UCD Assessment Code of Practice

For UCD Staff, Academic Session 2017-18

University College Dublin
An Coláiste Ollscoil, Baile Átha Cliath

TEACHING LABORATORY

Contents

Introduction

Assessment at UCD is an integrated and integral part of learning and teaching. The Assessment Code of Practice (ACOP) is a public document for UCD staff, which sets out a mandatory code of practice encompassing all forms of assessment along the lifecycle of assessment.

This code of practice is underpinned by the Purpose, Terms and General Principles of Assessment (see section 1) and supported through the UCD Academic Regulations, the Examination Regulations and all University policies relating to assessment. The UCD Academic Regulations provide high level, overarching rules to govern UCD programmes and specifically address matters relating to student progression, assessment and awards for undergraduate and graduate taught programmes of study.

The Assessment Code of Practice applies consistently to all students registered to taught modules on undergraduate or graduate programmes. The assessment of the research element of the work of students on graduate research programmes is governed by the UCD General Regulations and the UCD Policy on Theses in Graduate Research Programmes.

The University, through the Academic Council Committee on Examinations (ACCE), shall periodically monitor and review University assessment procedures and regulations, taking into account feedback from Schools, Programme Boards and Subject Extern Examiners. Instances of non-compliance or breach of the Code of Practice by the responsible party, shall be referred to the ACCE for consideration and action and/or other University mechanisms where appropriate.

In this code of practice, where responsibility is assigned to the School, the responsibility rests with the Head of School. However the Head of School may formally devolve this responsibility to a nominee such as a Head of Subject or Head of Teaching and Learning.

Section 1: Context

This section looks at the purpose of assessment, key assessment terms, regulations and the general principles that underpin the assessment code of practice.

1.1 Purpose of assessment in UCD

Assessment is a systematic process for gathering and evaluating information on a student's academic progress, which can be used for one or more of the following purposes[1]:

- **To provide certification:** providing means to identify, and discriminate between, different levels of achievement of the learning outcomes for the purposes of making an award of the University upon completion of a module or programme of study.
- **To improve student learning:** promoting learning by motivating students and informing them of their progress towards achievement of the learning outcomes.
- **To contribute to quality enhancement:** providing evidence of academic standards and student progress to staff and other stakeholders in order to inform teaching or curriculum enhancement.

1.2 Key assessment terms

Summative assessment is a term to describe assessment which is primarily for the purpose of providing certification. This includes all assessments that receive a grade contributing to the overall module grade, for example continuous or end of semester assessments. Where one summative assessment is given a high weighting in a module, it is often referred to as **high stakes assessment**.

Formative assessment is a term to describe assessment designed to provide feedback on students' learning and overall progress towards achievement of the learning outcomes. It can assist in improving student learning by: providing students with information to self-monitor their academic progress and providing staff with feedback to inform their teaching approaches. Formative assessment is often not graded.

[1] *Bloxham & Boyd, (2008) Developing Effective Assessment in Higher Education, A Practical Guide. Berkshire: Open University Press.*
Mutch, A. and Brown, G. (2001) Assessment: A Guide for Heads of Department. York: Learning and Teaching Support Network Generic Centre.

Whilst summative and formative assessments generally are differentiated by whether they are graded or not, they are not mutually exclusive. For example, particularly in the early weeks of a module or programme, staff may design assessments to encourage participation or to provide feedback on students' performance (formative) that are given low weighting (summative). This is often described as **low stakes assessment**. The overlap between summative and formative assessments which are graded is set out in Figure 1. Although the primary focus of this document is on the practices and policies related to graded assessments, increasingly non-graded formative assessment activities serve an important function in terms of student engagement and self-monitoring in the learning process.

These activities are often undertaken by students (in-class or online) where they self or peer review their own work with a view to monitoring their progress. These activities are represented at the right-hand side of Figure 1 below.

