

Part 3: Assessment regulations for taught courses

Section 5: General regulations

Principles of assessment

- 5.1 Assessment describes any processes that appraise a student's knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills. The Office for Students (OfS) defines various types of assessment under three broad categories.

Diagnostic assessment

Diagnostic assessment is used to show a learner's preparedness for a module or programme and identifies, for the learner and the teacher, any strengths and potential gaps in knowledge, understanding and skills expected at the start of the programme, or other possible problems. Particular strengths may lead to a formal consideration of accreditation of prior learning.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment has a developmental purpose and is designed to help learners learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and on how it can be improved and/or maintained. Reflective practice by students sometimes contributes to formative assessment.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment is used to indicate the extent of a learner's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme.

These regulations are mainly concerned with summative assessment (e.g. coursework and exams) but formative and diagnostic assessment is an important part of the University portfolio. An assessment can also often combine more than one of the above purposes.

- 5.2 The purpose of assessment is to promote and support effective learning and enable students to demonstrate that they have:
- a) met all the intended learning outcomes for each module;
 - b) fulfilled the objectives of the programme of study on which they are registered; and
 - c) achieved the academic standard required for the award.
- 5.3 All courses are subject to course regulations. Course regulations relate the assessment requirements of the course to objectives and intended learning outcomes.

Responsibilities for assessment

- 5.4 Academic Council is responsible under the Articles of Association and its Statutes and Principles (see Section 2: Statutes and Principles) for policies and procedures relating to:
- a) the assessment and examination of the academic performance of students;
 - b) procedures for the award of qualifications;
 - c) the exclusion of students for academic reasons;
 - d) the appointment and removal of examiners.
- 5.5 Academic Council, whilst retaining overriding authority, has delegated to:
- a) Progression and Award Boards: the responsibility for the assessment of students;

- b) the Deputy Registrar (Quality and Standards): the consideration of requests by students for a review of a decision of a Progression and Award Board (academic appeal see Section 16)
- c) the Academic Registrar's Department: the responsibility for the administration of courses.

Student's responsibilities

5.6 It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they are:

- a) registered for the correct modules in accordance with the procedures and deadlines determined annually by the Academic Registrar's Department. ;
- b) eligible for assessment, or reassessment in accordance with the appropriate undergraduate or postgraduate modular frameworks and course or module specific regulations; and
- c) where changing modules, they have done so in accordance with the procedures and deadlines determined annually by the Academic Registrar's Department.

Course assessment regulations

5.7 Every course leading to a named University of Westminster award must publish information that specifies the:

- a) intended learning outcomes at course and module level;
- b) type, timing and content of assessment for each aspect of the course;
- c) weighting of each element of assessment;
- d) arrangements for the submission of coursework, submission deadlines and the return of both marked work and feedback;
- e) conditions for progression to the next stage of the course;
- f) requirements for the award of qualification(s);
- g) decisions open to the Progression and Award Board where the student fails any part of the course;
- h) action to be taken where failure was due to illness or other mitigating circumstances considered as valid within University regulations.

5.8 Course assessment regulations must be consistent with both the assessment regulations of the University and with the regulations of any external validating or Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB), which recognises or accredits the course.

Note: Where there is a conflict between the University assessment regulations and those of a PSRB, accrediting a qualifying award of that body, the regulations of the external accreditation body will take precedence.

5.9 Where there is conflict between the course assessment regulations and those of the University, the University regulations will take precedence, except where the variance has been formally approved by the Academic Registrar through validation, review or the major modifications process.

5.10 Assessment regulations relating to the course must be published and made available to students at the beginning of each academic session in the course handbook.

- 5.11 Changes to course assessment regulations may only be made in accordance with the procedures set out in the University of Westminster [Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook](#). Where changes significantly affect the progress or future assessment of students already registered, the course team must ensure an appropriate level of student consultation about the changes takes place in the semester prior to the change being introduced.
- 5.12 Assessment must be:
- a) robust, valid and test the student's achievement of the intended learning outcomes accurately and fairly at both module and course level whilst at the same time relate that achievement to the national standard of awards;
 - b) appropriate to the subject being studied, the mode of learning and to the students taking the module or course;
 - c) marked and moderated by competent and impartial examiners, against published assessment criteria and methods, which enable them to assess students fairly and consistently.

Academic judgement

- 5.13 Assessment is a matter of academic judgement, not simply computation of marks. Percentages, marks and grades are not absolute values but are used by examiners to represent their judgements on the level of a student's achievement.
- 5.14 Academic judgement cannot be questioned or overturned.
- 5.15 Progression and Award Boards have discretion to interpret these regulations flexibly in the case of individual students. This is subject to the principle that an award may only be made when the student has fulfilled the objectives and intended learning outcomes of the course and achieved the required academic standard.
- 5.16 In case of dispute about the interpretation of these regulations, the decision of the Academic Registrar shall be final.

Failure and reassessment: general requirements

- 5.17 Course assessment regulations must specify which elements and how many elements of assessment must be passed for attainment of an award and make provision for a student to make good any initial failure.
- 5.18 A Progression and Award Board shall not unreasonably withhold permission for a student to be reassessed in accordance with the course and University assessment regulations.
- 5.19 Students will not be permitted to improve upon a mark or grade above the pass level required for the module or award.
- 5.20 Where a module(s) is no longer offered as part of a course and/or it is not practicable for students to be reassessed in the same elements or an alternative module(s), the Progression and Award Board may at its discretion, make special arrangements as it deems appropriate.

Note: Special arrangements deemed appropriate and agreed by a Progression and Award Board should be formally recorded and reported to the Registry and Quality and Standards Office for information.

Mitigating circumstances

- 5.21 The University recognises that some students may at certain times during their studies experience unforeseen and unpreventable circumstances that prevent them from completing

elements of assessment. The regulations governing this procedure are detailed in [Section 11: Mitigating Circumstances Regulations](#).