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University of Birmingham

UNDERGRADUATE ASSESSMENT PROTOCOLS

TO TAKE EFFECT FROM 2007/8

UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE ASSESSMENT PROTOCOLS

Senate, June 2007 for 2007-08

1 PREAMBLE 3

2 SETTING OF ASSESSMENTS 3

3 BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

3.1 Membership and documentation requirements 3
3.2 Role and Powers of the Board of Examiners 5
3.3 Internal Examiners 6
3.4 Role of External Examiner 6
3.5 Consideration of Mitigation or Other Extraneous Factors by School Boards of Examiners 6
3.6 Primary Appeals Committee 7
3.7 Recording of Decisions Made and Discussions Held 7

4 PROGRESS AND AWARDS BOARD OF SENATE

4.1 Membership 7
4.2 Role of the Progress and Awards Board of Senate 8
4.3 Examination Invigilation Arrangements 8

5 PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO STUDENTS 8

6 RETENTION OF SCRIPTS 9

7 MARKING

7.1 Preparation for Marking 9
7.2 Assessment Information 9
7.3 Marking Practices 10

8 PROGRESSION

8.1 Recording of Marks 11
8.2 Late Submission of Assessed Work 11
8.3 Absence from Teaching Sessions and Assessments 13
8.4 Opportunities for Re-assessment 15
8.5 Recording of Marks following Re-assessment or Repeat 16
8.6 Standardisation or Adjustment of Marks 17
8.7 Aggregation of Marks 17
8.8 Academic Failure and Withdrawal 17
8.9 Transfer of a Student to a Different Programme 17
8.10 Fitness to Practice 18
8.11 Debarring from Assessment and Due Diligence 18

9 AWARDS

9.1 Classified Degrees 18
9.2 Oral Examinations and Final Awards 19
9.3 Absence from Assessment and Final Awards 19

10 DEGREE CLASSIFICATION - DISTRIBUTION OF MODULE CLASSES PROCEDURE 20

11 AP(E)L……23

12 CONTRIBUTION OF YEAR ABROAD……24

APPENDIX A..... 25

List of documentation or other resources referred to in the Protocols or relevant.

APPENDIX B..... 27

Examples for degree classification using the Distribution of Module Classes Procedure.

1 Preamble

1.1 These Assessment Protocols are made under University Regulation 4.2 and apply to all types of programme, including part time provision, collaborative provision and distance learning. . The Protocols should be read in conjunction with the University Undergraduate Regulations for students first approved by Senate on 7 June 2000. The Protocols apply to the year in which a student is being assessed, rather than the year the student entered the University. The Protocols take into account the Sections of the QAA Code of Practice regarding Assessment and Collaborative Provision.

1.2 These Protocols apply to all summative assessments (i.e. those contributing to the module mark) including written examinations, coursework, projects, worksheets, oral presentations or any other form of assessment. Schools should comply with the guidance in these protocols where it is practicable to do so.

1.3 Where a School has devolved responsibility to Departments, throughout this document for 'School' read 'Department'.

2 Setting of Assessments

2.1 The Head of School shall have overall responsibility for the management of all assessment (in accordance with Regulation 4.7). The Head of School may choose to delegate this responsibility as appropriate.

2.2 A single member of staff shall have overall responsibility to the Head of School or his/her nominee for each module and all of the assessments within the module. It shall be the responsibility of the Head of School concerned or his/her nominee to ensure that examination question papers and other forms of assessment as appropriate are submitted to the relevant external examiner for his/her approval.

2.3 The contribution of all assessments to the determination of the final award should be notified in writing to students in advance of the assessment.

2.4 When working with a Partner Organisation in a collaborative arrangement, Schools should ensure that the Partner Organisation understands and follows the University's requirements for the conduct of assessment.

3 Boards of Examiners

(In the following protocols, "Boards of Examiners" refers to meeting(s) of examiners to make substantive and final decisions on programme awards and progress. The "main" Board of Examiners may be at School, Department or programme level).

3.1 Membership and documentation requirements

3.1.1 Membership of Boards of Examiners will be determined by the relevant School committee(s) and will normally be as follows:

Chair - the Head of School responsible for the programmes concerned or his/her nominee

the School Examinations Officer(s) or his/her nominee for the programme(s) concerned

all internal examiners for the programme(s) concerned

all external examiners for the programme(s) concerned (as a minimum, for meetings where final awards are being considered).

Schools may delegate responsibility to Department level. In such cases, 'Department' may be substituted for 'School' in the list of members above and in the guidance below. See also 3.2.5.

3.1.2 Schools should establish a quoracy for each Board of Examiners, subject to the approval of Progress and Awards Board of Senate. All meetings of Boards of Examiners should have a quoracy of one-third of the academic membership or 10 (ten) academic members involved in providing the programme(s) (whichever is the smaller number) in addition to at least one external examiner. A minumum would be 3 (three) members of academic staff and an external examiner (or a consulting mechanism to the external examiner if s/he is not physically present). The external examiner must be informed of any decisions that affect progress or final results.

3.1.3 All Boards of Examiners should establish written terms of reference, covering the following as a minimum:

- membership and quoracy
- timing and frequency of meetings
- the authority of the Board in relation to other Boards of Examiners (for instance, in multi-departmental Schools there may be a formal School-level Board that receives the final decisions of Departmental Boards for information only)
- role of the external examiners

a procedure for Chair's Action (if required between meetings)

3.1.4 All Boards of Examiners should have a written agenda, with at least the following items:

- At the initial meeting of the year, approval of terms of reference and membership.
- Receipt and confirmation of module marks.
- Receipt of report from mitigations panel or equivalent.
- Report of any further special factors (e.g. procedural irregularities).
- Determination and confirmation of awards and progress decisions within Regulations.
- Re-consideration of cases referred back to Board by a Primary Appeals Committee.
- Consideration and confirmation of awards and progress decisions made notwithstanding Regulations involving mitigations, if the criteria detailed in Assessment Protocol 3.2.3 are met.
- Consideration of all other cases notwithstanding Regulations, to recommend to appropriate Progress Board.
- External Examiners' comments on examinations, assessments and programmes (include discussion of any items of interest to External Examiner that may appear in his/her report).

3.1.5 Full minutes should be kept of all Boards of Examiners meetings and returned to the Academic Office with any appropriate marksheets and the signed Chair of Board of Examiners statement.

3.1.6 The Progress and Awards Board of Senate will normally meet four times a year:

(a) (From 2007) In March to receive details of Schools Boards of Examiners procedures and Mitigations Panels procedures.

(b) In June to receive results from students who will be eligible for a final award in summer, marks of those full-time and other students who have completed all taught elements, and decisions of Boards of Examiners with regard to opportunities for re-assessment.

(c) In September, to receive results of students who will be eligible for final award in December, the outcomes of re-assessment, marks of students who have completed all taught elements, and decisions from Boards of Examiners with regard to opportunities for re-assessment.

(d) In November to receive results of students who will be eligible for final award in December, the outcomes of re-assessment, marks of

students who have completed all taught elements, and decisions from Boards of Examiners with regard to opportunities for re-assessment

3.1.7 Schools should ensure the provision of adequate notice of meetings of the Board of Examiners, and in particular any reconvened meetings, to all who are expected to attend.

3.1.8 Members of the Board of Examiners should declare personal interest, involvement or relationship with a student either before the meeting to the Chair, or during the meeting and, if appropriate, withdraw from the meeting while that student is being considered.

3.1.9 When examining collaborative provision, where possible a common Board of Examiners should be used to ensure close comparability of approach. <u>However, where this is not possible, arrangements that are put in place should take proper account of quality issues. Arrangements for Boards of Examiners should be set out in the Memoranda of Agreement covering programmes.</u>

3.2 Role and Powers of the Board of Examiners

3.2.1 The Board of Examiners will make decisions on <u>all</u> module marks and the final award. This includes modules provided as part of the programme of study by other Schools. Such decisions will be made only on the basis of actual performance in those assessments, which have formally been defined as contributing to the final award. The consequences of such performance should not normally be modified by reference to the student's record of progress. In all cases, the Board of Examiners must be satisfied that the learning outcomes of the module or programme have been achieved.

