

Assessment Procedures Validated Degrees

2019-20

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Committee Approval

Committee	Committee Action	Date
QAEC	Recommended approval	26 June 2019
Academic Committee	Approved (Chair's action taken on 6 August 2019)	31 July 2019
	Date in force	30 September 2019

This Assessment Procedures: Validated Degrees document will be reviewed annually by our Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee. Any amendments require the approval of our Academic Committee.

1. Introduction

It is through these Assessment Procedures that Bloomsbury Institute has established and will maintain standards of quality assurance throughout the whole assessment process on our validated degrees.

The Assessment Procedures: Validated Degrees lays out the responsibilities of staff, forms and timelines involved in the operational activities for the creation and implementation of Assessment Briefs and assessment activities.

These procedures are subject to any regulations, policies and procedures established by the University of Northampton (UoN).

The assessment process is monitored by the Assessment Team through the completion of an **Assessment Approval Log** and **Assessment Marking Log**. There are separate Logs which can be easily filtered at course level as follows:

- Foundation Year
- BA (Hons) Accounting and Financial Management
- BA (Hons) Business and Management
- LLB (Hons) Law

These Logs record each stage of the assessment procedures set out below for each item of assessment within each module.

2. Related Documents and Procedures

The key documents and procedures which are linked to the Assessment Procedures: Validated Degrees document are as follows:

- Disability Policy
- Guidelines for the Assessment and Marking of Work by Students with Specific Learning Difficulties
- Information Control Procedures
- University of Northampton Mitigating Circumstances Policy
- University of Northampton Academic Misconduct Policy
- UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: External Expertise
- UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Assessment

3. Forms

The key forms which are used throughout the assessment process are as follows:

- Assessment Approval Log: Log 1
- Assessment Marking Log: Log 2
- Assessment Task Form: AF1T
- Marking Standardisation Form: AF2
- Moderation Form: AF3
- External Moderation Form: AF4
- External Examiner Assessment Task Approval Form: AF5
- Submission Date Change Request Form: AF6
- Late Grade Change Form: AF7

4. Key definitions

4.1 Assessment

Modules can be assessed in different ways, depending upon the nature of the module, its level, content and learning outcomes. Generally, there are three types of **assessment**:

- **Assignment:** e.g. essay, problem question, case study and seen examination
- **Examination:** any unseen examination (i.e. where the student is not provided with the questions beforehand)
- **Time Constrained Assessment (TCA):** a class assessment that can occur during teaching hours

Only a few modules will have an unseen examination and/or TCA alone. Most will be assessed by assignments, others a mixture of all three. Assignments may be text based or non-text based. Text based assignments consist of essays, problem questions, case studies and seen examinations. Non-text-based assignments include presentations and moots.

4.2 Item of assessment

Each module will normally have two separate **items of assessment**.

4.3 Assessment Review Team

The members of the **Assessment Review Team** include academic staff who have wide experience of higher education assessment procedures across Levels 0, and 4 to 6. They will have oversight of the whole assessment process and may be required to advise on specific assessment decisions.

4.4 Assessment Team

The **Assessment Team** completes the administrative elements of all forms and ensures that assessment items, coverage of learning outcomes, re-sits, and technical checks have all been addressed or completed. Where applicable, the Assessment Team passes the completed forms to the Assessment Review Team.

4.5 Assessment Task

All **Assessment** tasks are written by the Module Leader (see **Section 5**).

4.6 Assessment Brief

Once the assessment task has been approved, the task is inserted into the Assessment Brief, which includes the following:

- Assessment structure and weighting
- Learning outcomes for the item of assessment
- An explanation of the assessment grading
- Details of each assignment (i.e. for each item of assessment, unless it is an unseen examination)
 - The assignment task (e.g. question(s)), if the assignment is a seen examination, full details of the examination must be provided, to include the questions.
 - Guidance to complete the assignment
 - Submission requirements
- Details of any unseen examination:
 - Duration of the examination (including, if applicable, reading time)
 - Material which may be brought into the examination (if applicable)
 - Structure (e.g. number of questions set; number of questions to be answered; whether there are any compulsory questions; allocation of marks)
 - The syllabus content that will be examined
- Extensions and mitigating circumstances
- Appendix 1: Submission Check List
- Appendix 2: Declaration of authorship

4.7 Marking Scheme

The Module Leader must also provide a Marking Scheme for each item of assessment

4.8 Marking Team

A Marking Team is established for every module. If a module is delivered by more than one academic, the Marking Team comprises the Module Leader and the Module Tutor(s). If the module is delivered by one academic, the Marking Team comprises the Module Leader and an academic who will undertake, where required, standardisation and moderation for that module.

4.9 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) is an intermediate committee, sitting above the Course Committees and below the Academic Committee, the purpose of which is to work alongside the Senior Management and Leadership Team in contributing to the effective setting and maintaining of academic standards and the assuring and enhancing of academic quality.

As set out in our Corporate and Academic Governance Framework, the QAEC is responsible for, *inter alia*:

- Recommending to Academic Committee the approval and/or amendment thereto of Assessment Procedures - Validated Degrees
- Considering and approving reports to our university partner(s), External Examiners and other external quality assurance organisations such as the QAA
- Receiving External Examiner Reports and approving External Examiner Response Forms and providing an oversight of the completion of any actions and monitoring the responses to these reports by, *inter alia*, the Course Committees

In addition to the QAEC, we have a Senior Academic Leadership Team (SALT), the role of which is to ensure effective management and leadership throughout the Academic Division. Information which relates to maintaining academic standards and the enhancement of academic quality is disseminated and discussed within the SALT. Issues relating to assessment and the operation of these Assessment Procedures will be considered by the SALT and (if appropriate) referred to the QAEC.

5. Setting the Assessment Task

We set the dates for assessments and write the assessments for all validated degrees.

As stated at **Section 4.1** above, modules can be assessed in different ways, depending upon the nature of the module, its level, content and learning outcomes. Generally, there are three types of assessment:

- **Assignment:** e.g. essay, problem question, case study and seen examination
- **Examination:** any unseen examination (i.e. where the student is not provided with the questions beforehand)
- **TCA:** any in-class examination (i.e. where the student is not provided with the questions beforehand)

Each module will normally have two separate **items of assessment**: (i) two assignments; or (ii) one assignment and one unseen examination/TCA.

