ACADEMIC QUALITY



Learning and Teaching Policy

Types of Assessment: Policy + Administrative Definitions

As the University continues to update and adapt its types of assessments in response to the changing academic environment, different types of assessment continue to be defined and clarified for administrative/management and central scheduling purposes.

The information below should be read in conjunction with the <u>Heriot-Watt Assessment Platforms: Staff Guide</u> (see <u>Appendix</u>).

Assessment Types: Regulations and Policies

The University's policies and Regulations for taught programmes (eg <u>Regulation A4 Courses</u>, <u>Programmes and</u> <u>Assessment</u>) <u>do not prohibit diversity</u> in form and timing of assessment, and the constraints are only as follows:

- All programmes of study (including HW Online) shall contain a balance of various forms of assessment, unless specifically approved by the University Studies Committee;
- In-person, invigilated exams (hand-written or in a computer lab) shall be of two hours (for 15 credit courses) or three hours in duration (for 30 credit courses), unless approved by the Global Director of Student Experience and Academic Registrar;
- Exams and Final Online Assessments shall be held only in a scheduled Exams and Assessment Diet;
- Class Tests cannot be scheduled during an Exam and Assessment Diet;
- All courses shall provide opportunities for formative assessment (not credit-bearing) and formative feedback to support learning (particularly critical when courses are assessed by a single, end-of-course assessment for credit);
- Assessments contributing to the overall final mark/grade shall assess the specified learning outcomes;
- All assessment changes should be approved by School Studies Committees;
- The forms of assessment and weighting shall be specified in the Course Descriptor and as recorded in GCM.

Therefore, there is scope for Schools to continue to offer a diverse array of assessment without being constrained by institutional regulations or policies. For example, coursework assignments can be scheduled for submission in an Exams and Assessment Diet; however, coursework with a timed element, such as Class Tests or Final Online Assessments, are subject to specific constraints, as outlined in the see next section.

Assessment Types: Policy and Administrative/Management Definitions

Policy Statement on the Administrative/Management Definitions of Assessment Types

For the purposes of clarity for students and for staff involved in the management of assessment, **assessment should be differentiated as one of two types: Coursework or Examination**. This terminology should be used consistently in all staff and student communications and publications across all locations and modes, at institution, campus and School levels.

The approved definitions and scheduling of assessment (ie the practical arrangements for organising and managing assessments, and not the pedagogical definitions) on taught programmes, are as follows:

| Assessment Type | Timing | Responsibility |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Coursework | Can be scheduled throughout the semester and during Exams and Assessment Diets, with following exceptions: a) "Class Tests": <u>must <i>not</i> be scheduled</u> during an Exam and Assessment diet. (Exception: a class test is mandated to be | School a) School, with RAS support for students with disabilities |

| | reassessed as the outcome of an Award or Progression Board. This must be timetabled and supported centrally). b) "Final Online Assessments": <u>must <i>only</i> be scheduled</u> during Exam and Assessment Diets. | b) RAS |
|-------------|--|--------|
| Examination | Exclusively during Exam and Assessment Diets | RAS |

Note: The type of coursework known as Timed Online Coursework (TOCs) was removed at the end of 2022/23 and the type of exam known as "Take Home Exam"/"Take Home Open Book Exam" was removed at the end of 2021/22. "Final Online Assessment" is the standard phraseology to be used for time-limited, open book coursework to be accessed and completed online during an Exam and Assessment Diet.

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¹ Closed book digital exams will be secured using the University's academic integrity security software.

| Exam and | From 2024/25, each Exam and Assessment Diet is now 2-weeks in duration and held as follows; | | | | | |
|------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Assessment | [Dates for AY 2025/26 are here (list of dates) and here (calendar format)] | | | | | |
| Diet | | | | | | |
| | December Diet: Weeks 13 and 14; | | | | | |
| | April/May Diet: Weeks 13 and 14 (April break is not counted in number of weeks); | | | | | |
| | August Diet: Weeks 13 and 14* | | | | | |
| | * (there is scope to bring forward the August Diet into Teaching Week 12 if there is an early September start to the next academic year) | | | | | |