3.2.2 The decisions of the Board of Examiners regarding the marks and final awards are final where made consistent with these protocols and relevant regulations..

3.2.3 The Boards of Examiners have the formal authority, exercised on behalf of Senate to make final progress and award decisions notwithstanding University regulations if there are mitigating circumstances and the following criteria are met:

a) the School provides a written copy of their mitigations procedure (as advertised to students that academic year) and can prove in subsequent documentation that this procedure has been followed.
b) the School provides an anonymised summary of all decisions to the appropriate Progress and Awards Board of Senate taken under their mitigation procedure and approved by the relevant Board of Examiners. This should include decisions taken within Regulations and notwithstanding Regulations.

3.2.4 All recommendations made notwithstanding the regulations where 3.2.3 does not apply should be passed to the Progress and Awards Board of Senate for consideration and final decision.

3.2.5 Where, in multi-department Schools, there are Departmental level Board of Examiners meetings, the School Board of Examiners or School Committee must ratify the assessment processes and take appropriate measures to review and confirm decisions/recommendations as appropriate.

3.2.6 For Joint Honours or Interdisciplinary programmes, where there is no clearly defined separate Board of Examiners responsible, the Board of Examiners for the 'home' School should take responsibility for considering all of the student's results for the programme and make decisions about marks, final awards and progress decisions accordingly.

3.2.7 For Joint Honours or Interdisciplinary programmes where there is a

clearly defined separate Board of Examiners responsible, this should include representatives from all of the relevant Schools or Departments, which contribute modules to the programme, as appropriate to the cases under consideration.

See also Sections 3.5 and 9.6.

3.3 Internal Examiners

3.3.1 Head of School will appoint internal examiners annually. Internal examiners are responsible for the assessment of the performance of students and are automatically members of the Board of Examiners that makes recommendations on progression and decisions on module marks and final awards. Actual membership of the Board may vary according to the size of the provision and the cases being considered. All members of the academic staff (see Ordinance 1.5 for definitions) of a School are eligible to serve as internal examiners for programmes of study and modules, which are the responsibility of that School.

3.4 Role of External Examiner

Further details on the role of the external examiner are given in the Code of Practice on the External Examiner System for First Degrees and Taught Masters.

3.5 Consideration of Mitigation or Other Extraneous Factors by School Boards of Examiners

3.5.1 Each Board of Examiners shall establish a standard procedure for consideration of the possible effects of extraneous circumstances on the qualifications to be awarded to individual candidates. These procedures should be consistent with the advice contained within Guidelines on Mitigations. It shall be the responsibility of the Dean concerned to ensure that such procedures comply with basic principles of good practice including the need:

- for the relevant committee to maintain the greatest possible level of confidentiality concerning the personal affairs of students
- to maintain a clear and permanent record of all cases
- define clearly the nature of admissible evidence (which should whenever possible be provided in writing).
- to provide sufficient publicity to students so as to ensure that relevant evidence is as far as possible available at the meeting of the Board of Examiners.

3.5.2 Marks will be determined by the Board of Examiners without reference to any extraneous circumstances. The Board of Examiners will then consider individual cases where it is known that there are extraneous factors, which may have adversely affected a student's performance. In consultation with and with the full agreement of the external examiner, the Board of Examiners may then decide to recommend a final award or progress decision which is consistent with the performance which, on the evidence available, the Board of Examiners judges the individual would have achieved if their performance had not been affected by extraneous factors. In such cases the marks attained should not be adjusted, but a written record of the factors and the action taken by the Board of Examiners should be made available to the Progress Board. The original, unamended mark will appear on the student's transcript.

3.5.3 If circumstances occur which seem to require a change to the level of an award determined by the Board of Examiners (eg submission of late and unexpected medical evidence), any such change should be approved by or on behalf of the Board of Examiners concerned. All such changes must have external examiner approval. However, if it is

not possible to contact all internal examiners in the time available, it will be the responsibility of the Progress Board to determine whether the change can be made on the basis of whatever consultation has been possible. All such changes should be forwarded to Student Services and Admissions as soon as possible, and no later than one month before the beginning of the next academic session.

3.6 Primary Appeals Procedures

For more information on the operation of the Primary Appeals Procedures please see Regulation 4.7.5 and the Code of Practice on Primary Appeals Procedures.
http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/Policy/regs/currentregs/regs0607_4_7.pdf
http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/code6.htm.

3.7 Recording of Decisions Made and Discussions Held

3.7.1 All Schools will keep a formal record of the attendance at, discussions held and decisions made at the meeting of the Board of Examiners. Heads of Schools should ensure that adequate systems are in place in order that they are able to satisfy themselves that appropriate regulations and procedures have been adhered to in reaching any such decisions. Such systems are subject to review during Academic Audit and Heads of Schools will be asked to confirm that the appropriate regulations and procedures have been adhered to when submitting module marks and recommendations (where relevant) to the Progress and Awards Board of Senate.

3.7.2 As a minimum, all evidence on which a decision was based should be retained until one year after the student has left the University (see also Section 6).

3.7.3 Departmental/programme Examination Boards should consider:

Mean, standard deviation and % failure/pass rate for each module with corresponding figures for at least 3 and preferably 5 previous years [It is recognised that the historical comparators will need to be built up over time where the history does not exist];

School Examination Review Boards should consider:
Mean, standard deviation and % failure/pass rate for each module with corresponding figures for at least 3 and preferably 5 previous years [It is recognised that the historical comparators will need to be built up over time where the history does not exist];
For each cohort mean mark and distribution of classes (1sts, 2.1's etc.) with historical comparators.

- A standard one page examination report form should be produced by the internal examiner/Examinations Officer which provides:the data under a) above.
- brief comment, for the benefit of the external examiner and the audit trail, on any unusual events that were relevant (e.g. interruption to the exam by a fire evacuation as an extreme) or any unusual features in the outcome (perhaps under b) where a question was answered particularly well or badly)
- an endorsement or additional comment from the internal moderator/2nd marker.

4. Progress and Awards Board of Senate

4.1 Membership

4.1.1 The University's Progress and Awards Board of Senate is appointed by

the Senate and membership is published on the web.

4.2 Role of the Progress and Awards Board of Senate

4.2.1 For taught programmes the role of the Progress and Awards Board of Senate is:

- To determine recommendations made notwithstanding regulations (where special or mitigating circumstances have not been considered by the School) received from Boards of Examiners for taught programmes.
- To identify quality issues relating to examination processing, and report as appropriate to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.
- To annually receive:
  - Reports of Schools' examination procedures including those for special or mitigating circumstances and information provided by Schools to students on mitigations.
  - Anonymised summary data on special circumstances or mitigations considered by Schools.
  - Summary data on Primary Appeals Committee cases referred back to Boards of Examiners.
- To produce an annual report for the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee on recommendations notwithstanding regulations for students on taught programmes considered by the Progress and Awards Board.

4.3 **Examination Invigilation Arrangements**

The University provides information on the duties to be undertaken when invigilating examinations (see Conduct of Centrally Co-ordinated Formal Written Examinations and Examination Invigilation Arrangements).

5 **Provision of Information to Students**

5.1 University Regulation 4.7.4(6) states that marksheets shall be treated as strictly confidential but the marks awarded to an individual candidate may be disclosed to the candidate in a way which protects the confidential nature of the marks of other candidates. Attention is drawn to the University Data Protection Policy and the implications for storage of student information and provision of information. In particular, the Policy states http://www.legalservices.bham.ac.uk/data_protection_policy/index.htm

5.2 The publication date for final awards results shall be determined by the Progress and Awards Board of Senate.

5.3 Final lists of results, progress decisions and final awards will be published by the School as soon as possible after the meeting of the Board of Examiners at which they are determined.. In the exceptional circumstances where a recommendation is made 'notwithstanding the regulations' and mitigating circumstances are not involved (see 3.2.3 above) the provisional list of results should not indicate the result but should indicate that a decision is 'pending the meeting of the Progress and Awards Board of Senate'.