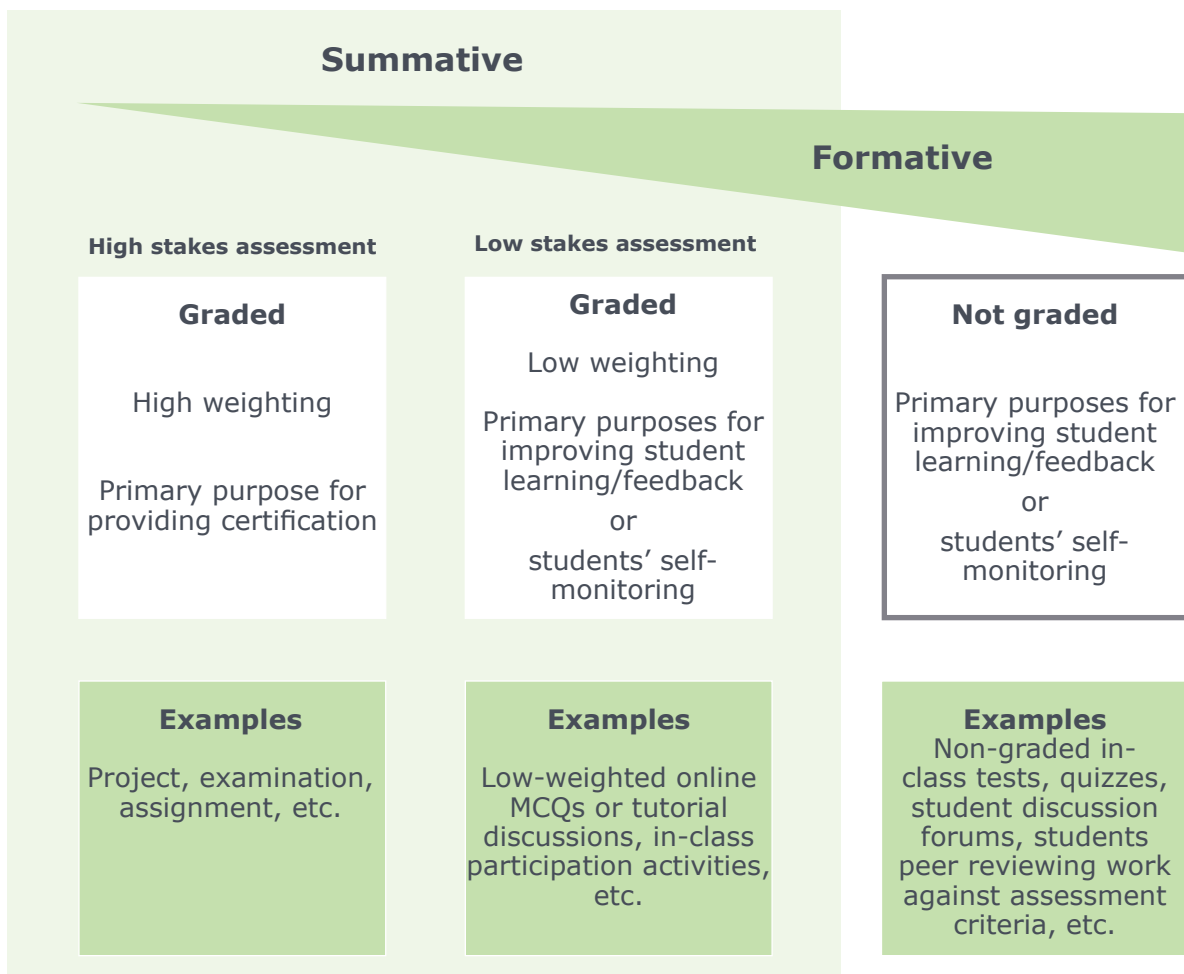| Summative		Formative
High stakes assessment	**Low stakes assessment**	
Graded High weighting Primary purpose for providing certification	**Graded** Low weighting Primary purposes for improving student learning/feedback or students' self-monitoring	**Not graded** Primary purposes for improving student learning/feedback or students' self-monitoring
Examples Project, examination, assignment, etc.	**Examples** Low-weighted online MCQs or tutorial discussions, in-class participation activities, etc.	**Examples** Non-graded in-class tests, quizzes, student discussion forums, students peer reviewing work against assessment criteria, etc.

Figure 1: Summative and Formative Assessment (High Stakes and Low Stakes Assessment)

1.3 General principles of assessment in UCD

The following general principles shall guide both programme and module assessment practices, although their application and emphasis will vary according to the context and purposes of the assessment (see Table 1). Not all assessment principles are equally applicable at the same time, and the balance of emphasis in practice requires professional judgment based on the overall intended learning outcomes, stage of student learning, educational rationale and pedagogic approach.

Table 1: General principles of assessment[2]

Validity	Assessments shall be appropriate and shall measure what they purport to measure and shall align with the programme's and module's learning outcomes.
Reliability	Assessment tasks shall generate comparable grades across time, across graders and across methods to ensure academic standards.
Effectiveness	Assessments tasks shall be designed to encourage good quality 'deep' approaches to learning in students.
Comparability and consistency	There shall be consistent and comparable approaches to the summative assessment requirements of awards of the same level across programmes and institutions in terms of student workload and academic challenge.
Equity and diversity	All students shall have equal opportunity to effectively demonstrate their learning and shall have the opportunity to be assessed by different, appropriate and applicable methods across a programme/subject major.
Practicability and efficiency	Assessment tasks shall be practical for both staff and students in terms of a reasonable workload, the time needed for completion and grading, and their cost effectiveness.
Transparency	Information, guidance, assessment criteria and rules and regulations on assessment shall be clear, accurate, consistent and accessible to all students, staff and examiners.
Attribution	Assessment tasks shall generate clear and reliable evidence that the work has been produced by the student.

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[2] *IBID Bloxham S. and Boyd, P. (2008)*

1.4 Academic regulations

The Academic Regulations provide high level, overarching rules to govern UCD programmes and specifically address matters relating to student progression, assessment and awards for Undergraduate and Graduate Taught programmes of study.

1.4.1 Any derogation from the UCD Academic Regulations to meet professional accreditation or any other requirements shall be approved by the relevant University Programme Board and Academic Council.