Assessment Types: Coursework

Coursework comprises assignments set during or at the end of a course (including assignments scheduled for submission or completion in the Exam and Assessment Diet) to assess one or more of the learning outcomes. Coursework includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- written assignment, including essay or report;
- dissertation (an extended piece of written work, often the write-up of a final-year project);
- portfolio (a collection of work that relates to a given topic or theme and has been produced over a period of time);
- project output (output from project work, often of a practical nature, other than a dissertation or written report);
- set exercise (questions or tasks designed to assess how knowledge is applied, and analytical, problem-solving or evaluative skills);
- class tests/quizzes (written or computer-based) of knowledge or interpretation.

All online coursework managed by Schools should be provided via Canvas or Gradescope. See the <u>Heriot-Watt</u> <u>Assessment Platforms: Staff Guide</u> provided in the Appendix to this paper for full details on coursework types and approved platforms.

If setting up assessments in the Global Curriculum Management system, Class Tests and Final Online Assessments should be placed along with other Coursework types as sub-components of the coursework component.

Schools should ensure that, in their management and scheduling of assessment, that coursework throughout the semester is proportionate and balanced. See <u>Policy on Coursework Scheduling and Submission</u>.

Assessment Types: Exams

As stated above, all forms of "Take-Home Exams"/Take Home Open Book Exams" which were used during the pandemic have been withdrawn.

The term "exams" refers exclusively to the pre-pandemic format of a 2-3 hour, in person, invigilated assessment held in an approved exam venue. The key difference from pre-pandemic is that the exam need not be restricted to hand-written format, but can be conducted online (in an invigilated, University approved computer lab) and can be open or closed book, hosted on Canvas¹. Both types of exams will continue to be scheduled by RAS.

See the <u>Heriot-Watt Assessment Platforms: Staff Guide</u> provided in the Appendix to this paper for full details on exam types and approved platforms.

Timing and Duration of Exams; Submission of Exams Papers

- 1) The standard approach for both types of exams (hand-written or completed online) is 2 hours' duration for a 15-credit course or 3 hours for a 30-credit or larger course. Exceptions to these standard durations may be considered for courses with non-standard credit-ratings or if a case is accepted for pedagogical reasons. However, there will be no duration greater than 3 hours. As per the University Regulations, requests for different durations of exams should be made to the Global Director of Student Experience and Academic Registrar.
- For students with a learning profile, arrangements will be made in conjunction with the <u>Disability Service</u> for additional time and/or specific venues. Student-related information on <u>Exams (and Coursework) Adjustments</u> is available on the Disability Service's webpages.
- 3) In accordance with University's <u>Policies and Procedures for Examinations in Different Timezones</u>, exams will be aligned to one of two time zones. For scheduling reasons (such as limited venue capacity), the timezone alignment could be formed as follows (provided here as an example): 1) UK/Dubai (TZ1) and Malaysia (TZ2); 2) UK (TZ1), Dubai/Malaysia (TZ2); 3) UK/Malaysia (TZ1), Dubai (TZ2).
- 4) A separate exam paper will normally be required for each timezone in order to mitigate risks related to academic misconduct. This requirement applies to all courses in all years, including qualifying years. If an identical exam

paper is to be used (for example, if required by a PSRB), then there must be an identical start time for the exam across all locations, which will be 09.00 UK time and 17.00 Malaysia (16.00 BST).

- 5) Arrangements and dates for submission of exams papers will be specified by the Exams Team within Academic Operations. As per the University's policy, reassessment papers must be submitted at the same time as the December, April/May or August Diet exam paper (August Diet is a first assessment opportunity for the May Semester).
- 6) Arrangements for the collection and marking of exam papers and the processing of results will be specified by the Exams Team and the School Support Teams within the Academic Operations Division.

Access to Past Exam Papers and Solutions

This section is replicated across a number of related policies:

- 1) The Global Course Leader may release a sample of past examination papers for revision purposes and learning how to navigate examination questions (the format of which might differ year on year). Pedagogical reasons will determine whether papers are made available.
- 2) Solutions to past examination papers are not provided as standard practice. They may be provided if deemed pedagogically appropriate by the Global Course Leader. Solution notes may be provided for marking and moderation purposes, but these are not necessarily model answers.
- 3) In all cases, there should be comprehensive communication to students regarding the assessment strategies, including whether there are opportunities to practice past exam papers and whether solutions will be provided.