5.4 Following determination of marks by the Board of Examiners, where students are continuing (i.e., they are not finalists) Schools will, through progress review tutorials, inform individual students of their module marks. Finalists may be given the marks which they have achieved in final level modules should they request this information.

It will be at the discretion of the School as to whether or not they will release to students the marks which they obtain in each assessment

(where available) of a module.

5.5 However, students should be given timely feedback on assessments, particularly those undertaken during a module and used to inform the student's learning (e.g. coursework). Schools may wish to provide this feedback in ways other than by provision of actual marks. Where marks are provided in advance of confirmation by the Board of Examiners, it should be emphasised that these marks remain provisional.

6 Retention of Scripts

Schools shall ensure compliance with Regulation 4.7.2.4(iii) and with the Code of Practice Conduct of Centrally Co-ordinated Formal Written Examinations.

7 Marking

7.1 Preparation for Marking

7.1.1 It is recommended that Schools have in place staff development and guidance procedures for all marking processes in use within the School. All staff involved in marking should be required to familiarise themselves with relevant material and practices and attend formal or informal briefing sessions.

7.1.2 All visiting lecturers and post-graduate students involved in assessment should normally undergo a period of training, as appropriate to the duties they are required to perform. This may include formal training provided by the Staff Development Unit for postgraduate students or training provided within Schools. In addition, each post-graduate student involved in undergraduate teaching should have a 'mentor', an experienced member of staff who can provide advice and support as necessary. See also the Guidelines on Undergraduate Teaching by Postgraduate and Undergraduate Students.

7.1.3 Where inexperienced internal examiners and post-graduate students undertake marking of work, which contributes towards the module mark, this should be under the guidance of an experienced internal examiner.

7.1.4 With regard to the information provided to External Examiners, it is recommended that Schools adhere to sections 8 and 9 of the Code of Practice on the External Examiner System for First Degrees and Taught Masters: on the briefing of External Examiners and the participation of External Examiners in assessment procedures. For example, on appointment External Examiners should be provided with a schedule outlining all relevant information relating to marking of assessments, (including information given to students).

7.1.5 The Head of School (or nominee) shall establish a formal timetable to ensure that external examiners have scripts in their possession sufficiently in advance of examiners' meetings to enable the external examiner to express an informed opinion on them and shall make this timetable known to all examiners, internal and external normally at the start of the session.

7.2 Assessment Information

7.2.1 To ensure consistency and transparency, Schools should publish assessment criteria appropriate to the module being assessed and the method of assessment and should make this information available to internal and external examiners and students. For some subject disciplines this may include the provision of model answers to internal and external examiners. Criterion (not norm) referencing should be used

for all assessments.

7.2.2 Schools should publish guidelines on the conduct of assessment (for example on plagiarism or late submission of work) for modules and should make this information available to internal and external examiners and students. Any amendments to programme and module assessments should also be made available to all internal and external examiners and students. Where students are required to pass specific assessments within a module ('internal hurdles'), module descriptions should specify whether the assessment has to be passed to achieve overall modular credit.

7.3 Marking Practices

7.3.1 At its meeting in March 1995, Senate agreed that Schools be required to adopt anonymous marking for all written examinations that contribute to the final award; this was later rolled out to all years of study. In December 1999, Senate agreed that anonymity should be extended at least to the second marker stage and that it should be recognised good practice that scripts remain anonymous even at the stage at which they are considered by the external examiner.

7.3.2 Where possible, anonymous marking of assessed work should be undertaken for course work, with the exception of practical assessments and projects.

7.3.3 Where individual questions in a paper are marked by different examiners, a single examiner shall be responsible for the overall mark for the paper returned to the Board of Examiners.

7.3.4 Schools should ensure that a technical check of assessment marks is carried out (ie, to ensure that simple arithmetic errors or omissions have not been made).

7.3.5 All assessment that contributes to a module mark must be moderated in some way, where moderation is defined as some form of independent academic checking in addition to the technical check of marks. Moderation may involve looking at pieces of assessed work (e.g. double marking) or it may involve analysis of marks for the cohort for that assessment. The amount of moderation may vary dependent upon the nature of the assessment, the contribution made to the module mark and the overall contribution of the assessment to the degree classification or to the achievement of the award. It is expected that there will be more rigorous moderation of later stages in the degree programme.

7.3.6 Moderation may be undertaken either on a random sampling basis, or by targeting of individual cases following previous moderation or identification of a potential problem (for example where there is significant disparity between the different elements of assessment for an individual student or within a module or where there is significant disparity between the marks of different markers for a particular assessment or within a module).

7.3.7 Double Marking is the term used for student work that is assessed by more than one marker. This may be done 'blind' or 'non-blind'. In blind double marking, the marks and comments of the first marker are not available to the second marker. A final mark is either agreed by the two markers in collaboration with the module leader or equivalent or the Examinations Officer, or produced by simple averaging of the two marks.

7.3.8 In non-blind double marking the marks and annotations of the first marker are available to the second marker. This latter method is usually used where the role of the second marker is seen as more one of checking the marks given by the first marker, such as where first markers are less experienced, or where there are several first markers and consistency may be an issue. The mark of the first marker usually stands, unless

there are significant discrepancies between the marks of the two markers. Schools should determine their own policies in this area, including clear a definition of what would constitute a significant discrepancy, as appropriate to the marking practices in the School.

7.3.9 Double marking is recognised good practice for all assessments, which contribute significantly to the final award. Schools may determine which assessments to double mark but it is likely that these will include as a minimum stage 2 and 3 modules with only one piece of assessment. Double marking for all students is recognised as good practice for all projects, dissertations and other substantial pieces of work.

7.3.10 Schools should ensure that the methods that are used are agreed within the School and that clear procedures are in place for moderation and the resolution of discrepancies or disagreements between markers.

7.3.11 Rounding of marks for classification purposes:-

For degree classification purposes the average mean mark should be rounded to one decimal point.

In determining class on the basis of weighted arithmetic mean, marks between 39.5-40.0, 49.5-50.0, 59.5-60.0 and 69.5-70.0 will be rounded to 40, 50, 60 and 70, respectively.

Average marks for use with the Distribution of Module Class Scheme should remain corrected to one decimal point. (Thus, for example 37.9, 47.9, 57.9 and 65.9 are insufficient average mean marks to allow a student to be considered for the Distribution of Module Class Scheme).

8 Progression

8.1 Recording of Marks (in accordance with Regulation 4.2.6(1) and 4.2.10(4)

8.1.1 Where there is more than one assessment contributing to the module mark, Schools may specify that particular assessments must be passed in order to pass the module (known as 'internal hurdles'). The weighting of each assessment, or the requirement to pass a particular assessment, must be clearly stated as a percentage of the module mark in the approved module descriptions as published on the Academic Office website. The website is updated to take into account approved late changes to module content or assessment. Within a single module or pair of linked modules, Schools may permit poor performance in one assessment to be compensated by strong performance in another assessment (Regulation 4.2.10(10)). Where this is applied, a set of Guidelines should be agreed by the Board of Examiners, and the Guidelines applied to all students taking the module. There is no compensation between unlinked modules.

8.1.2 The module mark should be expressed as a percentage and as a whole number for entry into the Electronic Marks System and for calculation of the degree classification. Marks should be entered into the Electronic Marks System by the date specified each year in guidance issued by the Academic Office. Further information on the Electronic Marks System is provided in Appendix A.

8.2 Late Submission of Assessed Work

8.2.1 Where students are required to submit coursework (e.g. essays, practical reports, projects, problem sheets) that contributes to the module mark Schools should have in place published arrangements for the applying of penalties for the late submission of such work. Coursework, which is not submitted by the initial deadline given, shall be subject to a penalty applied to the mark achieved for that piece of work.

