



Assessment Preparation Guidance for Academic Staff

Notes of Guidance to Academic Staff on information to be provided to students to assist their preparation for unseen assessments (including assessments containing an unseen component)

Guidance Note on Assessment Loading

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Assessment Preparation Guidance for Academic Staff

Notes of Guidance to Academic Staff on Information to be provided to Students to Assist Their Preparation for Unseen Assessments (including assessments containing an unseen component)

Preamble

Assessments at Glasgow Caledonian University may take a variety of formats and instruments of assessment may include seen elements which have been approved through normal channels as part of the institution's ongoing procedures for module approval.

The following notes of guidance are designed to relate specifically to instruments of assessment which are wholly unseen or to those unseen elements of assessment within formal coursework or examinations. The need for such guidance has been identified through the student Academic Appeals process and also in student reports within Annual Programme Board Reports. It is anticipated that by adhering to the following practices, the risk of inappropriate information on the content of unseen assessments being provided unintentionally and/or informally to students should be minimised if not entirely removed.

Paramount within the guidance is that, for all modules at GCU, everything which a student needs to know about an assessment should be provided in a written format. Thereafter, no further information should be divulged verbally by lecturers except where this is a re-iteration of what is provided in the written format. It is important that information given to all students taking a particular unseen assessment is standardised. No individual student, or group of students, should be given any information which may provide, or appear to provide, an advantage over any other student(s).

The following guidelines constitute the bounds of acceptable information which should be provided to all students undertaking modules at Glasgow Caledonian University which contain an unseen assessment or to those elements of assessment containing an unseen component:

- Clear details on the format and structure of any formal coursework or examination paper forming part of the overall assessment for a module must be made available to students either within module handbooks or in notes of guidance distributed to all students on that module - such guidance should clearly indicate the weighting attached to different elements of the paper and, for formal examinations, how many questions will be derived from each distinct area of the syllabus - **Under no circumstances should the specific topics of individual questions in a formal unseen examination be divulged to students**
- A general guide to the marking criteria which will be used by all lecturers when marking coursework or examinations for a particular module should be provided within module handbooks or in notes of guidance. **Two exemplars of marking criteria are given on pages 1 and 2; however, it is recognised that different discipline areas may have adaptations of these models to suit their own modules. However, these must be consistent with the levels outlined in the exemplars.** The marking criteria should provide clear guidance to students on what is expected. This will help to ensure transparency and consistency within an effective Quality Assurance framework.
- All students should be made aware of the different types of responses which may be required to individual questions, e.g. short response, case study, essay etc, and also the different styles of responses which may be required, e.g. give an account of, discuss, relate, compare and contrast, describe, write an

essay entitled etc. Students should be provided with guidance on the features of answers which will gain certain marks.

- For existing modules, students should be directed towards examples of previous examination or coursework papers as a guide as to what may reasonably be expected in terms of assessment
- For new modules being delivered for the first time, students should be given exemplars of the types of examination questions which may be set along with clear guidance on the structure and format of any coursework or formal examination papers along the lines indicated above

Exemplar A

Examples of the marking criteria which may be used for marking assessments within a specific module

Mark	Comment
75-100%	Excellent - Outstanding in every/almost every respect, and revealing wide reading, lucid writing, extensive knowledge and thorough understanding
70-74%	Excellent - Outstanding but at a less elevated level than the above
65-69%	Very Good - wide knowledge and good understanding of material covered in the module but without the insight associated with excellence. Clear accurate presentation
60-64%	Very Good - as above but may contain minor errors and omissions
55-59%	Good - Good knowledge and understanding of the topic but likely to be limited to lecture material and the answer may be marred by poor presentation, inaccuracy or omission
50-54%	Good - as above but with more defects
45-49%	Satisfactory - Factually correct for the most part but with pronounced shortcomings in content, relevance or accuracy
40-44%	Just Satisfactory - A weak answer but containing just enough relevant facts and evidence of understanding to justify a pass
35-39%	Marginal Fail - major weaknesses, inaccuracies, irrelevancies and omissions but containing a few relevant facts; could be considered for compensation
30-34%	Fail - but containing some relevant facts and some evidence of understanding
< 30%	Clear Fail - little or no relevant material, generally little or no evidence of understanding

For honours programmes:

Marks between 70-100% equate to the performance expected of a 1st class honours candidate;

Marks between 60-69% equate to the performance expected of a 2i class honours candidate;

Marks between 50-59% equate to the performance expected of a 2ii class honours candidate;

Marks between 40-49% equate to the performance expected of a 3rd class honours candidate.