Assessment Types: Guidance on Communicating Assessment Types to Students

As is standard practice, Schools should clearly communicate all assessment types to students (eg via overviews on Canvas or the Programme Handbook or Course Descriptors on School sites), but should pay particular attention to any changed arrangements, particularly as Schools have been engaged in assessment review and redesign, due to the institutional <u>Transforming Assessment/Embedding Assessment for Learning</u> activity and the transition to shorter assessment diets as part of the revised <u>Structure of the Academic Year</u>. Schools should also ensure that students are aware of all assessment deadlines, including their own responsibilities and any penalties for late submission.

Students might reasonably expect the Exam and Assessment Diet to be kept free of coursework assignment deadlines or for no coursework to be set for completion in this period; however, with a move towards fewer in-person exams, it is more practical for Schools to use the full semester (including exam and assessment diets) for spacing out assessment deadlines. However, Schools should take steps to ensure that coursework is scheduled in such a way as to minimise clashing and bunching of assessment deadlines, taking into account the full range of coursework and exams across the programme. (see <u>Policy on Coursework Scheduling and Submission</u>).

Further Information

- The <u>Student Exams and Assessment Website</u> provide comprehensive information for staff and students on examinations, including timetables.
 - The LTA has produced several student-focused guides as part of its Assessment and Feedback Resources, eg:
 - <u>Helping students prepare for exams;</u>
 - o Supporting international students in assessment;
 - o Helping students appreciate what's expected of them in assessment.
 - The Skills Hub provides extensive assessment-related advice for students.

Volume of Assessment and Assessment Review/Redesign

Feedback from students and from some External Examiners, as well as anecdotal evidence at various committees, have highlighted that overassessment continues to be an area of concern across Heriot-Watt generally. This is a long-standing issue for the University and so Schools should be mindful of the impact on both students and staff (the latter particularly in relation to workload and wellbeing, given the volume of marking, Exam Boards etc).

Volume of assessment should be given particular consideration, as the University now has a 2-week Diet for each assessment period. In an effort to reduce, the number of in-person exams in this period, there could be an unintended, consequential increase in the volume of coursework forms of assessment.

The University's strategic <u>Transforming Assessment/Embedding Assessment for Learning</u> initiative is designed to assist Schools in redesigning assessment, including addressing issues related to overassessment. The Learning and Teaching Academy continues to provide wide range of support for Schools in planning for and designing assessment, including designing an appropriate balance of assessment and designing assessment at the programme level. Teaching teams refreshing course and assessment design are encouraged to make use of these resources:

- <u>Curriculum and Assessment Design Toolkit</u>: Assessment
- <u>Assessment and Feedback</u>
- LTA Support for Schools

The LTA updates this information each academic year, providing a suite of resources and support for teaching teams in preparation of the start of the session; see the latest "Get Set for the Academic Year" <u>here</u>. Check out the LTA SharePoint Hub for <u>current information</u>. Further support and guidance are available from the LTA: <u>LTAcademy@hw.ac.uk</u>

Legibility of Handwriting in Assessment (Coursework and Exams)

This section is replicated across a number of related policies:

- 1) Students are responsible for ensuring that handwritten assessment work submitted is legible (including handwritten exams), and, where relevant, they should seek the appropriate support and guidance from Disability Services or the Student Advisor/Personal Tutor.
- 2) Where a new student has previously received support prior to joining Heriot-Watt University they must arrange to meet Disability Services as soon as possible to seek guidance and determine what level of support or adjustment is appropriate.
- 3) If the main marker finds any part of the completed handwritten assessment illegible, a second marker (the moderator of the marking) will attempt to mark the work (or part thereof). If there are issues with the legibility of the work, irrespective of whether it was possible to mark the work in whole or part, the Global Course Leader will, after the release of marks, inform the student and recommend they discuss with the Student Advisor/Personal Tutor, possible actions to avoid recurrence in the future.