8.2.2 The following are standard University procedures, which should normally be used for the submission of assessed work that will count towards a final programme mark. It may be necessary, in circumstances where there are good academic reasons, to adopt other procedures, for example, where assessed work is to be discussed in class shortly after the deadline. In such cases the relevant Dean should be notified. These protocols are supplemented by Submission of Assessed Work: Good Practice Guidelines for Students (see Appendix A).

8.2.3 **Deadlines**

Students should be made aware, in writing, at the beginning of a module, what the assessments for the module are, the deadlines, where and to whom assignments should be submitted, and the penalties for late submission (see below).

Deadlines should be set taking into account, where possible, revision and examination periods and student workload, for example submission dates for other assignments in Joint Honours programmes.

8.2.4 **Submission**

The School should have clear submission procedures for assignments that form part of the assessment for a module. These procedures should be made clear to students, in writing, at the beginning of the academic year and again at the beginning of each module. Students should also be issued with the Good Practice Guidelines for Students (see (1) above).

Each student should be issued with a receipt for submitted coursework that either indicates clearly that the work was submitted before the deadline, or shows the time and date of submission for any work submitted after the deadline. Receipts should be signed by a designated member of School staff.

If Schools or Departments believe they have justifiable reasons for not issuing receipts to students they should liaise with the relevant Dean to devise an alternative. If electronic or postal submission of coursework is permitted Schools should have a receipt mechanism in place that ensures that the student has positive evidence that the assignment has been received. Students should be made aware of what they can expect to receive. If students submit work by post they should ensure that they obtain proof that the assignment has been posted. Electronic submission should be supplemented as soon as possible, preferably on the same day, either by post or in person, by a paper copy of the assignment. Students should declare on the paper copy that no changes have been made since electronic submission.

8.2.5 **Extensions**

The School should have a clear procedure for granting extensions including guidance on circumstances, that will and will not be considered acceptable. Each case should be considered on its merits and below are examples of acceptable/unacceptable circumstances.

Acceptable	*Unacceptable*
Major computer problems (eg failure of university IT systems, such as network or server failure)	*Minor Computer problems (eg lost or damaged disks, printer breakdown)*
Significant medical problems	*Lost assignments*
Personal problems	*Desired books not in library*
Compassionate, (for example, family bereavement)	*Unverifiable travel difficulties*
	Not realising deadline imminent

Students should be required to apply in writing for an extension (this could be on a standard School form) explaining the reasons why they

require an extension. Appropriate evidence should be attached.

To ensure equity of treatment for all students, only one person should grant extensions. This would normally be the Head of School (or Department) of the School (or Department) who owns the module, or authorised nominee.

The Head of School (or nominee) should be responsible for ensuring that appropriate staff are informed of extensions that have been granted.

8.2.6 **Penalties for Late Submission**

It is recommended that, if no extension has been granted, or there is not sufficiently good cause for work being submitted late, then a penalty of 5 marks on the mark actually achieved should be imposed for each day the assignment is late until 0 is reached, for example, a mark of 67 would become 62 marks on day one, 57 marks on day two, and so on. Penalties should not include weekends, public and University closed[1] days. When setting deadlines weekends and closed days should be borne in mind to minimise student manipulation of penalties. Schools who wish to adopt a different penalty should liaise with the relevant Dean. In certain circumstances, for example, where assignments or the content are to be discussed in class shortly after the deadline, other penalties will need to be applied.

Assignments should be marked in the normal way and penalties applied afterwards.

The original mark and the penalty should be clearly indicated in documentation submitted to Examination Boards. In exceptional circumstances Examination Boards may modify decisions that have been implemented in accordance with standard procedures but which seem excessively harsh.

8.2.7 Marking and Feedback

School staff should ensure that assignments are marked and feedback given to students within a reasonable time of the submission date, taking into account that students find feedback helpful for examination revision.

8.3 Absence from Teaching Sessions and Assessments

8.3.1 A student who does not attend teaching sessions as required by the School or Department may be debarred from the assessment of the module. See Section 8.11.

8.3.2 Where there is unexplained absence from all assessments that contribute to the module mark the student will be awarded a mark of 0% for the module and will not achieve credit. Where the unexplained absence is for an assessment that contributes less than 100% to the module mark the mark of 0% for the assessment will be combined with the marks for the other assessments as for all other students. This may result in the student not achieving the pass mark for the module and failing the module.

8.3.3 Students may apply for leave from assessments or part of their programme exceptionally, and for good reason, as outlined below.

8.3.4 Guidelines for provision of single (1-14 days) absence

i. In the first instance, the relative importance of the event in question should be determined. The member of staff involved (this would usually be the Personal Tutor) should establish this

[1] Academic Board approved this change in November 2002, previously worded as 'holidays'.

either through internal consultation – the University's Foundation for Sport would have a good idea about athletics events – or through direct contact with the organisers or other relevant bodies. As a general rule, events should be national in character as an absolute minimum. Another related keynote would be the level of prestige involved in participation: this should be significant;

ii. It should not be seen as essential that there is any direct relevance to the student's course of study, although any link would clearly strengthen the case;

iii. If the member of staff considers that the application merits further consideration, the matter should be referred either to the Head of Department/School or the relevant Programme Director and (if any examinations are involved) to the relevant Examinations Officer for a joint decision as to whether the application should be granted in full or in part.

As part of this process, the Personal Tutor should, in consultation with the student, submit with the application an indication of how missed teaching would be covered through additional study or by other means;

iv. If the proposed absence clashes with scheduled examinations, it would not normally be possible to allow the student to undertake the paper(s) in question at alternative times within the series in question, unless the School/Department can arrange full chaperone cover covering the entire period of potential examination security risk. The use of 'honour letters' where students undertake not to communicate the contents of papers does not provide a sufficient level of assurance.

Where it is not possible to arrange for the student to sit examinations within a time scale, which makes inclusive chaperoning viable, the student should be permitted to sit the missing examination(s) during the Supplementary Assessments held in late August/early September each year. In such cases:

- the sitting should be deemed a first sit and the possible mark not capped;
- if the examination is subsequently failed, the standard course regulations should apply in respect of reassessment;
- where an examination has been re-scheduled because of exceptional leave absence, this method of assessment must be retained throughout the process. Replacement of formal examining by alternative means of assessment (such as projects or additional coursework) is not permissible under these circumstances;
- in all cases, the student must be reminded that their primary commitment must be to their University studies and that it is their responsibility to weigh with extreme care the implications in terms of study and progression of any exceptional leave allowance that the University may be able to offer. In particular, it must be made clear that any exceptional arrangement granted by the University cannot subsequently constitute the basis of a student appeal.

8.3.5 **Extended Leave of Absence**

In situations where absence of longer than 14 days is being considered, the following points should be noted:

- part-time registration may be an option. This might be useful if one or

two days per week have to be given over to training or other commitments. Part-time status may be for a single year only or may be extended to cover all three levels if necessary;

- the taking of a year out once the First Year has been completed may be appropriate for some students. The existence of clear rules for progression from level to level should assist flexibility in this area.

8.3.6 Students who are absent from assessments or part of their programmes for medical reasons should comply with the procedures and policy regarding provision and completion of medical certificates.

8.4 Opportunities for Re-assessment

8.4.1 A student who provides adequate reason or mitigation for failure to complete an assessment or attend an examination may be permitted to 'sit' the module again as if for the first time, or 'sit' the assessment(s) again as if for the first time. The decision on whether a student should be allowed to 'sit' should be made by the relevant Progress Board on the recommendation of the Board of Examiners (Regulation 4.2.13(6)).