Further information
UCD Academic Regulations:
http://www.ucd.ie/governance/resources/policypage-academicregulations/

1.5 Language of assessment

1.5.1 All teaching and assessment of modules within programmes leading to an academic award of the University shall be in the English language, apart from the following exceptions:
- Irish modules, foreign language modules and any modules on a programme with a significant foreign language curriculum specialisation.
- Modules provided and assessed by another institution associated with a student exchange or collaborative programme and approved by the relevant University committee/board.

1.6 Academic integrity

Academic integrity is one of the cornerstones of assessment in UCD. Academic integrity is the responsible practice of honesty and ethics in scholarship to ensure that appropriate acknowledgement is given to the contributions of others in any academic work.

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty, where ideas are presented falsely, either implicitly or explicitly, as being the original thought of the author. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and while it may be easy to commit unintentionally, it is defined by the fact not the intention.

1.6.1 All staff involved in assessment shall make students aware that they are responsible for upholding the University's Policy on Plagiarism.

Further information
UCD Policy on Plagiarism: http://www.ucd.ie/governance/

1.7 Assessment and extenuating circumstances

Extenuating circumstances are unforeseen events which prevent a student from attending a substantial number of classes, affect their ability to study or complete assessments, or impair their performance. In such cases, students may apply for their extenuating circumstances to be considered by the relevant Programme Examination Board. Such circumstances include serious illness, hospitalisation, accidents and family bereavement. Foreseen circumstances that prevent students from meeting deadlines cannot be considered under the Extenuating Circumstances Policy and procedure. The University's Extenuating Circumstances Policy provides further guidance and related procedures.

There is an established University process for dealing with applications for the extension of submission deadlines for graduate taught theses on the basis of extenuating circumstances. The University Policy on Theses in Graduate Taught Programmes provides further details and the relevant application forms.

> **1.7.1** Schools shall ensure that clear guidance on the protocols in place for dealing with late submissions and application for deadline extensions is provided for students, including details of any penalties that may be imposed for late submission.

Further information
UCD Policy on Extenuating Circumstances
Extension Submission Deadline (Graduate Taught Theses)
Policy on Late Submission of Coursework:
http://www.ucd.ie/governance/

1.8 Assessment and remediation

If a student fails a module in UCD, remediation is the process whereby the student is provided with the opportunity to demonstrate that they have met the minimum learning requirements of the module, in order to complete the credit requirements of the programme. Remediation encompasses resits, repeats and substitution where it is permitted.

Further information
UCD Academic Regulations Section 5.16 - Continuation
and Section 5.8- Remediation:
http://www.ucd.ie/governance/resources/policypage-academicregulations/

1.9 Assessment and students with disabilities

UCD is committed to ensuring, as far as possible and within the framework of current legislative requirements, that students with disabilities have equal access to, and participation in, all examinations and assessments. Reasonable accommodations are defined as those actions that enable students to accurately demonstrate their full knowledge and ability in examinations without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind the provision of such accommodations is to alleviate a substantial disadvantage without affecting the integrity of the assessment. The granting of reasonable accommodations is not intended to put the integrity or status of the assessment or examination at risk, and is designed to ensure fairness to all students. Although students are required to contact Module Coordinators well in advance of an examination to request reasonable accommodations, it is advisable for Module Coordinators to contact students to enquire if they require reasonable accommodations for local examinations by checking their module class list in UCD Connect.

1.9.1 Schools shall provide reasonable accommodations for students registered with the University for disability support in local examinations organised by the School.

Further information
Assessment and students with disabilities:
https://www.ucd.ie/all/supports/informationforstaff/

Section 2: Pre-assessment

This section focuses on pre-assessment and covers the key considerations and actions which need to be completed as part of the design of assessment approaches in advance of the assessment taking place.

2.1 Assessment design

Staff shall consider carefully the purpose of their assessment(s) and the general principles of assessment (see section 1), taking into account any previous student and staff feedback and the UCD module enhancement process. Assessment design is strongly linked with the module's learning outcomes. Normally UCD curricula use a 'typical' learning outcomes approach; this implies that outcomes should be written to represent what students typically achieve, as distinct from outcomes indicating a minimum standard of achievement. However, the 'threshold performance' approach is appropriate for the assessment of competence and pass/fail assessments where it is not possible or necessary to distinguish performance levels above the threshold. Examiners from different national or international institutions should be made aware of this distinction, where relevant.

2.1.1 To ensure the validity of the assessment, all assessment tasks shall be clearly aligned with the module's learning outcomes.

2.1.2 Module learning outcomes shall normally be assessed summatively (graded to certify learning). However, to achieve high level complex learning, some outcomes may be assessed formatively, primarily for student learning/feedback.

2.1.3 The principle of equity and diversity requires that students shall have the opportunity to be assessed by different approaches across a programme/major. Within each programme, there shall be a balance and a blend of assessment tasks to test the range of learning outcomes at each level of the programme/major.

2.1.4 Students shall normally have opportunities during the semester to work with and self-monitor against the assessment criteria or assessment rubrics, in order to have clear expectations of their progress.