5.1 Assessment task, examination paper and marking scheme

An assessment task is written by the Module Leader for each item of assessment. The tasks are submitted for approval using the Assessment Task Form [AF1T].

The Module Leader must also provide a marking scheme for the assessment task and examination, to include the academic disciplinary content that should be included within the assignment.

5.1.1 Examination paper

Examination questions are written by the Module Leader. These are converted into an examination paper by the Assessment Team using the standard Examination Template. The Examination Template includes the following:

- Front Page
 - Date, time and duration of the examination (including, if applicable, reading time)
 - Number of questions to be answered (including, if applicable, any compulsory questions)
 - Allocation of marks
 - Material which may be brought into the examination
- Examination Questions

A reserve examination paper must be produced by the Module Leader in case there is a security issue with one of the papers.

NB: If a past examination paper is not available (e.g. because this is the first time the module has been delivered), a sample examination paper must also be provided. The sample examination paper may be made available to students at the start of the semester, together with the Assessment Brief.

5.2 Approving assessment tasks and examinations

The Assessment Team draws up and distributes the *Assessment Tasks and Briefs Timeline* and allocates reviewers and proofers to each module. At this stage, the Assessment Team also distributes the up to date Module Specification to the Module Leaders. This is to ensure the most relevant specifications are being used to create the tasks.

The Module Leader writes all assessment tasks (first take and re-sit/resubmission) and marking schemes. The Assessment Task Form [AF1T] is used for writing the assessment tasks.

The Module Leader uploads the Assessment Task Forms and marking schemes to the relevant folder. The Module Specification used to create the assessment task must also be uploaded.

The Assessment Task Reviewer reviews the assessment tasks and marking schemes and completes the relevant section of the Assessment Task Form. The Assessment Reviewer liaises with the Module Leader (and Assessment Team) over amendments (if any), with feedback recorded on the Assessment Task Form.

This process continues until the assessment task and examination are agreed.

The tasks are then proofread. The proof-reader liaises with the Module Leader over any changes required. The proof-reader completes the relevant section of the Assessment Task Form. Once the tasks have been finalised, the Module Leader notifies the Assessment Team.

The Assessment Team forwards them to the External Examiner for approval, if applicable. The Assessment Team records this on Log 1. The External Examiner reviews the assessment tasks and sends feedback/comments to the Assessment Team.

The Assessment Team sends the External Examiner's comments and feedback to the relevant Module Leader to action, saves the External Examiner Assessment Task Approval Form [AF5], and logs receipt on the Log 1. Outcomes of this process are made available to the Assessment Review Team.

If applicable, the Assessment Team returns amended Assessment Tasks to the External Examiner for final approval. The External Examiner sends the final version of the External Examiner Assessment Task Approval Form to the Assessment Team.

The Assessment Team embeds the final agreed assessment task into the Assessment Brief.

In Week 0 of the academic year, the Module Leader publishes the Assessment Brief on Canvas, together with the Module Study Guide.

5.3 Presentation to students

Assessment Briefs will be presented to students at the beginning of the semester. Assessment Briefs should be posted in the Syllabus area of each module area on Canvas. AS1 and AS2 should be posted at the beginning of the semester (by Week 1). The Assessment Briefs should be posted below the Module Study Guides.

5.4 Submission date changes

If a Module Leader wishes to change the submission date for any element of assessment, the Submission Date Change Request Form [AF6] needs to be completed.

5.5 Examination arrangements

Examinations must be securely stored by the Assessment Team unless they are seen examinations.

The Assessment Team will be responsible for making all necessary examination arrangements (for both seen and unseen examinations), to include:

- Setting the examination timetable (to include any special arrangements for any students who are eligible for a reasonable adjustment to the standard examination)
- Arranging and training invigilators
- Printing copies of all examination papers
- Setting up each examination room on the day of the exam
- Collecting completed examination scripts
- Recording attendance
- Receiving invigilator reports and taking any action, as required
- Distributing examination scripts for marking
- Receiving marked scripts
- Arranging moderation
- Arranging moderation by the External Examiner (if applicable)

6. Marking the assessment

The following stages work towards grades being released to students no later than 20 working days after submission:

- The Module Leader provides the Marking Scheme and a copy of the Grade Criteria for the specific level
- Where applicable, the Marking Team completes a standardisation exercise through which the Marking Team agrees the grades for a sample of between three and five scripts before the marking starts
- The scripts are moderated by the Marking Team
- For modules at Levels 5 and above (and modules at Level 4 if specified by a professional body), the scripts are also moderated by an External Examiner
- At the end of the marking process a Grade Distribution Report is produced for each module which informs completion of the Module Monitoring Report (MMR) and subsequent Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report (AMER).

These stages are now considered in further detail.

6.1 Marking Scheme and Grade Criteria

The Module Leader must distribute a Marking Scheme to the Marking Team, to include the academic disciplinary content that should be included within an answer.

The Grade Criteria (see Appendix 1) are presented to students in the Assessment Briefs.

All written assignments will include clear guidance in the Assessment Brief on the maximum amount that should be written in order to address the requirements of the assignment (a 'word limit'). If a student's work exceeds the stipulated word limit by more than 10%, it will only be marked up to and including the additional 10% (i.e. the excess will not be taken into account when awarding a grade for the assignment). Abstracts, footnotes, reference lists, bibliographies and appendices are excluded from any word limit requirements.

If a student's work is under the word limit, the full work will be marked on the extent to which the requirements of the assignment have been met. Generally speaking, if a student's work is substantially under the word limit it will fall short of the requirements of the assignment.

6.2 Standardisation

Standardisation ensures there is a shared understanding of the marking criteria, and the awarding of grades is clear and in line with modules' level learning outcomes.

Standardisation is carried out on scripts that have not been marked and with markers who have not marked that item of assessment before.

A Marking Team will be established for every module. If a module is delivered by more than one academic, the Marking Team will comprise the Module Leader and the Module Tutor(s). If the module is delivered by one academic, the Marking Team will comprise the Module Leader and an academic who will undertake moderation for that module.

There is no standardisation when there is only one academic delivering the module, unless the module is being delivered for the first time, or the academic delivering the module is new to Bloomsbury Institute and is therefore marking the module for the first time. In such cases, standardisation must take place.