8.4.2 All students who fail a module (other than, subject to Regulation 4.2.13(12), modules taken in the final stage of a programme) shall have one opportunity to retrieve the failure, either by re-assessment or by repeating (Regulation 4.2.13(1)). The decision on whether a student should be allowed to be re-assessed or repeat should be made by the relevant Progress Board on the recommendation of the Board of Examiners (Regulation 4.2.13(6)). The normal expectation is that students will retrieve the failure by re-assessment

8.4.3 For re-assessment a student is required to complete such further assessments as specified by the Progress Board on the recommendation of the Board of Examiners as being necessary to demonstrate achievement of the stated learning outcomes (Regulation 4.2.13(2)). This re-assessment may take the form of additional or re-submitted coursework or an examination. For full time students the re-assessment should normally be by or at the time of the August/September supplementary examinations.

8.4.4 With the support of the School, students may apply to take their re-assessment at the next available opportunity (normally the next main summer examination period).

8.4.5 Students who have already achieved the requisite number of credits to progress to the next stage may progress 'carrying' the outstanding re-assessment. For example, a student who achieves 100 credits in stage 1 at the first attempt, and who is permitted to resit the failed 20 credits at the next available opportunity rather than in August/September, may proceed 'carrying' the 20 credits. Students who have not achieved the requisite number of credits to progress to the next stage may not progress and will be required to achieve the requisite number of credits before being permitted to progress. For example, a student who achieves 80 credits in stage 1 at the first attempt, and is permitted to resit the failed 40 credits at the next available opportunity rather than in August/September, cannot proceed to stage 2 until the resits have been passed. In effect they will take an additional year to complete stage 1.

8.4.6 For part time students the re-assessment should normally be within one calendar year. The nature of the re-assessment should be made clear in the approved module description as published on the Academic Office website.

8.4.7 A student who is required to repeat a module is required to attend teaching sessions as specified by the School or Department and to complete all the assessment requirements associated with the module in order to achieve the stated learning outcomes (Regulation 4.2.13(3)).

Repeat students should normally complete the repeat of the module within one calendar year of the initial failure. If a student does not attend teaching sessions as specified by the School or Department they may be debarred from the assessment of the module[2]. Students may repeat some or all modules from a stage of a programme as determined by the Board of Examiners.

8.4.8 In some modules the nature of the module will be such that retrieval of failure can only be by means of repeat (e.g. laboratory-based modules). Such modules should be designated as repeat only in module descriptions (Regulation 4.2.13(4)).

8.4.9 With the agreement of the Head of School a student required to sit or be re-assessed in or repeat a module may be allowed to choose a substitute module subject to programme requirements and availability. In such cases the student shall normally be required to attend the teaching sessions and to complete all the assessments.

8.4.10 Students who have not submitted coursework or been examined for a module due to illness or other reason accepted by the Progress Board on the recommendation of the Board of Examiners may be permitted to repeat a module or be re-assessed in a module or a number of modules as though they were taking the module for the first time. They will retain the right to an opportunity for re-assessment should they fail the module / modules. If repeating the module as if for the first time, the student is required to attend teaching sessions as specified by the School or Department and to complete all the assessment requirements associated with the module in order to achieve the stated learning outcomes. If being re-assessed as if for the first time, the student is required to complete such further assessments specified by the Progress Board as necessary to demonstrate achievement of the stated learning outcomes. The re-assessment should normally be by or at the time of the August/September supplementary examinations.

8.5 **Recording of Marks following Re-assessment or Repeat**

8.5.1 Following successful re-assessment or repeat of a failed module, the mark used for the purpose of arriving at decisions on progress or the final award will be the pass mark for the module (40% for most programmes). The mark actually achieved in any re-assessment or repeat will however be recorded in the Electronic Marks System, (see Appendix A) the student records system and on the student's transcript (Regulation 4.2.13(10)) with an indication of the number of sits taken.

8.5.2 Following unsuccessful re-assessment or repeat the higher of the two fail marks should be used for the purpose of arriving at decisions on progress or the final award.

8.5.3 Where a student has failed to attend a re-examination or not submitted re-assessed work, without adequate cause, the mark recorded for the module will be 0%.

8.5.4 Following unsuccessful re-assessment or repeat of a failed module, the mark used for arriving at decisions on progress or the final award shall be the higher of the two fail marks achieved, at initial assessment and at re-assessment.

8.5.5 Where the student has been permitted to substitute a module the mark achieved will be recorded and used on the transcript. The mark used for the purpose of arriving at decisions on the final award will be the pass mark.

8.6 Standardisation or Adjustment of Marks

[2] See previous footnote

8.6.1 Where the marks for a module fall outside of the normal range (on the basis of historical data) or where concerns or issues have been raised about the module or its assessment before or during moderation (see 7.3), an investigation should be made into the reasons why this might have happened. Where the reasons are identified as being due to an error in the assessment process (i.e. the format/content of the assessment, marking or assessment criteria) or to some factor, which would have affected students (such as unavailability of essential research equipment), the marks for all students may be adjusted. The extent of adjustment should be agreed with the external examiner.

8.6.2 Where marks are adjusted, the rank order of affected students for the assessment must be maintained and the mark distributions should normally be preserved. The normal method of mark adjustment might be a simple addition or subtraction of an agreed percentage; however, Schools may use more sophisticated methods within the above constraints.

8.6.3 There should be no adjustment to marks if they accurately reflect the achievement or otherwise of the learning outcomes and have not resulted from an error in the assessment process or some other factor which would have affected students.

8.6.4 All adjustments to marks must be recorded in the minutes of the School Examination Board and reported to the University Undergraduate Progress Board.

8.6.5 School quality assurance mechanisms should ensure that any concerns identified in the assessment process or other aspects of the module result in a review of that module.

8.6.6 Scaling of marks within a single (or linked pair of) module(s) to a previously agreed distribution is not permitted. The marks for one module should not be normalised against the marks for other modules.

8.7 Aggregation of Marks

8.7.1 Marks should be aggregated for the purposes of determining the final award according to the credit weighting of the module and in accordance with the University scheme. For example, a mark for a single second stage 20 credit module would be weighted one sixth of the overall mark for stage 2. For more information on aggregation of marks for the purposes of determining the final award see Appendix B.

8.8 Academic Failure and Withdrawal

8.8.1 Students who do not achieve the required number of credits to proceed to the next stage of their programme, as set out in Regulation 4.2.11(3) or in programme requirements following re-assessment or repeat shall be required to withdraw. Such students will be informed of their right of appeal (see Code of Practice on Primary Appeals). Students who have achieved the requisite number of credits may be eligible for the award of a Certificate of Higher Education or a Diploma of Higher Education (see 9.4 below).

8.9 Transfer of a Student to a Different Programme

8.9.1 Students may transfer to a different programme of study within the School or in another School, subject to procedures and deadlines available from Student Services. Schools are required to support the application by the student and to identify clearly, within regulations, which modules (if any) students may be exempted from in the new programme of study.

8.9.2 Students may transfer to a part time version of a full time programme with the support of the School. Attention is drawn to the financial implications

of transfer for students and for the School. It is expected that students will follow the same programme of study as full time students, but on a part time basis. Where provision for part time students may be different, or where a School wishes to admit students on a part time basis, approval must be sought from Academic Board (see Appendix A for web reference to the relevant form and guidance).

8.10 **Fitness to Practise (for students entering the University from September 2003)**

The University provides information on the duties to be undertaken when invigilating examinations, see:

- Ordinance 5.4, 5.6 and 5.7
- Policy on Assuring Fitness to Practise
- Fitness to Practise Procedures Code of Practice
- School-specific Codes of Conduct and Fitness to practice

http://www.studserv.bham.ac.uk/sca/fitness/index.htm

8.11 **Debarring from Assessment and Reasonable Diligence**

8.11.1 See Appendix A for Code of Practice relating to the Reasonable Diligence procedure. (See also Regulation 5.2.5 and 5.2.6).

9.1 Classified Degrees

9.1.1 The class of degree of each student shall be determined in accordance with the agreed University classification scheme (see Regulation 4.2.12(16) and 10 below)

9.1.2 In order to be awarded a classified honours degree, students are required to:

a. achieve the minimum number of credits at each level as specified in Regulation 4.2.12, and
b. to have achieved an overall mark of at least 40% from a combination of module marks in the proportions as specified in Regulation 4.2.12(6).

