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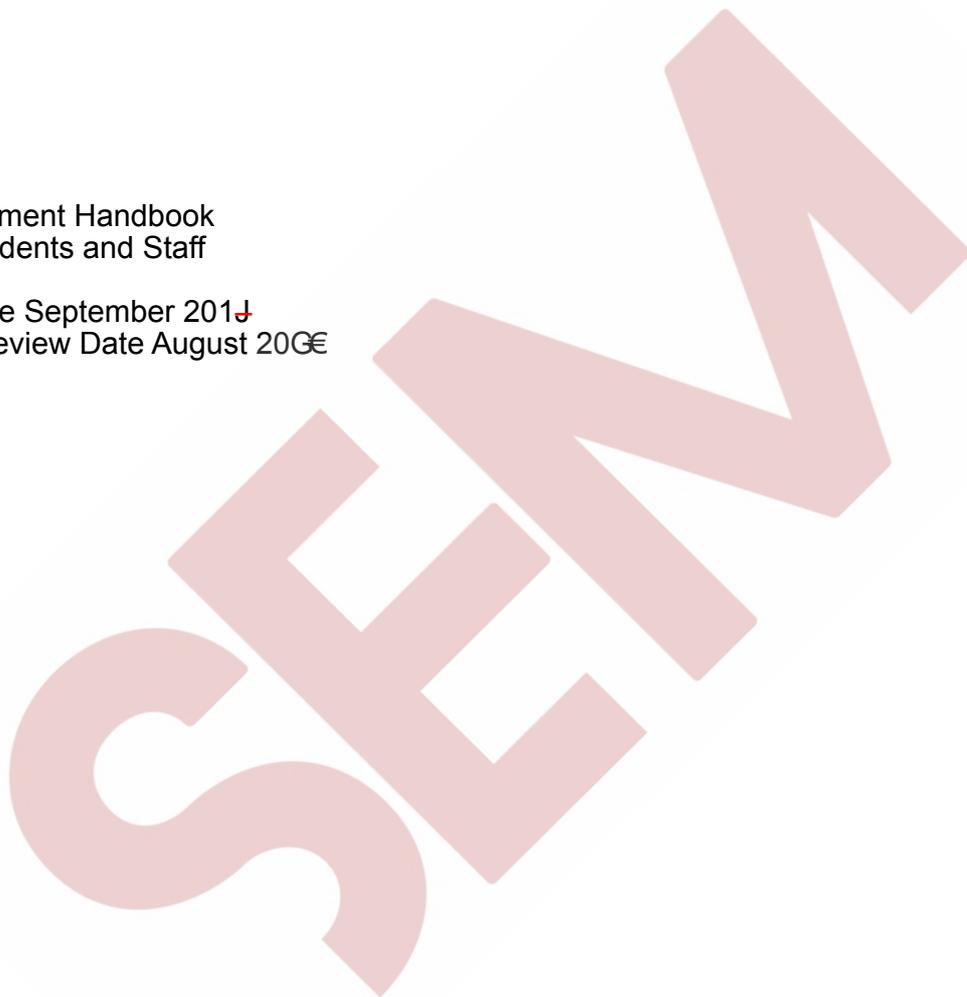
Assessment Handbook
For Students and Staff

Effective September 201
Next Review Date August 20

Assessment principles and procedures (for staff)

Principles of Assessment

Assessment for learning:
Learning and assessment should be integrated and fully aligned as an integral part of the learning process. There should be a focus on the development and achievement of intended programme outcomes rather than on marks and grades.

Assessment lacks precision:
Not all meaningful learning or assessment outcomes can be precisely defined.

Constructing standards in communities:
Staff and students should develop their own and a shared understanding of what is required from, and entailed in, the assessment and feedback process.

Ensuring professional judgements are reliable:
Since the assessment of high level complex learning is largely dependent on holistic judgement rather than mechanistic processes, academic, disciplinary and professional communities should set up opportunities and processes, such as meetings, workshops and groups, to regularly share exemplars and discuss assessment standards.

Assignment briefs:
It is important to clearly explain to students what is expected of them in carrying out the assessment, and how marks will be awarded, i.e. the assignment brief, and the marking criteria. Regardless of whether the marking criteria are published or are negotiated, a clear principle is that assignment briefs and marking criteria should be written clearly, and be available to and discussed with students.