2.1.5 When planning an assessment, both the method and the timing of the assessment shall be considered with reference to the overall assessment workload for the academic semester. The Module Coordinator shall consider how the assessment workload and approaches for each module relates to broader School/programme practices and consider steps to avoid assessment over-load, and the clustering of assessment and submission deadlines for individual students where possible.

Further information
UCD Teaching and Learning Assessment Resources
 http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/resources/assessment/

2.2 Assessment strategies and approvals

The Module Coordinator is responsible for designing all the instruments of assessment for a module. To support the Module Coordinator, this process is subject to review and monitoring by the School Head of Teaching and Learning, the Head of Subject, the Head of School, the Stage Coordinator (when relevant) and the Subject Extern Examiner.

2.2.1 Internal review of examination question papers shall take place before the papers are sent to Extern Examiners for comment. This shall include the clarity and accuracy of the language, specification of task and difficulty relative to the level and learning outcome.

2.2.2 Assessment information shall be clear and unambiguous to students, staff and examiners. The Assessment Strategy including assessment criteria, shall be communicated to students along with the learning outcomes and curriculum for each module in the Module Descriptor.

2.2.3 The mode and scheduling of remediation shall be set out in the Module Descriptor. Where a resit is the mode of remediation, information shall be provided on the nature and timing of the resit assessment. Only in the most exceptional circumstances may changes be made to the remediation opportunities once module registration has begun.

2.2.4 Where appropriate, students shall also be provided with details of specific assessment outcomes or other criteria in order to fulfil the requirements of professional accreditation bodies.

2.2.5 Where work-based learning forms part of a programme and students are assessed on placements, Module Coordinators shall inform students regarding who will assess their work during the placement, how it shall be assessed, and if the results will contribute to the calculation of the award for their programme.

2.2.6 Once students are registered to the module, only in the most exceptional circumstances, which do not prejudice the students concerned, can a Module Coordinator request a change to the assessment strategy through the formal University process.

Further information
UCD Policy on Internship Work Practice Experience
UCD Policy on Fitness to Practise:
http://www.ucd.ie/governance/

Exceptional Change to Module Assessment Strategy:
http://www.ucd.ie/registry/assessment/gap.html

2.3 Communication of assessment arrangements to students

2.3.1 Schools shall ensure that students are provided at the start of the module with a Module Outline document which provides a comprehensive description of all the assessment tasks which have been included in the Module Descriptor. A Module Outline document shall always align with the overarching information on module assessment as set out in the Module Descriptor.

2.3.2 The Module Outline document shall indicate clearly how grades for individual pieces of work are apportioned, and shall include the assessment criteria, submission dates and arrangements, and the timeframe for when assessment feedback shall be provided to students for the module.

2.3.3 The Module Outline document shall:

- Describe the purpose of different assessment tasks and how they link to the learning outcomes of the module.
- Provide details of specific assessment outcomes or other criteria to be met to fulfil the requirements of the programme. These shall include the requirements for professional accreditation bodies, where applicable.
- Refer to the appropriate assessment submission proforma, without which assessments are not accepted and whether electronic or hard copy submission is permitted or required.
- Identify the method for the return of graded coursework.

Section 3: Assessment

This section focuses on the process of assessment and outlines the requirements to ensure that the conduct of assessment in the University is appropriate and upholds the integrity of the assessment process.

3.1 Conduct of assessment

3.1.1 Assessment shall be conducted in the appropriate conditions in accordance with the designated university regulations, policies, procedures, timelines and systems to:

- Ensure that the work has been produced by the student.
- Guarantee that all students who participate in the assessment do so in comparable conditions, which are reasonable and appropriate to enable them to satisfactorily attempt the assessment in an equitable manner.
- Protect the integrity and security of the assessment process and ensure the confidentiality of all assessment related materials.
- Ensure that the Module Coordinator or Internal Examiner concerned has no conflict of interest in relation to any student whose academic work they would assess and/or act as an examiner.
- Ensure that a contingency plan is in place both at School and University level in the case of any event where an assessment needs to be cancelled, so that a clear, coherent process is followed to enable the assessment to be rescheduled with the minimum of inconvenience caused and with the aim of not disadvantaging any students by the revised assessment schedule.

3.2 Conduct of clinical assessment

A clinical assessment is a practical, competency-based examination that takes place in a clinical setting which tests the competency of the student to perform a particular key task related to their programme of study and area of clinical expertise. It may be conducted with actual clinical subjects or in a simulated assessment format.

3.2.1 Clinical examinations shall be conducted to maximise the reliability and validity of the assessment at evaluating the student's attainment of the key competency in order to guarantee fitness to practise and to safeguard the public.

3.2.2 Where clinical environments are used for an examination, the standards shall not be compromised by everyday service activities occurring around the examination.

3.2.3 Examination materials shall be of a high quality and available to all examiners. Materials and props shall meet the criterias of standard, quality and viability, which are set by the School for clinical examinations.

3.2.4 When conducting an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) students shall be assessed, where possible, using the same stations or cues with the same grading scheme, which test the core competencies related to the learning outcomes of the assessment.