The Marking Team completes a standardisation exercise through which the Marking Team agrees the grades for a sample of between three and five assessments before the marking starts. This exercise is completed as follows:

- The Module Leader (ML) provisionally marks the sample of assessments
- The ML circulates the assessments [without revealing what grade the ML awarded the assessments] to each member of the Marking Team who are required to mark each assessment
- The members of the Marking Team submit the marked assessments to the ML
- The ML convenes a standardisation meeting between the members of the Marking Team to agree the grades for the sample
- If the Marking Team cannot agree the grades for the sample, the matter is referred to a member of the Assessment Review Team [through the Assessment Team] and ultimately to a formal meeting of the Assessment Review Team

All the above stages are recorded in the Marking Standardisation Form (**AF2**) and sent to the Assessment Team within 7 working days of the assessment submission date.

6.3 Moderation

Once first marking has been completed, moderation is completed as follows:

- The Assessment Team and/or Module Leader collates a sample of assessments for moderation, to include all assessments at grades A and F and 10% of a range of assessments at Grades B, C and D. If the total number is less than 8 then all assessments will be moderated.
- In cases where multiple markers have marked the same assessment, the sample selection method would apply to all markers. In other words, the sample selection should take place for each marker as per the above-mentioned percentages.
- For Foundation Year modules, the sample is reduced to 25% of assessments at grades A and F and 5% of a range of assessments at Grades B, C and D. If the total number is less than 8 then all assessments will be moderated.
- For examinations, the moderated scripts should be submitted with the moderation form to the Assessment Team.
- The Assessment Team will request a different member of the Marking Team (referred to as the “moderator”) to moderate an assessment. The moderator will state whether the awarded grade is agreed or not.
- If the moderator disagrees with the grade awarded, a discussion must be held between the original marker and the moderator. Once agreement is reached, a note of the discussion should be kept in the Canvas moderation column. This note should include a record of how grade difference was resolved.
- All Principal Modules (i.e. research projects and dissertations) are second marked and, therefore, no further moderation takes place.

6.3.1 Difference in grades

At **Levels 0 and 4**, if grades awarded by the moderator differ from those of the first marker by one full grade or greater, all scripts marked by the first marker must be moderated.

Example 1:

- First marker: A+
- Second marker: A-

Outcome: No requirement for all scripts to be moderated.

Example 2:

- First marker: A+
- Second marker: B+

Outcome: All scripts to be moderated.

At **Levels 5, 6, and 7** if grades awarded by the moderator differ from those of the first marker by more than one grade boundary, all scripts marked by the first marker must be moderated.

Example 1:

- First marker: A+
- Second marker: A

Outcome: No requirement for all scripts to be moderated.

Example 2:

- First marker: A+
- Second marker: A-

Outcome: All scripts to be moderated.

All the above stages are recorded in the Moderation Form (**AF3**), which is sent to the Assessment Team.

6.4 External Moderation

The external examiner's role is to moderate marking standards, not to re-mark assessed work. Where marking standards are judged to be acceptable the external examiner will confirm this.

Once moderation has been completed, for all modules at Level 5 and above (also for Level 4 modules if required by a professional body), external moderation on a smaller sample of the original moderated sample is completed as follows:

- The Assessment Team sends the collated sample of internally moderated assessments to the External Examiner for external moderation; the sample includes 25% of scripts at grades A and F and 10% of all scripts at Grades B, C and D. If the total number of assessments is less than 8, then all assessments will be moderated.

Where the external examiner disagrees with one or more grades, one of the following may be applied, at the request of the external examiner:

- An individual grade can be changed provided the external examiner moderates all the assessments
- The external examiner requires all the assessments to be remarked (and then re-moderated by the external examiner)

The External Examiner will be provided, upon request, with access to all assessments to enable the External to increase the size of the sample.

All the above stages are recorded in the External Moderation Form (**AF4**).

6.5 Re-sits / Resubmissions

6.5.1 Standardisation

The standardisation for re-sits/resubmissions must be carried out if the item of assessment is new (i.e. AS1r or AS2r), or the designated marker has not marked the item of assessment before.

If the student is submitting the same item of assessment and the marker has marked this within the first sit/submission assessment cycle, then standardisation is not required.

Standardisation of re-sits and resubmissions must be recorded on the Marking Standardisation Form (**AF2**).

6.5.2 Moderation

For re-sits/resubmissions, moderation is only carried out on all F grades, all initial merit D- grades, and any scripts that have been submitted with mitigating circumstances [i.e. the grade will not be capped]. Moderated scripts are recorded on the Moderation Form (**AF3**).

6.5.3 External Moderation

Re-sits/resubmissions are not required to be sent to the External Examiners for moderation.

6.6 Canvas Grades

The Module Leader holds the responsibility to insert grades into Canvas. The following rules apply:

- First Sit/Submission, grades should be inserted into the columns in Canvas as follows:
 - Initial column: merit grade, only when moderation and suspected academic misconduct has taken place.
 - Moderated column: moderated grade
 - Final column: agreed grade between first marker and moderator.

NB: if the submission is late, then **only** the Final grade should be capped at D-.

- For all re-sits/resubmissions, grades should be inserted into the columns in Canvas as follows:
 - Initial column: merit grade, only when moderation and suspected academic misconduct has taken place.

- Moderated column: moderated grade
- Final column: capped grade (D-)

6.6.1 Canvas cut-off deadlines

The Assessment Team will provide academics with Canvas cut-off dates. Academic staff or any other professional services staff will not be able to make any changes to grades after these dates.

It is accepted that there could be instances where a change may be required after the deadline has lapsed; however only the Assessment Team has authorisation to make such a change. For more details please see below.

Changes to grades after Canvas cut-off

There could be instances where changes to the grades are required to be made after the Canvas cut-off deadline has passed.

Members of the Assessment Team are the only authorised individuals who can make a change to grade/s after the deadlines. The following are examples of when such changes may be required:

- Outcomes received for academic misconduct. This will result in the need to change the grade from ZZ to the grade awarded as per the outcome. This could have two stages, firstly, where the student attended a viva and the outcome was confirmed at this stage, and secondly, where the academic misconduct case is referred to a Panel at University of Northampton and an outcome has been received.
- Outcomes received for mitigating circumstances. This will result in the need to change the grade from ZZ to the grade awarded as per the outcome.