9.1.3 There is provision for students on Undergraduate Masters programmes to be awarded a Bachelors (Honours) degree. See Criteria for Award of Bachelor's Degree to Students on Undergraduate Master's Programmes (Appendix A).

9.1.4 Where a year of study abroad or in industry between stages 2 and 3 is included as a requirement of the programme of study to which a student has been admitted, it must the achievement of the learning outcomes shall be assessed and used, in a proportion to be agreed by Academic Board, to wards the overall stage 2 contribution to the degree classification.

9.1.5 Where a year of study abroad is an equivalent alternative to study that would otherwise have been taken within the University, it must be assessed and contribute to the classification in the same way as the equivalent study undertaken within the University.

9.1.6 Where a student was previously registered on an Honours degree programme, the Certificate or Diploma awarded will normally have the same title as that programme. The title of the award should reflect the content. In some circumstances (particularly where specialisms reflected in the programme title are not taught until the final stage) it may be more appropriate to award a Certificate or Diploma with the name of the School or Department. In all other cases and except where special provision has been made and approved by or on behalf of Academic Board, the title of the award will be the name of the School or (where relevant) Department.

9.2 **Oral Examinations and Final Awards**

9.2.1 Decisions on degree classification or on the achievement of an award are based on credit accumulation and aggregation of individual module marks according to the University scheme. All assessment is related to the learning outcomes of a specific module. Consequently all assessment that may affect degree classification or the achievement of an award must be related to a specific module and the mark included in the module mark. This is described in more detail in the University Undergraduate Regulations which are available to staff and students.

9.2.2 Oral examinations are permitted as one of a range of assessment methods available within modules. Where such oral examinations are used, they should be used where the competences/achievements of the stated learning outcomes for the module may only be demonstrated through these means, or where the oral examination is an integral part of the assessment of a module (eg in relation to the project or dissertation, or language skills). All students taking a module should be subject to the same form of assessment.

9.2.3 Generic additional oral examinations as previously used in some sections of the University for a subsection of students when determining the final degree classification or the achievement of an award are not permitted. Examples of where this type of additional examination has previously been used include

- as a means of calibrating the overall student performance or standard of a student cohort
- assessing students' competence across a range of modules
- in determining the degree classification of a borderline candidate.

9.2.2 Exceptionally, an additional oral examination may be used to check the authorship of assessed work in case of doubt, provided that this does not conflict with any formal investigation of examination irregularity or alleged plagiarism, or where there are mitigating circumstances for poor performance.

9.2.3 Exceptionally, where there are professional validation reasons, other forms of oral examination may be permitted subject to the approval of Academic Board. The criteria against which the students' performance at the oral examination will be judged should be made available to the students and examiners in advance of the oral examination. Students should also be provided with written information and guidance should be provided in advance to students.

9.3 **Absence from Assessment and Final Awards**

9.3.1 Students who are ill for a significant period during the academic session (i.e. have missed key elements of their learning experience) or are prevented from following their programme of study, may apply for leave of absence, returning to study once circumstances allow. Applications to the Progress and Awards Board of Senate would normally be for only one academic session at a time and must be endorsed by the School.

9.3.2 All students, including those in their final stage of their programme, who miss assessments on individual modules through illness, or for other good reason as determined by the Board of Examiners/Mitigation Panel, should take the assessment at the earliest reasonable time (normally at the next available opportunity).

9.3.3 In cases where students miss only part of the assessment for a module for reasons or illness or other good reason as determined by the Board of Examiners/Mitigation Panel the Board of Examiners should consider whether there is enough material evidence to show that the students has satisfied the learning outcomes of the module. The mark awarded should be based on the completed work, e.g. if one of three equally weighted

assessments was missed, then the mark awarded would be based on the two completed assessments equally weighted.

9.3.4 Where a student is prevented by illness or other cause from attending all or part of the final assessments for an award, the Board of Examiners may either:

- where sufficient evidence of achievement exists, recommend the award of the degree (classified), diploma or certificate
- where insufficient evidence of achievement exists, recommend that the student be provided with a further opportunity to complete the requirements for the qualification concerned.

Sufficient evidence of achievement would normally consist of the majority of assessed work, and evidence that the main learning outcomes of the programme have been achieved.

9.3.5 In exceptional circumstances, and where it would not be possible for a student to be provided with a further opportunity to complete the requirements for the qualification due to illness or some other good reason, the student may apply to be awarded an aegrotat degree.

10. Degree Classification – Distribution of Module Classes Procedure

10.1.1 Basic Principles:

The system of DMC operates under the following conditions:

- The starting point is the calculation of the arithmetic mean mark, rounded to one decimal point;
- When the averaging system has already calculated a result and when that result is within a certain band below a borderline. (This principle ensures that consideration can only be given to the median when the less successful module outcomes do not fall below an acceptable level).
- Where there are 480 units attempted for a bachelors degree and 600 units for an Undergraduate Masters. (This ensures that the candidate offers a complete record and meets the University requirements for eligibility for the award of a classified degree).
- Where there is a preponderance, after credit-weighting, of marks in the class above the relevant borderline. (The purpose of the DMC system is to recognise the prevailing character of a candidate's performance on the basis of judgements of the class to which each module outcome belongs. In this way, recognition is given to the fact that a student may have more module marks, which lie above the degree classification indicated by the arithmetic mean.)
- Where there are no fails or limited failure is outweighed by additional units in or above the higher class. (The median emphasises achievement and recognises classes. Correspondingly it deals more firmly with failure).

10.1.2 <u>Step 1 – the arithmetic mean:</u>

Where candidates are eligible for the award of a classified first degree, the class will be determined initially on the basis of the weighted arithmetic mean (to take account of the credit rating of a module) using the weighting between stages as identified in the assessment protocol:

70+ = 1st;
60-69 = 2i;
50-59 = 2ii;
40-49 = 3rd.

Recording of marks should be in accordance with Assessment Protocol 8.1.3.

For the purposes of determining the degree classification obtained, the mean should be calculated to one decimal place. In determining class on

the basis of weighted arithmetic mean, numbers of .5 and above will be rounded up. For example, 59.5 would become 60, whereas 59.4, would be subject to consideration under the DMC – distribution of module class scheme.

10.1.3 Step 2 – identifying borderline cases:

Those candidates with weighted arithmetic means that are within pre-determined margins less than the degree classification hurdle values provided above, will be borderline cases and eligible for classification on the DMC basis as set out below.

The distribution of module class system makes use of the class band in which each module mark falls.

In order to obtain a relative weighting of final year to second year, credits are transformed into units (weighted credits), as follows:

	3 yr programme credits = units	**4 yr Mod Langs programme credits = units**	**4 yr Undergraduate Masters programme credits = units**
Proportions between years/stages	25:75	12.5:12.5:75	20:40:40
	Credits ⇔ Units	**Credits ⇔ Units**	**Credits ⇔ Units**
Year 2	120 = 120	120 = 60	120 = 120
Year 3	120 = 360	120 = 60	120 = 240
Year 4		120 = 360	120 = 240
Total of units	**480**	**480**	**600**

Example: So, for instance, in the case of a Modern Languages degree, the second and third year credits are half weighted and the 120 credits in each year are divided by 2 to give 60 units, whereas the final year is triple weighted and the 120 credits are multiplied by 3 to 360 units. A 20 credit module in this programme will therefore count 10 units in years 2 and 3, but 60 units in year 4.

A candidate will be eligible for classification according to the DMC system only if all the following conditions are met:

a. the candidate has attempted all credits on which the classification is based,
b. the candidate has failed not more than:
   60 units for a classified honours degree and
   70 units for an Undergraduate Masters degree,
c. the candidate has a weighted arithmetic mean in the ranges as follows:
   ≥ 66.0 and < 69.5 - for consideration for a 1st
   ≥ 57.0 and < 59.5 - for consideration for a 2i
   ≥ 48.0 and < 49.5 - for consideration for a 2ii
   ≥ 38.0 and < 39.5 - for consideration for a 3rd

10.1.4 Step 3 – Determination of the degree class for borderline cases:

As explained above, the Distribution of module classes (DMC) system makes use of the class band in which each module mark falls.