3.2.5 The conduct of a Direct Observation of Procedural Skills (DOPS) clinical examination in a veterinary context requires University ethical approval and the appropriate restraint of animals to ensure the safety of students.

3.3 Conduct of continuous assessment

Continuous assessment in UCD involves the evaluation of a student's progress and attainment throughout the course of delivery of a module during the teaching semester. In UCD, assessment is based on a learning outcomes approach which is more aligned with a greater emphasis on continuous assessment rather than the traditional approach of assessment being mainly based upon terminal examinations. A wide and diverse variety of continuous assessment methods are used in UCD which include – but are not limited to – projects, essays, laboratory tests, laboratory reports, practical assignments, fieldwork assignments, clinical assessments, group assessments, practical or experimental reports, projects, problem based learning exercises, class tests, pop quizzes and reflective/learning journals.

3.3.1 Module Coordinators shall keep records of continuous assessment in a safe, accurate and comprehensive manner, and enter grades for continuous assessment onto University systems during the semester. Module Coordinators shall communicate to students that any provisional component and module grades are indicative only and subject to adjustment until they have been formally approved by the relevant Programme Examination Board. Module Coordinators shall also be cognisant of the approved guidelines around feedback provision, which are delineated explicitly in section 4.1 of this document.

3.3.2 In the conduct of continuous assessment, Module Coordinators shall pay particular attention to what additional continuous assessment related accommodations may be required by students with disabilities who are taking the module by checking their module class list in UCD Connect.

3.3.3 Module Coordinators shall monitor the performance and feedback of students on components of continuous assessment during the module to inform the teaching inputs and module content in the later weeks of its delivery and to address any significant, unforeseen issues that may arise during the course of the semester.

Further information
Reasonable Accommodations in Assessments
https://www.ucd.ie/all/supports/informationforstaff/

3.4 Conduct of group assessment

A group assessment involves students participating collaboratively to produce a component of assessment where the process of the group work, the output of the group or a combination of both contributes to the outcome of the assessment.

3.4.1 Group assessments shall be conducted in a planned, developmental and coherent manner, to facilitate equity of contribution and participation for all students who attempt the assessment. Module Coordinators shall prepare students for group work, make them aware of the consequences of non-engagement with group work activity, and address the risk of the 'free-rider' syndrome in this assessment setting.

3.4.2 It shall be made clear how the module will be assessed and whether the assessment strategy is based on the product of the group work, the process of the group work or a combination of both the product and process.

3.4.3 It shall be clearly outlined how grades in group assessments will be distributed:shared group grade, individual grade or a combination of both.

3.4.4 It shall be made clear who applies the assessment criteria and determines the grades.

3.4.5 Schools that use group work for assessments shall ensure that a fair and transparent process is put in place to assign roles and responsibilities within student assessment groups. The roles may be assigned by the Module Coordinator, or by agreement within the group by its members.

3.4.6 Basic ground rules for the conduct of an assessed group work activity shall be established at the onset of the activity, including the means of any conflict resolution (what students do if there is conflict within the group) and what is expected of the group members in terms of treating each other with dignity and respect. Minimum levels of collaboration shall be identified as part of the group work assessment guidelines.

3.4.7 Module Coordinators shall encourage group members to resolve any disagreements amongst themselves. Schools shall ensure that there is a formal escalation and resolution process in place where relationships break down and disputes cannot be satisfactorily resolved by group members.

3.5 Conduct of online assessment

Similar to all assessment approaches, staff using online assessments shall be clear on the key purposes of each online assessment component (see Figure 1, page 6).

3.5.1 With regard to the conduct of online formative assessment, which includes a low stakes, online Multiple Choice Questionnaire (MCQ) examination, participation in online discussion forums, contribution to wikis, student creation of resources and low stakes summative assessment, Module Coordinators shall ensure that students have opportunities to:
- Self-monitor and/or learn from other students.
- Receive feedback.
- Practise, and see examples of, any unfamiliar task/software/VLE functionality prior to submission.

3.5.2 With regard to online summative, high stakes assessment (e.g. online examination, highly weighted projects/assignments), Module Coordinators shall ensure – in addition to the considerations on formative assessment – that students are given clear comprehensive instructions on all aspects of the operation and completion of the assessment including such information as the required file formats and the number of attempts allowed for that assessment component for which they have the responsibility for submitting online.

3.5.3 The principles of universal design shall underpin online assessment in UCD to ensure it is accessible to the greatest extent possible by all students regardless of age, ethnicity, family status, gender, nationality, sexuality, religion, size, ability or disability. As with all assessment practices, Module Coordinators should account for reasonable accommodations required by individual students within their cohort. In designing online assessment practices, please also refer to section 1.9 on "Assessment and students with disabilities" for guidance in this regard.

3.5.4 Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) in an assessment context refers to the practice of students taking an online assessment on their personal electronic device such as a PC, laptop, tablet or smartphone. UCD supports the principle of providing greater diversity in assessment through BYOD online assessments where it is pedagogically appropriate.