Further details of Academic Misconduct Process can be found in Appendix 2 of this document.

- Grade change as a result of moderation activity
- Missed grade as per the original cut-off deadline
- Late marking of assessment
- Incorrect grade

All the above changes have to be reported to the Assessment Team as a matter of urgency using the AF7 form.

Any grade changes after the Canvas cut-off deadline where the AF7 form has not been used will not be considered for the purposes of assessment boards and may be changed back to the original grade by the Assessment Team. Use of the AF7 form after the assessment board has to be authorised by Chair of Boards.

If any changes are required, the Late Grade Changes form (**AF7**) must be completed and submitted to the Assessment Team.

6.7 Grade Distribution Report

Following completion of the marking process, a Grade Distribution Report (i.e. a marks' matrix) is provided for each module cohort indicating:

- Student grade scores
- Aggregate scores including average and standard deviation statistics

- Year-on-year comparison statistics

The Grade Distribution Report informs completion of the Module Monitoring Report and the subsequent Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report.

7. Assessment Grading

The University of Northampton marks in letter grades rather than numerical marks. This is considered to deliver the most accurate and fair outcomes for students. The table below shows how each letter grade could be converted to a numerical mark:

Letter Grade	Percentage Mark
A+	90
A	78
A-	73
B+	68
B	65
B-	61
C+	58
C	55
C-	51
D+	48
D	45
D-	41
F+	38
F	27
F-	13
H	5 [Mitigating Circumstances Approved]
ZZ	4 [Holding Grade]
G	0 [Non-Submission]
LG	3 [Late Submission]
NG	2 [Nothing of Merit]
AG	1 [AMP Outcome (Academic Misconduct Panel)]

Each assessment [assignment and exam] that a student completes will be marked using the common grading system: The Grade Criteria (see **Section 6.1** above and **Appendix 1**).

In addition to the above criteria-based grades, there are two grade indicators which represent either a withheld decision or an upheld decision:

- If the student has either applied for mitigating circumstances (MCs) or is under investigation for suspected academic misconduct (AM), a holding grade of ZZ will be used. This holding grade can also be used for other administrative reasons.
- A ZZ grade for suspected academic misconduct is added by the marking tutor during the marking process in the Final grade column in Canvas.
- A ZZ grade for mitigating circumstances is added by Academic Administration in the Final grade column in Canvas.
- If a mitigating circumstances application has been upheld, then a grade of H is used. Academic Administration adds the H grade in the Final grade column in Canvas.

A note should also be added by the Marking Tutor and/or Academic Administration in the note column in Canvas when an application of MCs has been made.

Academic misconduct or mitigating circumstances outcomes will only be applied to a whole assessment item, not to individual sub-component parts (i.e. presentation and submission).

NB: If the student has applied for MCs, then there should not be a submission. If the student makes a submission, then the MCs will not be considered and a general rule of 'fit to submit/sit' applies.

7.1 Passing a module

To pass a module, a student must achieve an overall grade of at least D- in the assessment of that module. The items of assessment for each module and their weightings are published in the Assessment Brief. The weighting of the assessment gives an indication of its significance, and below are two examples of assessment patterns:

- 2-hour exam (weighted at 60%) and a 2,000-word essay (weighted at 40%)
- Portfolio (100%)

It is possible that because a student only needs to get a D- overall, if the student achieves a fail grade in one item of assessment the student may still be able to pass the module, provided a pass grade is achieved in another item of assessment. However, if the item of assessment which is failed is weighted at (for example) 70%, it may be very difficult to pass the module.

NB: Some modules carry a professional body exemption and have a different pass requirement:

- To pass modules in AFM and ensure they have gained the professional body (ACCA and CIMA) exemptions, students must obtain a minimum grade of F+ in each item of assessment and a minimum overall grade of D- for the module. If they obtain a D- overall but have one item of assessment with lower than an F+, they will have passed the module, but not gained the exemptions.
- To pass LLB CILEx modules and ensure they have gained the professional body requirement for admission as a Graduate Member, they must obtain a minimum overall grade of C- for the module. There is no minimum requirement for individual elements of assessment. If they obtain a D- overall, they will have passed the module, but not gained the CILEx requirement.

7.1.1 Condonement for Foundation Year modules

From 2017-18 onwards, Foundation Year modules up to a credit value of 40 may be condoned. In other words, a student passing three FY modules and achieving F+ in the fourth module will be condoned for the F+ grade and will not have to repeat that module.

7.1.2 Calculating the overall module grade

To calculate the overall module grade, for each item of assessment the University of Northampton converts each letter grade (e.g. A+) to a number (referred to as the "item value"). The following steps are then completed:

- the relevant weighting is applied to the "item value"
- the weighted item values for each item of assessment are added together
- the total is converted back to a letter grade (using the "total module value")

The number (i.e. the item value) to which grades are converted are not percentages. See columns 1 and 2 in the table below for the number (i.e. the item value) to which each grade is converted.

Taking the example of the module above with a 2-hour exam (weighted at 60%) and a 2,000-word essay (weighted at 40%), if a student passed the exam with a D+ and the essay with a B-, the overall grade will be calculated as follows:

- 60% of 14pts (see [1] in the table below) = 8.4pts
- 40% of 18pts (see [2] in the table below) = 7.2pts
- 8.4pts + 7.2pts = 15.6pts = C (see [3] in the table below)

A student may have passed the module overall but may still have an opportunity outstanding for an item of assessment; this may be a referred or deferred item. In this situation, a student can be allowed to undertake the outstanding item of assessment to improve their overall module grade, but they do not have to.

ITEM GRADE	ITEM VALUE	TOTAL MODULE VALUE	MODULE GRADE
A+	25	24.0 or more	A+
A	23	22.0 - 23.99	A
A-	21	20.5 - 21.99	A-
B+	20	19.5 - 20.49	B+
B	19	18.5 - 19.49	B
B-	18	17.5 - 18.49	B-
C+	17	16.5 - 17.49	C+
C	16	15.5 - 16.49	C
C-	15	14.5 - 15.49	C-
D+	14	13.5 - 14.49	D+
D	13	12.5 - 13.49	D
D-	12	11.5 - 12.49	D-
F+	11	9.50 - 11.49	F+
F	8	6.00 - 9.49	F
F-	4	2.00 - 5.99	F-
G	0	0.00 - 0.99	G

Diagram annotations: [1] points to the D+ row (Item Value 14), [2] points to the B- row (Item Value 18), and [3] points to the C row (Total Module Value 15.5 - 16.49).

