

QA3 ANNEX E – Assessment Taxonomy

Clear definition of assessment is vital for establishing a course level approach to assessment for learning as well as student understanding of assessment tasks and system integration and assessment administration. In November 2021 EQSC approved the principle of the development of a taxonomy which categorised assessments at the highest level into Examination, Coursework or Practical and then provided more detailed sub categories within each. This was heavily based on existing definitions used by the CLT with the addition of some extra classifications relating to changes in assessment formats which had arisen during the pandemic. Since then the taxonomy has been developed by the Assessment and Feedback Working Group and feedback from all Directors of Teaching has been sought to ensure it is fit for purpose and encompasses the many examples of innovative and authentic assessment that are used across the University. This taxonomy has evolved through this process and is now presented in such a way as to demonstrate the information which would be provided to different stakeholders, i.e. external information about assessment types and then assessment sub-type detail required for approvals processes, assessment administration and fully informing students on a course/unit.

Using the Taxonomy

The Assessment sub-types below are deliberately generic as, if the Taxonomy were to include a sub-type for every potential description of an assessment it would become too cumbersome. However, the sub-types are not intended to stifle creativity in assessment design. Therefore, if your planned assessment is not clearly defined below, please seek advice on the most appropriate Assessment sub-type to use from Curriculum Development Officers. If your planned assessment falls between the defined sub-types (for example it includes elements of two different assessment sub-types) please place it in the sub-type that describes the most substantive part of the assessment. If your assessment includes two submissions with two separate marks that form part of the whole, these should be identified separately within the defined categories. In all cases further detail of the specific assessment can be provided for the approval process, and must be provided in the information provided to students about their assessment within a course/unit.

If there are proposed assessments which cannot fit into any of the Assessment sub-types defined below, EQSC will be asked to approve a new Assessment sub-type.

Assessment Type (Summary) For publication to prospective students at course level	Assessment sub-type (Detail) For approval purposes and for internal publication to staff and students	Operational considerations For assessment administration	Definition Including important information for students
Examination An assessment at the end of a period of learning (not necessarily the end of a unit) carried out under timed conditions.	Closed-book written examination • duration to be specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes place within the university examination period and is scheduled by the exams office • Environment (online through Inspira or in person) should be specified • Invigilation required • No extensions allowable • Mitigation by IMCs and/or supplementary assessment period • Individual feedback not required 	A written assessment occurring during the University's official examination period. Students are expected to answer a question or set of questions relating to a particular area of study under timed conditions and without reference materials . Closed-book examinations may be "seen" where the student is aware in advance of the question(s) they are expected to answer, or "unseen", where the questions are only revealed on the day. Students should also be provided with information relating to the type of questions that will be included in the exam (MCQ, short answer, essay)

	<p>Open-book written examination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • duration to be specified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes place within the university examination period and is scheduled by the exams office • Environment (online through Inspira or in person) should be specified • Invigilation not required • No extensions allowable • Mitigation by IMCs and/or supplementary assessment period • Individual feedback not required 	<p>A written assessment occurring during the University's official examination period. Students are expected to answer a question or set of questions relating to a particular area of study under timed conditions and with access to reference materials.</p> <p>Open-book examinations may be "seen" where the student is aware in advance of the question(s) they are expected to answer, or "unseen", where the questions are only revealed on the day.</p> <p>Open book examinations can be invigilated or not. Students should also be provided with information relating to the type of questions that will be included in the exam (MCQ, short answer, essay) and the reference materials that can be used.</p>
	<p>In-class test</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • duration to be specified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes place outside the university examination period and is scheduled by Departments • Environment (online through Inspira or Moodle in person) should be specified • Closed book or open book to be specified • Invigilation dependent on open or closed book • No extensions allowable • Mitigation by IMCs or like for like assessment • Individual feedback may be provided 	<p>A timed test taken outside the University's assessment period, in a normal classroom or online, during a timetabled session.</p> <p>Conditions may be similar to those of a formal examination and this is why it is proposed that this assessment method be classified as Examination rather than Coursework.</p> <p>In-class tests may be seen or unseen, and open- or closed- book. This information should be provided to the students along with the type of questions and reference materials that can be used (if appropriate).</p> <p>Individual feedback is normally provided for in class tests.</p>