In order to conduct a BYOD online assessment, the Module Coordinator in consultation with UCD IT Services shall:

- Inform the students of the minimum hardware and software technical specifications required to complete the assessment on their devicei n advance of the examination.
- Agree a contingency plan for the process to be followed, if a student is unable to complete a BYOD online assessment on their own device due to a) a University systems error, and b) an error with their own personal device.
- Provide any student who does not have access to a personal device, with the appropriate UCD supplied device to take the examination, in order to uphold equality of access in an online assessment.

3.6 Conduct of MCQ examinations

A MCQ examination is where the student is provided with a range of questions or statements – the stem – with a number of possible answers, where one or more of the answers – the key – are correct responses and the other answers are distractors. A MCQ examination scores highly on the principles of the reliability and practicability of assessment, and is appropriate for testing learning outcomes related to knowledge recall and comprehension, but is less suitable for assessing analysis, synthesis or evaluation. For these, other forms of objective assessments, including Spot Tests and Extended Matching Questions may be more appropriate.

3.6.1 MCQs may be organised by Schools online through the nominated institutional Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) platform or in a class room as an in-semester examination. It is also possible to schedule a MCQ examination as part of the University's end of semester examination session.

3.6.2 Students shall be provided with all the necessary tools and examination materials to enable them to successfully attempt a MCQ examination in an online or paper format. It shall be clearly stated on the examination question paper and in all examination instructions to students whether or not negative marking applies to a MCQ examination.

3.6.3 It shall be clearly stated on the examination question paper and in all examination instructions to students whether or not it is permissible to remove the MCQ examination question paper from the examination.

3.6.4 Module Coordinators shall ensure the MCQ Set-Up Form has no errors and shall conduct an audit check of the results to ensure their accuracy and to ensure the integrity of the MCQ examination.

3.7 Conduct of oral examinations

An oral examination is an assessment which tests a student's achievement of a particular set of learning outcomes through the medium of spoken communication.

3.7.1 Two examiners shall be present at every oral examination.

3.7.2 Where a grade is allocated to the oral examination, every student shall be given an equal opportunity to perform wel, the questions put to every student shall be of a comparable standard and the grading criteria shall be clear to students.

3.7.3 The Module Coordinator shall keep an official record of the examination and shall archive – in line with University policy, see Section 27 – all the supporting documentation for an oral examination, including the examination structure, interview questions/topic guide, grading criteria and the official examination score sheet for each candidate.

3.8 Conduct of written, timed examinations

A written, timed examination is an assessment undertaken within a constrained period of time in a set location, following a rubric of instruction that is subject to invigilation. Examination invigilators are responsible for ensuring that the examinations are conducted in accordance with UCD procedures, ensuring that students comply with the Examination Regulations and for supporting students during examinations. The University's approved procedures provide a secure environment for examinations and for the fair treatment of all students undertaking them.

3.8.1 Examination question papers shall be set by the Module Coordinator and reviewed by the Head of Subject and Subject Extern Examiner (where applicable) for final approval by the Head of School. Examination question papers shall be submitted by the School using the official online system by the deadline set by the University.

3.8.2 A final schedule of formal, timed, end of semester examinations, with the date, time and location of each examination, shall be published by the University at least four weeks prior to the start of the end of semester examinations.

3.8.3 The Module Coordinator (or an academic nominee) shall be in attendance at the examination centre to answer student queries at the start of the examination. If the Module Coordinator has students taking the examination in an alternative examination centre, they shall also, where possible, attend this examination centre. The Module Coordinator shall remain contactable throughout the duration of the examination.

3.8.4 Changes to an examination question paper on the day of the examination shall only take place in exceptional circumstances where an error that materially affects the assessment has occurred and shall be reported to the Invigilator in Charge by the Module Coordinator in advance of the commencement of the examination.

3.8.5 Normally dictionaries shall not be used during an examination in UCD, except for students on an international exchange programme, whose native language is not English. These students may bring a hard copy, English-native language dictionary into an examination. If a Module Coordinator wishes to allow all students to use a dictionary in an examination, the permission to use a dictionary and the restrictions of use shall be clearly stated on the front cover of the examination question paper and communicated to all students at the beginning of the module delivery.

3.8.6 A calculator (programmable or non-programmable) is only permitted during an examination if its use is clearly permitted and specified on the examination question paper by the Module Coordinator.

3.8.7 Normally, all written examinations in UCD are conducted as closed book examinations where students are not permitted to bring any written, printed or electronically stored materials into the examination. However, where a Module Coordinator wishes to organise an open book examination, this shall be indicated on the front cover of the examination question paper and communicated to Assessment UCD Registry in advance of the examination session along with clear instructions on what materials students may bring into the examination and what restrictions apply in this regard.

3.8.8 The School is responsible for the planning, organisation and conduct of examinations that are not organised centrally by the University. When organising a local examination the School shall meet the following requirements:

- Appropriate supervision and invigilation are in place.
- An identity check occurs of all students before the examination.
- The UCD Examination Regulations are upheld throughout the examination.
- The venue is accessible and appropriate so that students can satisfactorily attempt the examination without environmental disturbances.
- Records and examination materials (attendance records, examination question papers and examination scripts etc.) are of the appropriate standard.