7.2 Resubmitting / Re-sitting assessments

If a student fails an item of assessment (i.e. achieves an F+, F or F-), the student needs to rework their original submission. If a student receives any G grade (i.e. G, NG, LG or AG) or has an upheld mitigating circumstances claim, then the student will need to use the resubmission Assessment Brief. If a student fails an examination or TCA, the student will have to re-sit a new paper. The resubmission/re-sit period will be published in the Module Study Guides.

A student is only allowed one resubmission/re-sit opportunity. If the student passes at the second attempt, the mark will be capped at 'D-', unless the student has successfully applied for mitigating circumstances to be taken into account. Students are strongly advised to resubmit/re-sit when they receive a fail grade (i.e. F+, F, F- or G), approved mitigating circumstances and/or a holding grade (i.e. ZZ) as there will be no further opportunities to resubmit/re-sit after the deadline for resubmission/re-sit

If a student gets a G, LG, AG or NG grade **for both items of assessment at the first opportunity**, the student **may lose** any opportunity to resubmit/re-sit for that module.

NB: No extensions can be granted for resubmission/re-sit work, and, therefore, all resubmission/re-sit work must be completed by the deadline given.

Outstanding resubmissions may affect a student's ability to attend graduation, even if the work has been marked and grades provisionally released.

7.2.1 Resubmission / Re-sit support sessions

Support sessions will be timetabled for students who have to resubmit an assignment and/or re-sit an examination.

There will be separate periods for students who start in September and for students starting in January.

If a student has failed an assignment and wants to complete the resubmission assignment early the student will be provided with in-year support by the Module Leader and/or Module Tutor. However, the student can only formally resubmit the assignment during the resubmission period assigned to the intake.

7.3 Extensions and Mitigating Circumstances

Applications for extensions and mitigating circumstances, with supporting evidence (such as medical certificates), should be made through the Student Self-service Portal (SSP).

7.3.1 Extensions

If a student experiences unforeseen circumstances that may prevent him/her submitting an assignment at the first opportunity, it is possible to request an extension of up to two weeks. The length of extension requested will be evaluated by the Academic Administration Team.

The granting of an extension will depend upon the nature of the difficulty the student is experiencing, whether the difficulty could and should have been anticipated, and the extent to which the circumstances were outside of the student's control. For example, health difficulties would usually provide legitimate grounds for an extension; last minute computer issues or clashing deadlines would not. If an extension of up to two weeks is not sufficient the student should make a claim for mitigating circumstances.

NB: No extensions can be granted for TCAs and examinations, and no extensions can be granted for resubmission/re-sit.

7.3.2 Mitigating circumstances

Mitigating circumstances are defined as a serious or acute problem, or an event beyond a student's control or ability to foresee, which has prevented completion of assignment/s or attendance at examination/s. If a student is experiencing unforeseen or unexpected events – such as serious illness or severe disruption to their personal life – that may affect the student's ability to take assignment/s or sit examination/s, the student should meet with their Module Leader, Course Leader, Academic Administrator or a Student Wellbeing Advisor to discuss available options.

If a student is unable to sit an exam or submit an assignment, the student may be able to claim mitigating circumstances, which, if accepted, would allow the student to complete the assessment for the first time at a later date, and receive an uncapped mark for it. The assessment would be taken at the next sitting or the assignment would be submitted at the next submission opportunity. The outcome of mitigating circumstances application will determine whether the grade is capped or not. A claim for mitigating circumstances, with supporting evidence, must normally be submitted before the original due date of the assessment.

NB: The University of Northampton has a 'fit to sit' policy, under which mitigating circumstance cannot be applied for. Please refer to the policy for information.

The University of Northampton's Mitigating Circumstances Policy can be accessed through Part D of the Quality and Enhancement Manual:

<https://www.bil.ac.uk/all-policies>

7.4 Students with Disabilities

If a student has a disability or specific learning difficulty and requires additional support, they are advised to contact the Disability and Wellbeing Advisor: disability@bil.ac.uk.

We operate a Dyslexia Sticker Scheme, through which marking tutors are alerted to examination and TCA scripts that have been written by students with dyslexia. Information on this can be found in an appendix of our Disability Policy, which can be accessed through Part D of the Quality and Enhancement Manual.

7.5 Plagiarism and Cheating

Plagiarism is passing the work of another off as the student's own, whether by copying from a text book, an internet site, another student etc. In the latter case, the student whose work is copied is liable to be regarded as having colluded in the plagiarism and is therefore also liable to the imposition of a penalty. This is regarded by ourselves, the University of Northampton (and all universities) and professional bodies as a very serious matter. Instances of suspected plagiarism will be investigated by one of our Academic Integrity Officers.

Procedures are in place to deal with both suspected and proven plagiarism.

Cheating or attempting to cheat in exams is also regarded as a serious matter. This will be reported and the student will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant procedures.

Online guidance to help avoid plagiarism is available through the University of Northampton's Skills Hub¹, within the 'Academic Skills' section. Additionally, our Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success (SEWS) provides students with support, guidance and tuition in all areas of academic skills and English language. The service is aimed at improving academic performance, regardless of existing level. The support is called StudyPlus and can be accessed by emailing: studyplus@bil.ac.uk or visiting the SEWS Centre at Gower Street.

8. Feed-forward and feedback

The provision of effective and timely feed-forward and feedback is a key component of our academic strategy.

Feed-forward refers to timely and constructive feedback that feeds into the next assignment point (Sadler, 2010). If students are provided with the opportunity to receive feed-forward 'it can be assumed that tutors have the opportunity to improve student performance and satisfaction' (Hine & Northeast, 2016).

Several types of feed-forward and feedback are provided at various times during the assessment process. Prior to completing an assessment, feed-forward will be provided on a sample of written work. Once an assessment is completed, summative feedback will be provided. If a student fails to pass the assessment, this summative feedback will additionally act as feed-forward for the resubmission or resit. If a student passes the assessment, this summative feedback will likewise additionally act as formative feedback for future assessment.