Marking criteria:
Marking criteria are used to judge the standard to which each learning outcome has been achieved. They need to be specific to the assignment because they need to link the criteria and the intended learning outcomes for the module/unit. Marking criteria should be included in the module/unit information pack, and should be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are being applied a. consistently; b. transparently; c. in such a way that the full range of marks is deployed.

Dialogue between tutor and student:
Staff should ensure that opportunities for dialogue are maximised.

Assessment Procedures
Verification
(Approval of assessment briefs)
Verification is the checking of assessment briefs including coursework/practical assignments of any type for all elements of assessment for every module which contributes to the final mark for the module.

Internal Verification:
The purpose of internal verification is to ensure that the briefs are appropriate in relation to the intended learning outcomes.
Internal verification applies to re-assessment briefs as well as the original assessment brief and should be undertaken at the same time.

Internal verification must be undertaken by a minimum of two members of academic staff (author and one other) and be recorded.
The internal verification of assessment briefs must be undertaken before the briefs are published to the students.

External Verification:
External verification involves the checking by the external examiner of assessment briefs.
The External Examiner(s) must verify the form and content for every module which contributes to an award, and this must be recorded.
All briefs for coursework/practical assignments for modules which contribute to an award must be made available for review by the external examiner (access will be facilitated electronically).
The external examiner is entitled to review an amended assessment brief on request if substantial changes were suggested in external verification.

Moderation
(checking of students' assessed work)
Moderation is the checking of a sample of students' assessed work in order to confirm that the verified assessment and marking criteria for a component of assessment have been correctly, accurately and consistently applied, that students are being treated equitably through the assessment process and that there is a shared understanding of the academic standards students are expected to achieve.

Changes may not be made exclusively to marks within a representative sample. Should concerns be identified during internal moderation regarding the accuracy or consistency of marking based upon the sample, the relevant parts of the assessment for the entire cohort should be re-marked. This might be through scaling up or down, should the sample be considered to be consistently over or under – marked, or a full re-mark if the pattern of error is inconsistent.

The minimum requirement for moderation samples for both internal and external moderation purposes is set at 10% of all work submitted for a particular element of assessment, and (where student numbers on modules are small) the sample to include at least 3 pieces of work from the batch to be taken from work awarded the highest marks, marks in the middle range and the lowest marks.

Where assessments comprise various types of performance or presentation, tutors must still ensure that they meet the minimum requirements for moderation samples.

Internal Moderation
Each module/unit must have an identified internal moderator who will be responsible for checking a representative sample (see details of minimum requirements above) of work and confirming that the assessment criteria for every element of assessment have been correctly and accurately applied and for recording the appropriate evidence of moderation.

Standardisation may be used for courses with multiple teams of markers (eg on a large course with different pathways). The review ensures that marks have been awarded consistently by different marking teams and that there is a common understanding of the marking boundaries. For example; parity reviews often take the form of a meeting of all markers and moderators, or they can take place online. The Module Leader will normally identify a sample of work to be reviewed, taking examples from all the marking teams. The module team will compare the marks awarded, resolving any discrepancies and agreeing the final mark and feedback for the students.

External Moderation
External moderation involves the external examiner in checking that the assessment criteria for every element of assessment have been correctly and accurately applied to a representative sample (see details of minimum requirements above) of work, for all modules contributing to a final award. The sample of work moderated by the external examiner should include a selection of work that has been internally moderated.

The external examiner will be asked to provide confirmation of whether marking is in accordance with the stated criteria and weightings and identifying any issues.

Second Marking
Second marking is where all assessments in the set are independently marked by two markers with a view to agreeing on a mark via a standardisation process.

Assessment Feedback
Generic feedback on assessment performance can be given to a group as a whole. For descriptive essays it may include statements of what an expected answer might include but not necessarily a model answer. A description may also be included of any typical problems encountered in answering the questions or general misunderstandings.

For all assessments, students will be provided with individual written and/or audio/digital feedback.

Assessment/Standardisation/Moderation Boards
The School is committed to the policy of disclosure of moderated and unmoderated grades to individual students. A moderated grade is defined as a grade which has been confirmed by a Module Assessment Board. An unmoderated grade is defined as the provisional mark which is submitted to the Module Assessment Board.