Further information
UCD Examination Regulations: http://www.ucd.ie/students/assessment/examregulations.html
A guide to organising in-semester examinations:
http://www.ucd.ie/registry/assessment/in_sem.html

3.9 Appointment and role of examiners

All academic staff who hold permanent appointments or contract appointments of one year or longer are *ex officio* Internal Examiners.

3.9.1 Other contract or part-time staff whose contract is less than one year's duration, who act as examiners shall be appointed annually by the Academic Council Committee on Examinations (ACCE), on the recommendation of the Head of School, to be Internal Examiners.

3.9.2 Professionalism in teaching and assessment demands that, as far as practicable, the member of staff who teaches a module shall also be responsible for assessing the module. Where the number of students taking an assessment is very large, several examiners may be required, but the Module Coordinator, as the principal examiner, retains responsibility for ensuring consistency of standards across the assessment.

3.10 Grading and moderation

Grading in UCD is the process of applying standardised measurements of varying levels of achievement in a module with reference to the UCD standard component or module grading scale and the Module Grade Descriptors which have been approved by the Academic Council. A key aspect of grading is setting an appropriate standard and maintaining consistency of standards, particularly where the same examiner is grading a large number of assessments. Moderation is a quality enhancement tool to help ensure that grading practices and assessment outcomes are valid, consistent and reliable. Moderation may be used in a School for the assessment of large modules where a number of Internal Examiners are grading components of assessment that contribute to the overall module grade for review by the Module Coordinator.

3.10.1 All examiners involved in grading shall ensure that they are aware of UCD regulations and policies in relation to the assessment of students and the official UCD Module Grade Descriptors.
Staff Grading Guide: http://www.ucd.ie/registry/assessment/gap.html

3.10.2 A student's performance shall be graded according to the module assessment criteria published in the Module Descriptor and set out in the Module Outline document – which shall be set at the required academic level of the module – by measuring the extent to which the learning outcomes have been achieved by the student.

3.10.3 To avoid the possibility of bias entering the grading process, wherever possible, the identity of students shall not be apparent to graders and assessments shall only be identified by a student number in both continuous and terminal assessments.

3.10.4 The Head of School shall have effective systems and processes in place for the internal moderation of the process of grading all assessments in the School to help ensure that there is a consistency in grading standards and practice.

3.11 Grading examination scripts

3.11.1 When grading examination scripts, examiners shall ensure all parts of an answer, which a student has attempted, have been checked and an appropriate grade or mark has been entered onto the front cover of the examination script.

3.11.2 Answers, or parts of answers, which have been crossed out by the student shall be read and shall be graded if the student has not attempted to answer the question by writing additional content.

3.11.3 Where there is a degree of subjectivity in the response to a question, examiners shall be scrupulously fair in awarding grades for opinions expressed by students which might not accord with their own views, but which are nevertheless valid, well-argued and supported by relevant data.

3.11.4 Where a student attempts more than the required number of questions, all answers shall be graded. The lowest grade(s) or mark(s) shall be excluded when calculating the total grade or mark and shall be parenthesised on the front cover of the examination script.

3.11.5 In order to support student feedback, examiners shall annotate graded examination scripts, particularly to indicate material that is factually incorrect or irrelevant to the question. Examiner's comments shall be distinguishable from the student's, and shall not contain personal or derogatory material. Where a second examiner is examining the script, the first examiner shall avoid any notations that may influence the second examiner.

3.11.6 Examination scripts containing a 'Refer to Grading Guidelines Sticker' shall be graded in accordance with the Examiners' Grading Guidelines from UCD Access. Grading Guidelines: https://www.ucd.ie/all/supports/

3.11.7 Module Coordinators shall enter grades for examinations into University systems by the deadline set out in the schedule for the Grade Approvals Process (GAP) for the given semester. GAP Schedule: http://www.ucd.ie/registry/assessment/gap.

Section 4: Post-assessment

This section refers to the post-assessment phase and identifies the key activities and actions that must be completed once assessments have taken place in order to guarantee the accuracy, reliability and responsiveness of the assessment process.

4.1 Assessment feedback

4.1.1 Module Coordinators shall provide timely feedback to students in order to promote learning and facilitate improvement. It is provided following formative and summative assessment. Feedback may be individual, to identify specific issues relating to one student's work, or generic, referring to general points about the assessment as a whole, arising from an overview of the work produced by the student or group as a whole. All feedback shall:

- Relate to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- Be relevant, meaningful, motivating, clear and constructive.
- Be critical but with the intention of enabling student development by consolidating learning and advising on means of improvement.

4.1.2 The nature and the extent of feedback that a student may expect shall be indicated for each assessment task at the time it is set. Students shall be made aware of whether their assessed work will be returned at the time feedback is provided.

4.1.3 The timing of feedback is important in improving students' learning. Feedback shall be provided as soon as possible after the student has completed the assessment task. Feedback on formative assessment shall be given in time for students to make use of it prior to summative assessment.