Feed-forward and feedback is provided in several forms, written and verbal.

8.1 General feedback policy

Feed-forward and feedback will be provided to a student at the following stages:

- In writing on a sample of written work (feed-forward)

¹ skillshub.northampton.ac.uk/

- Verbally on a sample of written work (feed-forward)
- In writing after marking an assignment
- Verbally after marking an assignment
- Verbally after marking an examination

8.2 Written and verbal feed-forward on a sample of written work

Students are expected to have an opportunity to be provided with feed-forward prior to completing an assessment. Lecturers should either: (i) encourage students to start on their assignment as soon as possible and to provide an early draft for feed-forward; or (ii) set students a separate piece of written work for marking and feed-forward. If the assessment is a closed-book examination, a separate piece of written work should be set for marking and feed-forward.

Verbal feed-forward is a key stage in a student's learning process. After written feed-forward has been provided, lecturers should provide students with additional advice and support on how to improve their assignment. This may be provided either one-to-one or within groups. In groups, the teacher can display a model and allow students to compare their work with the model and thereby generate their own formative feedback. This process engages students in assessing their own work and responding to its deficiencies. Additionally, the model empowers students to regulate their own thinking to become independent learners by constructing knowledge thus developing their ability to become lifelong learners (Sadiq, n.d.).

This verbal feed-forward also provides students with an opportunity to ask questions and receive further clarification on any written comments that they did not understand. Finally, it allows lecturers to provide encouragement and reassurance to students who are concerned about whether they will be able to succeed or positive reinforcement to those students who did well. This verbal feed-forward should be considered as complementary to the written feed-forward rather than as an alternative to, or duplication thereof.

Bloomsbury Institute has agreed limits (per level of study) to the amount of individual feed-forward that can be provided to students. These limits, and additional information on feed-forward, are stated in all Course Handbooks:

Prior to the final submission of an assignment, you will be offered the opportunity to gain 'feed-forward' on your draft work. This is offered to help you target your study activities and develop your ideas; this feed-forward will not include any indications of speculative grading. In the context of your development through the stages of your studies, the detail and extent of pre-submission feed-forward will reduce as you progress. There is a specified maximum level of pre-submission feed-forward on which the tutor can comment:

- *Foundation Year: Assignment plan **and** 50% of assignment*
- *Level 4: Assignment plan **and** 20% of assignment*
- *Levels 5 & 6: Assignment plan **or** 20% of assignment*

NB: *to receive feed-forward on your draft work, you will have to submit the work **at least 10 working days** prior to the submission deadline.*

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8.3 Written and verbal feedback after marking an assignment

Summative written feedback will be provided for all assignments. As previously stated, if a student fails to pass the assignment, this feedback will additionally act as feed-forward for the resubmission. If a student passes the assignment, this feedback will likewise additionally act as formative feedback for future assessments.

After written feedback has been provided, lecturers should provide students with additional advice and support on how to improve their assignment. This may be provided either one-to-one or within groups. This also provides students with an opportunity to ask questions and receive further clarification on any written comments that they did not understand. Finally, it allows lecturers to provide encouragement and reassurance to students who are concerned about whether they will be able to succeed or positive reinforcement to those students who did well.

8.4 Verbal feedback after marking an examination

Lecturers should provide students with advice and support on how to improve their examination performance. This may be provided either one-to-one or within groups. Students should be provided with an opportunity to ask questions. This also allows lecturers to provide encouragement and reassurance to students who are concerned about whether they will be able to succeed or positive reinforcement to those students who did well.

NB: an examination script can be shown to, and discussed with, a student. However, scripts must not be released to a student.

8.5 Good practice

Feed-forward and feedback should be considered as part of the teaching and learning process rather than simply a way of communicating results. As such, good quality feedback should have the following attributes:

Constructive

Feedback should be constructive rather than destructive. It should therefore focus on how a student can improve rather than simply on what the student did wrong. While it is inevitable that feedback will point out errors that the student has made, this should be done only in order to go on to show how those errors can be resolved or avoided in future. Constructive feedback will also cover the areas in which the student did well in addition to areas for improvement. In many cases the student may not know which areas were right and so by reinforcing good practice as well as improving poor practice, we can improve their overall future performance.

Feedback should also be given with an understanding and sensitivity to the fact that the student may have a Specific Learning Difficulty. Please refer to our *Guidelines for the Assessment and Marking of Work by Students with Specific Learning Difficulties* which is available from the Disability Office.

Align with learning outcomes

Biggs ((2003), quoted in HEA 2013b) states that a key theme within UK Higher Education over recent years has been that assessment should 'align' with the learning outcomes that we expect students to demonstrate and that these should relate to the level or stage of the course. This means that feedback should be tied directly to the learning outcomes of the relevant module and should be expressed in terms similar to those used in the learning outcomes.

Prioritise

HEA guidance on feedback (HEA 2013b) states that feedback should not simply list everything that is wrong with a piece of work, but rather we should prioritise the main areas for improvement.

Appropriate level

Part of giving students realistic, manageable, targets for improvement within feedback means matching those targets to the level of the course of study. The key reference point is the [QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications \(FHEQ\)](#) which was published in 2014: Therefore, the expectation of a student completing a Level 4 module is different than for a module at Level 5, 6 or 7. This links to learning outcomes, because the learning outcomes for a module will have been written to recognise the level at which the module is being delivered.

Achieving the next level

In each case, feedback must focus on helping a student to improve and this means helping the student to achieve the next level. If a student has not passed an item of assessment, then the feedback should explain why they have received this mark and what they would need to change or improve in order to pass. In the case of a student who has passed an item of assessment, the feedback should focus on what they would need to do to achieve a higher grade. Even for students who achieve the highest grade, feedback should be provided to explain to the student what they can do to ensure they score equally high grades for future work, at a higher level.

9. External Examining

As per the UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: External Expertise, external examining provides one of the principal means for maintaining UK academic standards within autonomous higher education providers. External examining is, therefore, an integral and essential part of institutional quality assurance. External Examiners are individuals [drawn from academia and also from industry, business and the professions], who are appointed in accordance with the criteria set out in Indicator 5 of the QAA Code for External Examining. Not every External Examiner is necessarily required to meet all the criteria.