Exemplar B

Examples of the marking criteria which may be used for marking assessments within a specific module

Mark	Comment
81-100%	Work of exceptional quality that shows an excellent command of the subject in question and originality in thought and extent of knowledge acquired
70-80%	Work that shows an excellent, though not necessarily faultless, command of the subject in question, together with elements of originality in thought and in the extent of knowledge acquired
60-69%	Work that shows an above average command of the subject in question, possessing qualities of thoroughness, conscientiousness, and insight
50-59%	Work that reveals that the student has acquired a basic command of the material covered in the course
40-49%	Work that shows some understanding of the material covered in the course, but of a poor quality and with elements of misunderstanding and lack of thoroughness
35-39%	Work that fails to come up to the standard expected of University students admitted to an Honours degree, but where there are sufficient signs that understanding prevails over misunderstanding and could be considered for compensation
30-34%	Fail - but containing some relevant facts and some evidence of understanding
0-29%	Fail - Work that contains very few, if any, relevant facts and shows little or no understanding of the material covered

For honours programmes:

Marks between 70-100% equate to the performance expected of a 1st class honours candidate;

Marks between 60-69% equate to the performance expected of a 2i class honours candidate;

Marks between 50-59% equate to the performance expected of a 2ii class honours candidate;

Marks between 40-49% equate to the performance expected of a 3rd class honours candidate.

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Examinations

Type of Module	Proportion of total module assessment	Suggested upper limit on examination time
10	100%	1.5 hours at L1 and L2 2 hours at L3, LH and LM
10	70%	1.5 hours
10	50% and under	1 hour
20	100%	2 hours at L1 and L2 3 hours at L3, LH and LM
20	70%	2 hours
20	50% and under	2 hours

Coursework

Type of Module	Proportion of total module assessment	Suggested upper limit
10	100%	1500 words or equivalent at L1 and L2 2000 words or equivalent at L3, LH and LM
10	70%	1000 words or equivalent at L1 and L2 2000 words or equivalent at L3, LH and LM
10	50% and under	1000 words or equivalent at L1 and L2 1500 words or equivalent at L3, LH and LM
20	100%	3000 words or equivalent at L1 and L2 4000 words or equivalent at L3, LH and LM
20	70%	2000 words or equivalent at L1 and L2 3000 words or equivalent at L3, LH and LM
20	50% and under	1500 words or equivalent at L1 and L2 2000 words or equivalent at L3, LH and LM

Project/Dissertation

Type of Module	Suggested upper limit
20	up to 5000 words or equivalent at LH up to 7000 words or equivalent at LM
40	up to 10000 words or equivalent at LH up to 14000 words or equivalent at LM
60	up to 15000 words or equivalent at LH up to 20,000 words or equivalent at LM

Notes

1. It is acknowledged that the above guidance on coursework assignments will not apply in some situations e.g. laboratory reports
2. Assessments should be proportionate to the size of the unit of study. A 6,000 word coursework essay for a ten credit unit is clearly too much, since a student studying in six such units would be expected to write 36,000 words that Trimester.
3. **As far as possible**, individual units of study of 10 credits should be tested by one method of assessment only. Whilst it is recognised that it is the learning outcome which dictates the assessment, staff designing modules should be aware of the potential overload issue when setting the outcomes and when determining the balance between the different components which contribute to the total assessment for the module. There may also be the requirements of a professional body to take into consideration, for example, the need to assess both practical/clinical and academic elements within even a 10 credit module.
4. In formulating assessments, colleagues should pay attention to the forms of assessment which students are being asked to undertake on other units of study offered as part of that course. A balance of assessment is desirable.