Coursework Written, oral or design work on a particular topic that is undertaken during the course and has a deadline attached to it.	<p>Essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max word or page count, or range to be specified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation normally by extension • Individual feedback required 	<p>A written exercise on a particular topic which includes description, analysis, interpretation or critical thinking. It is usually shorter than a dissertation.</p>
	<p>Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max word or page count, or range to be specified • Individual or group assessment to be specified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation normally by extension • Individual/group feedback required 	<p>A description, summary or other account of an experience or activity or investigation. There are many different kinds of report - often students are required to produce a report after participating in a practical activity such as fieldwork, laboratory work, work experience or placement. Reports typically have a prescribed format.</p>
	<p>Visual or recorded presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual or group assessment to be specified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation normally by extension • Individual/group feedback required 	<p>The visual or recorded presentation of work on a particular topic which does not use a traditional written form. There are many different formats that could be used including posters, infographics, webpages, blogs, podcasts, vlogs, narrated presentations and short films and assessments of this nature can be very authentic. It is essential that clear information on the expected format is provided to students.</p>
	<p>Dissertation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max word or page count, or range to be specified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation normally by extension 	<p>An extended piece of written work, often the writeup of a final-year UG or taught Masters research project. A dissertation is a substantial piece of writing deriving from research that a student has undertaken. Dissertations are the result of a student's independent work (although the research could have been undertaken as part of a group), carried out under the guidance of a supervisor. Different subject disciplines may follow different conventions in relation to the production of dissertations.</p>

	<p>Portfolio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max word or page count, or range to be specified where appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation normally by extension • Individual feedback required 	<p>A collection of work that relates to a given topic or theme, which has been produced over a period of time, and is usually associated with work-based or experiential learning.</p> <p>A portfolio can contains a number of pieces of work, usually connected by a topic or theme. Students are usually required to organise the collection of examples and the portfolio often includes some reflective accounts.</p>
	<p>Oral presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual or group assessment to be specified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation normally by extension • Individual/group feedback required 	<p>An oral presentation on a given topic which could be followed by a questions and answer session.</p> <p>The timing and format of the presentation should be specified.</p>
	<p>Oral assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation normally by extension • Individual feedback required 	<p>A conversation on a given topic, including an individual contribution to a seminar.</p> <p>Examples of oral assessments might include conversations, case discussions, role play, debates and individual contributions to seminars.</p>
	<p>Viva Voce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation normally by extension • Individual feedback required 	<p>An individual question and answer session which may also include an oral presentation.</p> <p>Is normally associated with the assessment of a dissertation or project, but can also be utilised for practical, clinical or other applied assessments or in a holistic way to establish attainment of course learning outcomes.</p>

	<p>Project output (other than dissertation or report)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual or group assessment to be specified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation normally by extension • Individual/group feedback required 	<p>Output from project work, often of a practical nature, other than a dissertation or written report.</p> <p>Students are assessed on the output of a period of project work (other than in the form of a dissertation or written report). Examples are diverse and may include a new product, model, or a poster.</p>
	<p>Set exercises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual or group assessment to be specified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation normally by extension • Individual/group feedback required 	<p>Questions or tasks designed to assess the application of knowledge, analytical, problem solving, or evaluative skills. Examples might include data interpretation, data-analysis exercises, and problem-based or problem-solving exercises</p>
	<p>Reflective Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max word or page count, or range to be specified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation normally by extension • Individual feedback required 	<p>Any reflective assessment that focuses on critical analysis of the learning, and/or development that has taken place over a period of time, or following a specified event.</p> <p>Typical examples may include learning journals and/or diaries, blogs, audio/video reflections, personal development planning, placement or work-based learning synthesis, reflective essays.</p>

	Study abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be used for assessment conducted by an overseas institution, as part of study abroad, where the assessment cannot be clearly defined. • Mitigation may be through IMCs. 	Assessment conducted by an overseas institution usually cannot be categorized as it will vary according to the units taken by the student.
Practical	Practical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation normally by extension • Individual feedback required 	<p>Assessment of a student's practical skills or competence. A practical skills assessment focuses on whether, and/or how well, a student performs a specific practical skill or technique (or competency). Examples include clinical skills (including OSCEs), laboratory techniques, record keeping and analysis, identification of or commentary on sketches, surveying skills, or listening comprehension. This might also include a placement supervisor's assessment of a student's competence.</p>

Owner	Education, Quality and Standards Committee
Version number	1.2
Approval date	2 July 2024
Approved by	Education, Quality and Standards Committee
Date of last review	January 2022; October 2023 (<i>non-substantive minor update only</i>)