External Examiners are appointed to provide each degree-awarding body with impartial and independent advice, as well as informative comment on the degree-awarding body's standards and on student achievement in relation to those standards. The specific responsibility of each External Examiner is dependent on the role allocated by the degree-awarding body on appointment, and may be at different levels depending on the nature of the provision and the way in which a degree-awarding body's decision-making processes about assessment are structured.

In principle, External Examiners should test that:

- The types of assessment are appropriate for the subject, the students, the respective level of study and the expected outcomes
- The marking scheme/grading criteria have been properly and consistently applied, and that internal marking is therefore of an appropriate standard, fair and reliable.

In viewing samples of students' work, External Examiners are not normally in a position to expect or encourage an Examination Board to raise or lower marks for individual students, on the basis that such a practice would be unfair to those candidates whose work is not part of the sample.

Degree awarding bodies ensure that External Examiners are clearly briefed to carry out the role. Briefing includes confirmation of the module(s), programme(s) or award(s) to which the External Examiner is appointed; the evidence that he/she requires to provide oversight; clarity about his/her precise role in respect of scripts sent (for example, sampling or adjudicating in cases of disagreement); his/her remit in relation to endorsing the outcomes of the assessment process; and the type of commentary that he/she is expected to provide on the outcomes of the assessments conducted within those programmes / modules.

The University of Northampton (UoN) operates a two-tier examination system and appoints Module External Examiners and a smaller group of Framework (or Principal) External Examiners. The External Examiners for programmes at Bloomsbury Institute are Module External Examiners. All External Examiners are appointed for a period of four years.

To fulfil their role, External Examiners view students' work. The volume of assessment samples is of sufficient size to enable the External Examiners to form a view as to whether the internal marking process has properly assessed students' performance against standards. External Examiners are not responsible for the assessment of individual students to the point that External Examiners do not carry out marking of assessed work.

External Examiners are required to submit an Annual Report (using UoN's Annual Report Form template) by the deadline indicated in their letter of appointment. The standard deadlines are:

- Undergraduate programmes (Levels 4-6): 31 July of each academic year.

- Postgraduate programmes (Levels 7 and 8): 31 October of each academic year.

The reports are submitted to the UoN Quality Unit which then distributes them. Reports on Bloomsbury Institute programmes are sent to the Academic Registrar and the Head of Quality at the same time that External Examiner Reports are circulated to UoN counterparts. The Head of Quality will then distribute the reports to the Deputy Academic Principal and the relevant Programme and Course Leaders.

Course Leaders complete an External Examiner Response Form, which is approved in the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee prior to submission to UoN. The final versions of the External Examiner Reports and Bloomsbury Institute's responses are posted in Part A of our Quality and Enhancement Manual on our website at:

<https://www.bil.ac.uk/part-a-academic-standards/external-examining/>

External Examiners are asked to submit their reports, and any other correspondence relating to their appointment, reports and payment of fees and expenses, to UoN's dedicated mailbox for External Examiners externalexaminers@northampton.ac.uk.

10. Assessment Review Team Meetings

The ART will meet twice per year to review assessment matters.

The first meeting will take place towards the end of Semester 1 and will review and reflect on the cycle of assessment tasks and assessment brief production, including the external task approval process.

The second meeting will take place in June and will review and reflect on the cycles [Semesters 1 and 2] of standardisation, marking, moderation, external moderation, and grades release.

11. References

Biggs, J. B. (2003) *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*, Open University Press/Society for Research into Higher Education.

HEA (2014) *Assessment and Feedback*, available online at: [HEA guidance on assessment and feedback](#)

Hine, B. and T. Northeast. (2016) *Using feed-forward strategies in higher education. The terrifying novel assignment: using feed-forward to improve students' ability and confidence on assignments that test new skills*. *New Vistas*, 2 (1). pp. 28-33.

Sadiq, A. (unpublished) *Impact of self-regulated assessment and formative feedback on students' learning & performance in HE*.

Sadler, D. R. (2010) *Beyond Feedback: Developing student capability in complex appraisal*. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 35: 535-550.

[UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: External Expertise](#)

[UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Assessment](#)

Appendix 1: Grade Criteria

An outstanding Distinction	A+	Work which fulfils all the criteria of the grade below, but at an exceptional standard.
A very strong Distinction	A	Work of distinguished quality which demonstrates strong, convincing and consistent evidence appropriate to the task or activity. Rigorous and authoritative command of academic / professional conventions appropriate to the discipline.
A clear Distinction	A-	Work of very good quality which displays most, but not all, of the criteria for the grade above in relation to the learning outcomes.
A Distinction	B+	Work of highly commendable quality which clearly fulfils the criteria for the grade below, but shows a greater degree of capability in relation to the relevant learning outcomes.
A very strong Merit	B	Work of commendable quality which demonstrates good, robust and convincing evidence appropriate to the task or activity. Strong command of academic / professional conventions appropriate to the discipline.
A strong Merit	B-	Work of good quality which contains most, but not all, of the characteristics of the grade above in relation to the learning outcomes.
A clear Merit	C+	Work which clearly fulfils all the criteria of the grade below, but shows a greater degree of capability in relevant intellectual/subject/key skills.
A Merit	C	Work of sound quality which demonstrates evidence which is sufficient and appropriate to the task or activity. Sound command of academic / professional conventions appropriate to the discipline.
A very strong Pass OR bare/basic Merit	C-	Work of capable quality which contains some of the characteristics of the grade above in relation to the relevant learning outcomes.
A strong Pass	D+	Work of satisfactory quality which demonstrates evidence of reliably achieving the requirements of the learning outcomes, but to a limited degree. Acceptable command of academic / professional conventions appropriate to the discipline.
A Pass	D	Work of broadly satisfactory quality which demonstrates evidence of achieving the requirements of the learning outcomes, but to a limited degree. Broadly acceptable command of academic / professional conventions appropriate to the discipline.
A bare Pass	D-	Work of bare pass standard which demonstrates evidence of achieving the requirements of the learning outcomes, but only to a limited degree. Broadly acceptable command of academic / professional conventions appropriate to the discipline.
A marginal Fail	F+	Work which indicates some evidence of engagement with the learning outcomes but which contains some significant omissions or misunderstanding, or otherwise just fails to meet threshold standards.
A Fail	F	Evidence included or provided, but missing in some very important aspects. Poor command of academic / professional conventions appropriate to the discipline.
A comprehensive Fail	F-	Negligible or inappropriate evidence. Unsatisfactory command of academic / professional conventions appropriate to the discipline.
Academic Misconduct	AG	Work submitted, but academic misconduct proven and penalty given was to award AG grade.
Late submission	LG	Work submitted, but given an LG grade due to late submission.
Work of nil value	NG	Work submitted, but work comprises no value.
Non-submission/Nil attempt	G	Nothing presented.