Alternative Assessment Formats for Students with Disabilities

Occasionally, students with disabilities may require an alternative format of assessment (for both coursework and exams) to ensure equitable access and fair evaluation of their knowledge and skills. The Disability Service will liaise with schools on assessment types before finalising any adjustments. Requests for such accommodations will be considered on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with relevant disability support services, institutional guidelines, and PSRB requirements.

Guidance on Alternative Assessment Requests for Disabled Students is available from the Disability Service.

Off-Campus Marking

All assessments should be treated as confidential information.

The marking of hard copy assessments (coursework assignments and exam scripts) should be undertaken at secure location such as a University campus or a partner's campus. If hard copy assessments are being removed for marking purposes to another location, the transportation of the assessments should be undertaken securely and marking should be undertaken in a secure setting such as a family home and not in any public locations (eg cafes, airports, trains).

These requirements relating to security of off-campus marking align with the University's policies on <u>Information</u> <u>Security</u>, <u>Information Management</u> and <u>Data Protection</u>.

All existing requirements relating to secure removal and return of exam scripts apply equally to on-campus and offcampus marking.

Online and Off-Line Marking

All assessments should be treated as confidential information.

The marking of online assessments (coursework assignments and exam scripts) should be undertaken within the <u>Heriot-Watt approved online assessment platforms</u>. Access to these platforms should be via Heriot-Watt devices and marking completed online wherever possible. Where personal devices are used to access the platform this should be done in keeping with the <u>IT and communications facilities acceptable use policy</u> and marking should be completed online.

Where markers require to mark offline, they should do so on Heriot-Watt managed devices. Markers should not download online assessments to personal devices, unless they have prior authorisation from their Head of Unit (or other relevant officer) to do this as part of a reasonable adjustment for the marker. Where such authorisation has been received, only secure encrypted methods provided by the University may be used to transmit assessments.

These requirements relating to security of online and offline marking align with the University's policies on <u>Information</u> <u>Security</u>, <u>Information Management</u> and <u>Data Protection</u>.

Approved by the LTAYG, 13 July 2022; revised version approved by the LTAOC, 18 April and 17 May 2023. Factual accuracy updates, 21 August 2023.

2024/25 version approved by LTAOC, 26 June 2024; legibility of handwriting, LTAOC 11 November 2024; addition on students with disabilities, LTAOC, 12 February 2025

2025/26 version: 1 July 2025, security of off-campus/off-line marking



Heriot-Watt Assessment Platforms: Staff Guide

This guide outlines the coursework and exam platforms that are approved for use at Heriot-Watt from AY24-25 onwards.

| Assessment type definitions1 | |
|--|--|
| HW Approved Exam platforms 2 | |
| HW Approved coursework assessment platforms | |
| Key Assessment Policies | |
| Further Guidance on Assessment Methods | |
| Further support | |
| Appendix 1: Summary of HW approved assessment platforms and coursework types | |

Assessment type definitions

• For details on approved assessments and their administration see <u>Types of Assessment: Policy and Administrative Definitions</u>

In summary:

- Exams are scheduled during the assessment diet, administered by Registry and Academic Support (RAS) and must be:
 - Time-limited (2 or 3 hours with some exceptions),
 - o Invigilated
 - \circ In-person
- Coursework is all other assessments which are not an exam. The following types of coursework have administrative support:
 - Class tests support for students with assessment adjustments.
 - Final Online Assessments (primarily Heriot Watt Online): also scheduled and administered by RAS.

HW Approved Exam platforms

| Exam platform | Options | Most effective for the following exam types |
|---|--|---|
| Handwritten exams conducted in an 'exam hall' and invigilated by a person(s). Students complete the questions by hand in an | Closed book | Unseen exam questions. Long answer written questions e.g. essays, evaluations, reflection, reports. Questions requiring application of skills to provided content e.g. data analysis, textual analysis, translation. |
| answer booklet during the exam time. Invigilators oversee the delivery of the exam, including assessment security and student wellbeing. | Provided information only e.g. formulae | Unseen exam questions. Long answer written questions e.g. essays, data analysis. More detailed exam questions which rely on information which students wouldn't be expected to remember. Questions testing application of skills or knowledge to information provided e.g. case studies. |
| | • Open notes (i.e. can bring own notes but not textbooks etc). | Previously seen / prepared exam questions. Unseen exam questions. Questions testing application of skills to data provided / permitted. |
| | Open book (i.e. nominated textbooks only, or wholly open-book can bring any book or notes they choose) | Previously seen / prepared exam questions. Questions focused on retrieval of information from the permitted sources. Questions testing application of skills to data retrieved. Unseen exam questions. |
| | Gradescope-marked exam | Questions requiring scientific notation or workings e.g. chemical structure diagrams, mathematical formulae. |