The candidate will achieve a higher class, than indicated by the arithmetic

mean, if the following conditions are met:

(a) **CLASSIFIED BACHELORS DEGREE, with more than 240 units in the classification band above the degree class indicated by the calculation of the arithmetic mean**

i. Where a student has achieved **more than** 240 units above the degree classification indicated by the calculation of the arithmetic mean and has no fails.

ii. Where a student has achieved **more than** 240 units above the degree classification indicated by the calculation of the arithmetic mean, but there are failed units up to a maximum of 60 units. The failed units should be compensated by an equal number of additional units in the degree classes above that indicated by the arithmetic mean (eg if 20 units are failed, then more than 260 units are required in the degree classes above that which is achieved).

(b) **CLASSIFIED BACHELORS DEGREE, with exactly 240 units in the classification band above the degree class indicated by the calculation of the arithmetic mean and no fails**

i. A student whose arithmetic mean mark lies in the range of 66.0 and 69.4, inclusive should be awarded a 1st class degree if they have achieved 240 units in class I, with not less than 80 units in class 2i and they have no fails.

ii. A student whose arithmetic mean mark falls between the following ranges should be awarded a higher class of degree if they meet the following requirements:

iii. A student whose arithmetic mean mark lies in the range of at least 57.0 and less than 59.5, should be awarded a 2i class degree if they have achieved 240 units in the 2i class or above, but have at least 40 units in 1st class;

A student whose arithmetic mean mark lies in the range of at least 48.0 and less than 49.5, should be awarded a 2ii class degree if they have achieved 240 units in the 2ii class or above, but have at least 40 units in the 2i class or above.

(a) **UNDERGRADUATE MASTERS DEGREE, with more than 300 units in the Classification Band above the degree class indicated by the calculation of the arithmetic mean**

i. Where a student has achieved **more than** 300 units above the degree classification indicated by the calculation of the arithmetic mean and has no fails.

ii. Where a student has achieved **more than** 300 units above the degree classification indicated by the calculation of the arithmetic mean, but there are failed units, up to a maximum of 70 failed units. The failed units should be compensated by an equal number of additional units in the degree classes above that indicated by the arithmetic mean (eg if 20 units are failed, then more than 320 units are required in the degree classes above that which is achieved).

(b) **UNDERGRADUATE MASTERS DEGREE, with exactly 300 units in the classification band above the degree class indicated by the calculation of the arithmetic mean and no fails**

i. A student whose arithmetic mean mark lies in the range of 66.0 and 69.4, inclusive, should be awarded a 1st class degree if they have achieved 300 units in class I, with not

less than 100 units in class 2i and have no fails.

ii. A student whose arithmetic mean mark lies between the following ranges should be awarded a higher class of degree if they meet the following requirements:
A student whose arithmetic mean mark lies in the range of at east 57.0 and less than 59.5, should be awarded a 2i class degree if they have achieved 300 units in the 2i range, but have at least 50 units in 1st class;
A student whose arithmetic mean mark lies in the range of at least 48.0 and less than 49.5, should be awarded a 2ii class degree if they have achieved 300 units in the 2ii range, but have at least 50 units in the 2i class or above.

11. AP(E)L

11.1 (With effect from October 2001)

Credit should only be awarded for achievement of designated learning outcomes. Therefore AP(E)L should be awarded only against specific modules where through prior qualification or experience it can be confirmed that students have achieved equivalent learning outcomes. Where this is not academically possible due to differing curriculum or (in particular) accreditation of prior experiential learning, Schools should identify which modules the students are not required to complete by studying at Birmingham. AP(E)L will be awarded against these modules. Students will be registered for these modules so that their total credit load is as for other students, as appropriate to the programme and award.

Transcripts should only reflect credit achieved at the University of Birmingham. Consequently 'direct entry' students (i.e. those who join the University at a later stage of the programme) would receive transcripts containing only marks achieved while at the University. For students who receive AP(E)L, all modules should be reflected on the transcript, so that the total number of credits matched that required for the award. In such cases, the AP(E)L module should be clearly marked.

Progression should be determined as for other students, and AP(E)L modules should be considered as equivalent to other modules. For example, an undergraduate student who received AP(E)L for 20 credits would be required to achieve 100 credits for progression (students take 120 credits and need 100 credits to proceed). An undergraduate student who received AP(E)L for 40 credits would be required to achieve an additional 60 credits for progression.

Degree classification should be determined pro rata. Only credit gained through study at the University of Birmingham should be included in the calculation.

Students who apply for AP(E)L once they are already registered for a programme should be required to complete the AP(E)L procedures, and pay the appropriate fee(s).

For cohorts entering from October 2003:
A student may be awarded only one University qualification following completion of a programme of study. (Regulation 4.2.12(1)).
Where a student is permitted to use pre-awarded credit towards a University qualification, satisfactory completion of that qualification will be dependent

upon the further achievement of at least one third of the total credits required for the award. The achievement of these credits must be at the same or at a higher academic level than the pre-awarded credits and must include any compulsory dissertation or thesis element stated in the programme requirements. (Regulation 4.2.7(3)).

12. Contribution of Year Abroad/in Industry

Where the year abroad/in industry is either an integral part of the programme to which the student has been admitted, or recognised in the title of the degree awarded it must be assessed and produce a mark or marks which contribute to the stage 2 contribution to the degree classification. It must be passed (at least 100 credits) for the purpose of progression within that programme. The proportion of the contribution to the overall stage 2 contribution to the classification shall be subject to approval by the Academic Board on the basis of a recommendation from the School concerned.

Where the year abroad is an equivalent alternative to study that would otherwise have been taken within the University, it must be assessed and contribute to the classification in the same way as equivalent study undertaken within the University in accordance with the agreed University-wide classification scheme.

Where the year abroad/in industry is assessed and contributes to the final classification, Schools shall recommend for approval by the Academic Board assessment arrangements (which must be carried out either by this University or the 'host' institution) which will produce a mark or marks which can be used with confidence in degree classification.

Appendix A

List of documentation or other resources referred to in the Protocols or relevant:

1. University Undergraduate Regulations
http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/regs/index.htm

2. University of Birmingham Codes of Practice (Index - http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/index.htm)

The External Examiner System for Undergraduate and Taught Masters Programmes	http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/code4.htm
Final Examination Procedures for First Degrees	http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/code5.htm
Primary Appeals Procedures	http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/code6.htm
Senate Appeals Procedures	http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/code7.htm
Code of Practice for Reasonable Diligence Procedure	http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/code13.htm
Conduct of Centrally Co-ordinated Formal Written Examinations	http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/code9.htm
Code of Practice on Plagiarism	http://www.studserv.bham.ac.uk/sca/plag/cop.htm
Code of Practice for Student Development and Support in Schools	http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/CoP_Student_Development_and_Support.pdf

3. Guidelines on Mitigations
http://www.studserv.bham.ac.uk/mitigations.htm

4. Programme and Module Catalogue
http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/progmods/

5. Guidelines on the Use of Students in Teaching
http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/ugteach.htm

6. Guidelines on AP(E)L/WBL
http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/APELug.htm
http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/APELpg.htm

7. QAA Codes of Practice
http://www.qaa.ac.uk

8. Part Time Variants of Full Time Programmes
http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/ptvariant.htm

9. Criteria for Award of Bachelor's Degree to Students on Undergraduate Master's Programmes (to be revised to reflect the recommendation agreed by Senate in March 2003 that such an award could be made by counting credit irrespective of where that credit is located in the programme).
http://www.ao.bham.ac.uk/aps/bhamonly/ctteedocs/AB.01.03.10/default.htm

10. Submission of Assessed Work: Good Practice Guidelines for Students
http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/aps/policy/cop/sub.htm

11. Examination Invigilation Arrangements
http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/invigilence.htm

12. Medical Certificates
http://www.studserv.bham.ac.uk/medical_cert.pdf

13. Data Protection Policy
http://www.legalservices.bham.ac.uk/data_protection_policy/

Appendix B

Degree Classification for cohorts graduating summer 2004 onwards – background information and examples

Establishing "Average" Performance and Boundary Procedures - *Background and rationale:*

The Regulations and Assessment Protocols for classified bachelors degrees and Undergraduate Masters degrees provide for classification on the basis of "average" performance. "Average" is, of course, a vague term which describes a single indicator. It is used to describe measures, which represent overall performance. Although much potentially valuable information is lost by the attempts to reflect the variety of results obtained by a student in a single measure, it is a practice pursued in a variety of ways by all of our peer academic institutions in this country and demands for such an indicator persist. The importance that students, some funders and some employers attach to classification is reflected by the concern that examiners apply to classification and since there are a number of different measures used to represent average each with their own shortcomings, attention is given to this issue here.