Appendix 2: Suspected Academic Misconduct Process

1. While marking, Module Tutor (MT) suspects academic misconduct (AM) took place and so the MT:

- Marks the work on *face-value*.
- Inserts the 'face-value' grade in the *INI* column on Canvas.
- Inserts ZZ in the *Live* column on Canvas and adds a note in the Note Column on Canvas for Academic Administrators (AAs) to be aware of the reason why the grade is withheld.
- Tries to find evidence that AM took place.
- Before the grades are moderated/released, flags the suspected assignment and provides supporting evidence to the Module Leader (ML) asking for advice on procedures. This is to gain ML's support in moving the case to the formal stage. It may be that the ML advises a small grade reduction and clear feedback rather than referral to the formal stage based on a judgment of poor scholarship (see below).

2. ML checks the suspected assignment while moderating (i.e. before grades are released to students).

i. **Suspected Plagiarism**

- If poor scholarship is found:
 - ML advises MT to penalise the assignment according to marking criteria without referring the assignment for formal procedures.
 - MT inputs the grade on Canvas and provides the student with feedback along the lines of:

Although you presented many good and relevant ideas, and supported them with citations and references, the problems with paraphrasing heavily impacted on your grade. Large sections were copied from sources.

It is clear that you worked on structuring your work and embedding information from sources into your assignment. However, you needed to spend more time paraphrasing.

In future, make sure you upload your work more in advance so that you can check your similarity report and work on improving the sections highlighted by Turnitin. You are strongly advised to contact studyplus@bil.ac.uk for additional support with paraphrasing to avoid academic misconduct in future.

- If significant sections were plagiarised:
 - ML advises the MT to complete the Referral of Suspected Academic Misconduct (SAM) form and send it with a PDF of the similarity report from Turnitin (and, if possible, source text) to the relevant AA by the grade release date.
 - AA forwards the SAM form received from the MT and other evidence to Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) and schedules an Academic Integrity Interview.
 - Interview and subsequent procedures follow.

ii. Suspected Commissioning/Collusion

- If ML does not think there is enough evidence to suspect commissioning/collusion:
 - Student's grade (as given in 1.1 above) is upheld and replaces the ZZ in the Final column. This should be done prior to releasing the grades. If it is done before the Canvas cut-off deadline, the ML changes the grade on Canvas. If it is done after the Canvas cut-off deadline, the Late Grade Change Form (**AF7**) needs to be completed by the ML, and sent to the Assessment Team (AT)
- If ML agrees that there is enough evidence to suspect commissioning/collusion, a viva needs to take place. Although the viva is an initial informal chat for the ML/MT to give the student the opportunity to evidence that he/she is the author of the work, the viva can result in formal academic misconduct referral. The process for conducting the viva is:
 - ML appoints the Chair of the viva (ML/MT)
 - ML writes on Canvas feedback along the lines:

Your grade has been temporarily withheld. Within one week [or a date] you will receive an email from your ML/MT inviting you to attend a viva (a meeting to discuss your assignment).

- ML/MT schedules the viva and sends the student an email at least 1 week prior to the scheduled meeting. Suggested email text:

Dear Student

I am writing to invite you to a viva (meeting) with me, as Module Leader/Module Tutor for XXXXXXXX (name of module) to discuss your assignment. The aim of the meeting is to give you an opportunity to talk about your work. Although this meeting is informal in nature, it is being held to help determine whether commissioning or collusion took place and the grade for your work. As such, there is the possibility that the outcome of the meeting could be a formal academic misconduct referral.

Please bring with you any evidence of the preparatory work you completed in advance of your submission. This could include earlier drafts, notes, sources used (e.g. pdf files of articles used either as hard copies or on a computer), tutor comments or formative feedback.

If you have had any third-party assistance with your work (e.g. proof-reader), then you should bring the original, unamended copy of the work to assist staff in assessing the extent to which this has impacted on the quality of the work you subsequently submitted.

The viva is an opportunity for you to demonstrate that you are deserving of a grading classification. You are therefore strongly encouraged to attend. The meeting will last up to 30 minutes.

Your viva (meeting) will be held at TIME on Date in PLACE/99 Gower Street. Please let our reception staff know when you arrive, and I will come to meet you.

You may bring someone with you to the meeting; however, any accompanying person cannot take part in our discussion; they are in attendance just for moral support for you.

If you are unable to attend on the day for any unforeseen reason, for example, transport problems, you should let us know as soon as possible.

If you fail to attend the meeting, your assignment may be referred to the University of Northampton for formal consideration of suspected academic misconduct.

Please reply to this email to confirm your attendance.

Thank you.

- Viva outcomes:
 - The Chair of the viva (ML/MT) determines that NO commissioning/collusion took place:
 - Grade is released. If it is before the Canvas cut-off deadline, the ML changes the grade on Canvas. If it is after the Canvas cut-off deadline, the Late Grade Change Form (**AF7**) needs to be completed by the ML, and sent to the Assessment Team (AT)
 - ML adds a note in the feedback section:

Thank you for attending the viva. Your grade has now been released.

- The Chair of the viva (ML/MT) has grounds to believe that commissioning/collusion took place:
 - The Chair completes the Referral of Suspected Academic Misconduct (SAM) form.
 - The Chair sends the SAM with the PDF of the assignment from Turnitin, the PDF of the similarity report, and any other evidence to the relevant AA by the grade release date.
 - AA forwards the SAM form and other evidence to Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) and schedules an Academic Integrity Interview.
 - Interview and subsequent procedures follow.