| Exam platform | Options | Most effective for the following exam types |
|--|---|---|
| Online exam hosted on Canvas quizzes and conducted in an 'exam hall', invigilated by a person(s). | Respondus: to restrict student access to the internet for the duration of the Exam. | Questions which require the use of a computer and / or specific software. Questions which require submission of a typed document. |
| Students complete the questions online in the quiz during the exam time. | | |
| Students access to the internet can be restricted whilst undertaking the exam. | | |
| Invigilators oversee the delivery of the exam, including assessment security (checking that the students are not accessing inappropriate content on the computer) and student wellbeing. | | |
| Viva Interview / verbal assessment of knowledge, understanding and skills by viva panel. | NA | PhD or dissertation defence Assessment of work which is on the borderline of degree classification. Reassessment where required e.g. due to plagiarism being proven in original assessment. |

HW Approved coursework assessment platforms

| Assessment platform | Likely to be most effective for the following assessment types | Supports similarity checking (Turnitin) | Supports self or Peer assessment | Supports group submission | Suitable for a class test | Supports a time limit |
|------------------------|---|--|--|---|------------------------------|---|
| Canvas assignments | Used to host Final Online Assessments for on-campus or non-EBS distance learning students. Long answer written questions e.g. case studies, essays, evaluations, reflections, reports, reviews, summaries. Dissertations and theses. Assessment of writing skills. Media submissions / recordings (video or audio) e.g. presentations, demonstrations, case studies. File upload, including <u>multiple</u> <u>file uploads</u> in single assignment¹ e.g. Excel spreadsheets, image files, student project files, posters. | Yes. Note this is only applicable to text- based submissions. | Peer assessment. | Yes. Assign grades collectively to the group or individually to each group member. Note this is only applicable to text- based submissions. | No | Optional – can set: • due date, • time assignment becomes visible to students and • time it closes to students. |

¹ File types can be restricted to only those appropriate for the assignment when setting it up.

| Assessment platform | Likely to be most effective for the following assessment types | Supports similarity checking (Turnitin) | Supports self or Peer assessment | Supports group submission | Suitable for a class test | Supports a time limit |
|-----------------------------|--|--|---|---------------------------------|---|---|
| | Document annotation e.g. annotated bibliography, labelling a diagram. URL submission e.g. link to a blog / vlog, eportfolio, wiki, website. | | | | | |
| Canvas graded quizzes | Mixed questions assessment. Providing immediate feedback via automated answers or moderated feedback from course team. Testing recall of information e.g. via closed questions such as true / false, fill in the blank Classification of information questions e.g. matching, ordering, categorisation. Comprehension and application of information e.g. Multiple choice questions, multiple answer questions. Short answer questions e.g. Problem-solving, evaluative and reflective questions. | No | Self- assessment – if the questions and answers are designed to enable this. | No | Yes Optional - can set: Open book Closed book Computer lab Respondus: to restrict student access to the internet for the duration of the assessment | Optional – can set: • due date, • time assignment becomes visible to students and • time it closes to students. |

| Assessment platform | Likely to be most effective for the following assessment types | Supports similarity checking (Turnitin) | Supports self or Peer assessment | Supports group submission | Suitable for a class test | Supports a time limit |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|---|
| | Identification of visual information e.g. hotspot questions. Simple numerical questions. <u>Single</u> file upload e.g. image, PDF. | | | | | |
| Canvas graded discussions | Debates. Discussions. | No | Peer- assessment. | Yes - Group discussion. | No | Optional – can set: • due date, • time assignment becomes visible to students and • time it closes to students. |
| Gradescope assignments | Detailed numerical questions. Questions requiring LaTeX notation. Questions requiring handwritten notation e.g. chemical structure diagrams. | No | No | Partly – relies on one student submitting and adding other group members to | Contact LTES to discuss suitability | Optional |