It is important to affirm that the determination of module marks requires the application of academic judgement (including, for example, the setting of questions, determination and application of marking schemes, internal and external moderation). It is this academic judgement that reflects the standards of this University. However, there is substantial pressure to ensure that the determination of degree classes, using module marks, should be a consistent and objective process, except in relation to the consideration of mitigation or other special circumstances. While this pressure is increased by considerations of equity, particularly in the context of joint, major/minor and other cross-University programmes, it has been effectively made a requirement in the face of QAA Institutional Review. In setting boundaries, which can be applied objectively and consistently across the University, consideration has been given to the determination of "average".

The arithmetic mean has considerable merit as a measure of average (or overall) performance: with marks given on a 100 point scale, every additional mark on each module is taken into account; marks from modules of the same credit rating and in the same year/stage of the programme are given equal weighting. However, this merit is offset by how it responds to the incidence of marks which are outliers with extreme values and by mark distributions which are skewed. Due to the small number of modules being averaged and the nature of the distribution of marks across the range of the scale, the arithmetic mean can fail to provide a satisfactory representation of overall performance. As a result, there are numerous examples of the use of alternative classification procedures around the UK sector.

A number of alternative measures are available and that which has been widely used in this University, and that most commonly used in other UK Universities often as the principal approach, is the median (which measures the distribution of module classes - hereafter referred to as DMC).

The median has the benefits of not being distorted:

- by marks from individual modules which are outliers,
- by the differences in the range of marks in each class band and
- by the different qualitative demands across the bands.

The method set out below takes account of the above to provide a procedure which

- is objective and can be programmed,
- while adopting the weighted arithmetic mean as a prime measure, makes provision for students whose overall performance would not be properly recognised by this measure through the limited application of a median calculation
- reflects the empirical position both in producing outcomes substantially consistent with the variety of those under existing practices and in reflecting the distribution of marks across class bands (*in particular, the central tendency of the arithmetic mean*

is reflected in step 2, below, by setting narrower margins for those with averages falling just below 60 to those falling just below 70 etc).

- ***Examples for Classified Honours Degree Students:***

a) A candidate with marks as follows:

Year 2 (all 20 credit modules	61	62	63	70	71	72	
Year 3 (all 20 credit modules)	64	70	70	71	72	72	
Weighted arithmetic mean							*69.0*
Units at 1st Units at 2I Units at 2ii	80	60 20	60 20	80	80	80	360 120

Not eligible for 1st class degree under step 1 but meets all conditions under step 2 to be considered under paper count basis.

Number of units that fall within 1st class are 360 [*60 (from year 2) plus 3 times 100 (from year 3)*].
The student should be award a 1st class degree under step 3 (a).

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b) A candidate with marks as follows:

Year 2 (all 20 credit modules):	61	62	63	70	71	72	
Year 3 (all 20 credit modules):	64	68	68	71	72	72	
Weighted arithmetic mean							*68.5*
Units at 1st Units at 2I Units at 2ii	80	80	80	80	80	80	240 240

Not eligible for 1st under step 1 but meets all conditions under step 2 to be considered under paper count basis.
Number of units that fall within 1st class are 240 units [*60 (from yr 2) plus 3 times 60 (from yr 3)*], the total of units that fall within 2i class are 240 units [*60 (from yr 2) plus 3 times 60 (from yr 3)*].

Not eligible under step 3(a) to be awarded a 1st, as the student does not have '<u>more than</u>' 240 units in the 1st class category;
However, under step 3(b)i the student would be awarded a 1st class degree as they have 240 units in the first class and 240 units 2i.

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c) A candidate with marks as follows:

Year 2 (all 20 credit modules):	52	52	54	61	61	62	
Year 3 (all 20 credit modules):	52	56	56	62	63	71	
Weighted arithmetic mean							*59.3*
Units at 1st Units at 2I Units at 2ii	80	80	80	80	80	60 20	60 180 240

Not eligible for 2i under step 1 but meets all conditions under step 2 to be considered under paper count basis.
Number of units that fall within 1st = 60 units (from year 3), the total of units that fall within 2i class (or higher) are 240 units [60 (from year 2) plus 3 times 60 (from year 3)]

Not eligible under step 3(a), but award 2i under step 3(b)ii since the student has achieved 240 units at 2i or above, including at least 40 units at 1st class.

- ***Examples for Undergraduate Masters Degree Students:***

d) A candidate with marks as follows:

Year 2 (all 20 credit modules	61	62	63	70	71	72	
Year 3 (all 20 credit modules)	64	70	70	71	72	72	
Year 4 (all 20 credit modules)	64	70	70	72	73	71	
Weighted arithmetic mean							*69.2*
Units at 1st Units at 2I Units at 2ii	100	80 20	80 20	100	100	100	460 140

Not eligible for 1st under step 1 but meets all conditions under step 2 to be considered under paper count basis.
Number of units that fall within 1st class are 460 [*60 (from stage 2) plus 2 times 200 (from stage 3)*].
Since 460 units are more than 300, the student should be awarded a 1st class degree under step 3 (c).

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e) A candidate with marks as follows:

Year 2 (all 20 credit modules	61	62	63	70	71	72	
Year 3 (all 20 credit modules)	64	68	68	71	72	72	
Year 4 (all 20 credit modules)	64	68	68	72	73	71	
Weighted arithmetic mean							*68.7*
Units at 1st Units at 2i Units at 2ii	100	100	100	100	100	100	300 300

Not eligible for 1st under step 1 but meets all conditions under step 2 to be considered under paper count basis.
Number of units that fall within 1st = 300 [*60 (from stage 2) plus 2 times 120 (from stage 3)*], the total of units that fall within 2i class are 300 [*60 (from stage 2) plus 2 times 120 (from stage 3)*].

Not eligible under step 3(c) to be awarded a 1st, as the student does not have '<u>more than</u>' 300 units in the 1st class category;
However, under step 3(d)i the student would be eligible for the award of a 1st class degree as they have 300 units in the 1st class category and 300 in the 2i category.

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f) A candidate with marks as follows:

Year 2 (all 20 credit modules):	52	52	54	61	61	62	
Year 3 (all 20 credit modules):	52	56	56	62	63	71	
Year 4 (all 20 credit modules)	52	56	56	62	63	71	
Weighted arithmetic mean							*59.4*
Units at 1st Units at 2i Units at 2ii	 100	 100	 100	 100 	 100 	80 20 	80 220 300

Not eligible for 2i under step 1 but meets all conditions under step 2 to be considered under paper count basis.

Number of units that fall within 1st = 80 units (from stage 3), the total of units that fall within 2i class (or higher) are 300 units [60 (from stage 2) plus 2 times 120 (from stage 3)].

Not eligible under step 3(c) but award 2i under step 3(d)ii since the student has achieved 300 units at 2i or above, including more than 50 at 1st class.