4.1.4 As part of the feedback process, provisional component grades may be released to students during the teaching semester. Where this is the case, Module Coordinators shall clearly communicate that provisional grades are indicative only and are subject to adjustment until they have been formally approved by the relevant Programme Examination Board.

4.1.5 Where possible, students shall be able to meet with the Module Coordinator. Where this is not possible, another academic/examiner shall be available to provide feedback and the Module Coordinator shall brief the academic/examiner giving feedback on the grading schema for the particular module and on how the student can improve their approaches to learning and to other assessments.

4.1.6 When giving feedback to students, a Module Coordinator shall outline the reasons why the student's attempt at an assessment task was given a particular grade, referring to the appropriate Grade Descriptors. Module Coordinators shall try to help students to understand what is further required in order to achieve the module's learning outcomes and how to improve their approach in other assessments.

4.1.7 Module Coordinators shall inform students that they are entitled to inspect their examination script following the release of finalised module results in order to:
- Gain feedback on their performance in the module and/or
- Facilitate a results recheck if a student believes there was an administrative error in the calculation of the grade.

4.1.8 Module Coordinators shall be clear that the inspection process is not an opportunity for a student to try to alter or renegotiate a finalised grade, which is not permitted by the University. If a student believes they have grounds to appeal a module grade, they shall follow the formal appeals process in the University.

4.1.9 Any errors in the award or collation of grades in a module, which might come to light during a feedback session, shall be brought to the attention of the Head of School for amending according to the standard University procedure. Where errors are noted by another academic/examiner giving feedback on behalf of the Module Coordinator, this matter shall be immediately referred to the Module Coordinator and the Head of School.

4.2 Grade approvals process

The definition and principles of the process of grade entry, grade audit/verification, and grade approvals at UCD, including descriptions of responsibilities of key stakeholders and functions of examination boards and committees, are outlined in the policy statement on Grade Approvals Process (GAP) at UCD.

Further information
UCD Grade Approvals Process
http://www.ucd.ie/registry/assessment/gap.html

4.3 Release of provisional and final results

4.3.1 Module Coordinators shall communicate to students that any provisional component and module grades are indicative only and subject to adjustment until they have been formally approved by the relevant Programme Examination Board.

4.3.2 If student results are made publically available, the only identifier to accompany a student's results relating to an assessment shall be his or her student number. The posting of a student's name alongside a module result in a public area is a breach of the Data Protection Acts, 1988 and 2003.

4.4 Assessment appeals

A summary of the criteria for making an assessment appeal and the procedures that are required for a student to submit an appeal are available on the website of the UCD Assessment Appeals Office.

Further information
UCD Assessment Appeals: https://www.ucd.ie/appeals/

4.5 Aegrotat Degrees

Where the death or a very serious illness of a student prevents completion of a degree, diploma or other academic award, the Academic Council Committee on Examinations may, on the recommendation of the relevant Programme Examination Board and the Registrar, award a posthumous or aegrotat degree or diploma.

Further information
Aegrotat and Posthumous Degrees: http://www.ucd.ie/registry/assessment/

4.6 Archiving of Assessments and Records Management

4.6.1 Module Coordinators shall – as the Data Controllers of their modules – guarantee the integrity of student assessment data for which they are responsible and ensure that it is stored in a safe and secure manner in line with University procedures on Records Management. Any breach or suspected breach of the security of student data shall be reported immediately to the UCD Records Management and FOI Unit.

4.6.2 All assessed work and outcomes – including examination scripts – shall be retained by Schools in safe storage for a minimum of thirteen months after the release of final results for the assessed module.

4.6.3 Records relating to assessment shall be disposed of using a secure and confidential disposal system in line with UCD guidance on records management.

4.6.4 Module Coordinators shall back up and store safely any electronic assessment materials and data which is recorded in the Blackboard Institutional VLE for every module for which they are responsible in advance of the deletion of this data by UCD IT Services.

4.6.5 The University shall maintain a public repository of past examination question papers which are automatically stored on the repository, unless the School requests that they are not added to the repository at the time of submission of the examination question paper.

Further information
UCD Records Management and FOI unit: http://www.ucd.ie/foi/

Assessment Code of Practice
Steering Group

Membership

Role	Name	Email	Telephone
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Key dates and development

Milestone	Date
Terms of Reference of Steering Group developed.	February 2012
Interim changes to UCD Examination Guidelines, Approved by Academic Council.	25 April 2012
All Staff Consultation, Purposes & General Principles of Assessment in UCD The draft Purposes and General Principles of Assessment were circulated amongst all staff in March/April 2014 and feedback integrated into the draft Assessment Code of Practice.	March/April 2014
Stakeholder Workshop Feedback from the workshop integrated into draft Assessment Code of Practice.	June 2014
Approval by the Academic Council Committee on Examinations (ACCE) of Assessment Code of Practice.	2 April 2015
Submission to Academic Council.	7 May 2015
Updated for Academic Session 2017-18 following extensive stakeholder consultation with amended sections on 'Online Assessment' and 'Universal Design', approved by ACCE.	22 June 2017

University College Dublin
An Coláiste Ollscoil, Baile Átha Cliath