| Assessment platform | | kely to be most effective for the Ilowing assessment types | Supports similarity checking (Turnitin) | Supports self or Peer assessment | Supports group submission | Suitable for a class test | Supports a time limit |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | • | Paper-based assignments in STEM ² . | | | the submission. | | |
| In-person assessment e.g. practicals, vivas. | • | In-person demonstration of skills e.g. practical lab skills, use of tools / machines, computer skills, simulations. In-person demonstration or exploration of understanding e.g. presentations, viva, debates, discussions. In-person application of knowledge and skills e.g. solving a problem. | No | Varies depending on assessment. | Varies depending on assessment. | No | NA |
| EBS Student Portal (Turnitin) | • | Only available for assessments for Heriot-Watt Online courses that are hosted in the EBS Student Portal. Used to host Final Online Assessments for those courses. | Yes. Note this is only applicable to text- based submissions. | No | No | No | Optional |

² These must then be scanned and uploaded to Gradescope either by the student or by the course team.

Key Assessment Policies

• Types of Assessment: Policy and Administrative Definitions

Further Guidance on Assessment Methods

Sambell, K. and Brown, S. (2022) <u>Choosing and using fit-for-purpose assessment methods</u>, Edinburgh, HWU Learning and Teaching Academy.

Further support

Technological support

- IS training hub
- Contact Information Services for advice from the Learning Technology Enhancement Service (LTES) via the IS Self

Service Portal Teaching support

- Curriculum and assessment design toolkit
- Contact the Learning and Teaching Academy via their teaching

consultancy hub. Assessment Administrative Support

- Academic Operations Support
- Examination and Assessment Support: <u>ras-examinations@hw.ac.uk</u>

Appendix 1: Summary of HW approved assessment platforms and coursework types.

| | Canvas | Canvas | Canvas | EBS Student | Gradescope | In-person |
|------------------------------------|-------------|---------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| | assignments | graded | graded | Portal | assignments | assessment |
| | | quizzes | discussions | (Turnitin) | | e.g. practicals, vivas. |
| Annotated | Y | | | | | |
| bibliographies | | | | | | |
| Article for | Y | | | | | |
| publication | | | | | | |
| Blogs and Vlogs | Y | | | | | |
| Case studies | Y | N/ | | | | |
| Class Tests | | Y | | | Y ³ | |
| Critical incident | Y | | | | | Y |
| accounts Debates and Moots | | | Y | | | Y |
| | Y | | Y | | | Y Y |
| 'Design a product' assignments | r | | | | | ř |
| Dissertations / thesis | Y | | | | Y | |
| Essays | Y | | | | I | |
| | Y | Y | | | | |
| e-Portfolios Evaluations | Y Y | Y | | | Y | Y |
| Evaluations Executive Summaries | Y Y | | | | Ŷ | Ŷ |
| FOA (EBS) | I | | | Y | | |
| FOA non-EBS | Y | | | 1 | | |
| Glossaries | Ŷ | | | | | |
| In-tray exercises | Ŷ | | | | | Y |
| Live brief (or triple jump) | Ŷ | | | | | |
| Open book or open note exams | | Y | | | | |
| Oral | | | | | | Y |
| assessments/Vivas | | | | | | |
| Patchwork | Y | | | | Y | |
| assignments | | | | | | |
| Posters | Y | | | | | Y |
| Presentations | Y | | | | | Y |
| Quizzes / tests | | Y | | | Y | |
| Reflective journals | Y | | Y | | | |
| Reports / reviews | Y | | | | | |
| Simulations | Y | | | | | Y |
| STEM assessments ⁴ | | | | | Y | |
| Teaching packages | Y | | | | | |
| Two-stage exams | | Y | | | | |

³ Contact IS to discuss suitability

⁴ STEM assessments requiring detailed numerical calculations, LaTex or scientific notation.