempt.
- Option 2: Resit failed pieces of Coursework by resubmitting one piece of work which tests the learning outcomes of all pieces.

7. Re-use of coursework/ dissertations previously submitted as part of a resits and First Sit opportunity

A. Resits as a capped second attempt (or a capped third and final attempt)

If a student has failed a piece of work, as well as the module overall and has thus not gained any credit for the work, s/he would be given a capped resit (or capped third and final attempt - PGT). In such circumstances the student may be given the opportunity to submit a revised version of the original failing work, if the Department Assessment Board is willing to grant permission for this course of action. The student is allowed to use the feedback from the assignment to revise his or her work. This applies to coursework as well as dissertation or project work.

Where it is not appropriate to submit the same work, an alternative topic may be set in the case of a coursework essay or an alternative task in line with the guidance above **for summer resits only**.

B. UNDERGRADUATE: What if a student is given a 'first sit' opportunity on a piece of coursework where his/her original submission was affected by extenuating circumstances?

If extenuating circumstances result in a student being allowed to re-submit his or her passing or failing work as a 'first sit' over the summer, the Department Assessment Board must be assured that the student has not been given an unfair advantage over other students. In particular, the re-submission must not have had the benefit of feedback not available to other students on the module. Therefore if a student submitted an essay during the term and received feedback (either individual, in-class, or both) and is given a First Sit opportunity over the summer, they should be given a new piece of coursework.

C. POSTGRADUATE: What if a student is given an 'uncapped resit' opportunity on a piece of coursework where the student's original submission was affected by extenuating circumstances?

If extenuating circumstances result in a student being allowed to re-submit his failing work as part of an 'uncapped resit' opportunity over the summer, the Department Assessment Board must be assured that the student has not been given an unfair advantage over other students. In particular, the re-submission must not have had the benefit of feedback not available to other students on the module. Therefore if a student submitted an essay during the term and received feedback (either individual, in-class, or both) and is given an uncapped resit opportunity over the summer or in the following academic year, they should be given a new piece of coursework.

With respect to dissertations being resat in the following academic year it is at the discretion of the Department Assessment Board whether the student be permitted to submit a revised version of the dissertation or must submit on a new topic.