

# ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE FOR 2020/21:

## OCTOBER 2020

### Alternative assessments during 2020/21

At the recent meeting of EQSB, it was agreed that:

1. With the exception of clinical examinations in SMD, all exams for the current academic year (up to and including the 2020/21 Late Summer Resit examinations) will be conducted as **online, open book assessments**, as for the latter half of 2019/20;
2. All students should be given access to details of the assessment (the 'exam paper') for the full duration of the open submission window;
3. The standard duration for alternative assessments during 2020/21 would be a **24-hour submission window** (reduced from 48 hours). \*

The duration of the standard submission window was arrived at having considered the lessons learned from 2019/20, in conjunction with feedback received from colleagues, students and external examiners. It is accepted that, in most instances, students will be expected to complete an assignment of between 90 minutes and 3 hours in duration, but the window to undertake that task (which may be timed) should be limited to 24 hours.

\*Exceptions to this standard 24-hour submission window will only be granted where a School or Institute has made a case to the relevant Dean for Education and this has been approved (for instance where students are expected to carry out independent research for a day or more prior to drafting and submitting the written assessment).

### Role of External Examiners in the question setting process

For all modules to be assessed in 2020/21, the role of the External Examiner remains as for preceding years: to provide feedback on and approve any element of assessment classified as an exam (typically coded as "EXM" or "EXN" in the module specification). It is understood that, as stated above, for 2020/21, such elements of assessment will generally take the form of online, open book assessments rather than invigilated, on campus exams. For 2020/21, where External Examiners have had the opportunity to review the examination paper(s), it is not necessary for them to also review and approve summatively assessed items of coursework. In the event that a module does not have an examination, it is considered good practice to send at least one substantial element of assessment to External Examiners in order that they can provide comment on the appropriateness of the design (as in previous years).

In order to meet our quality assurance obligations, for every module where at least one element of assessment requires External Examiner scrutiny / approval, the SEB will need to provide evidence that:

1. the External Examiner provided independent opinions on the design and content of the assessment;
2. the responsible Internal Examiner considered and acted upon any feedback provided by that External Examiner, as appropriate.

This evidence can be presented in tabular form (one table per SEB) by recording the relevant initials and dates for each module, as illustrated below:

Module Code	Module Title	External Examiner	Date Reviewed	Responsible Internal Examiner	Date Recommendations Considered / Actioned
XYZ123	<i>Insert Title</i>	AB	01 / 11 / 20	CD	08 / 11 / 20

### Submitting question papers to ARCS

As with the alternative assessments conducted in the latter half of 2019/2020, there will NOT be a requirement to send examination papers to ARCS for production in November 2020 (Semester A) or February (Semester B and year-long modules). Instead, each SEB should submit collated copies of each of the Semester A examination papers, together with the table referred to above (as a record that all exams were reviewed by External Examiner/s and that exam papers were revised to take account of their feedback by the responsible Internal Examiner/s).

The tabular record should be emailed to [exams@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:exams@qmul.ac.uk) by **12:00 noon on FRIDAY 11 DECEMBER**. Copies of all Semester A exam papers should be available for sharing to a secure electronic repository by that same date (Friday 11 December) – further details to follow when a suitably secure site has been identified. (The deadline for examinations relating to Semester B and year-long modules plus late summer resits will be confirmed in a later email.)

In agreeing the above deadline for Semester A examinations, it is for each School / Institute to put in place a timeline that allows External Examiners the opportunity to review and comment on papers by mid-November such that the relevant Internal Examiners have time to edit their papers as necessary and still lodge these with the SEB, for onward posting to ARCS, by the deadline of 11 December. As for 2020, Schools/Institutes will be responsible for publishing exam papers to students at the appropriate time.

### Providing students with feedback on online assessments from 2019/20

The Coronavirus Response Education Sub-Group (“Education 3.0”) has considered how best to provide students with feedback on the assessments that they completed during the latter half of 2019/20. It is strongly recommended that Schools and Institutes do NOT provide students with electronic copies of any exam papers submitted and marked online, either directly or via screen-sharing. It is instead recommended that **for each advisee, Advisors review the examiners’ comments across all modules assessed and provide a precis of all feedback to the student.** (At the time of writing, this necessitates the Advisor manually retrieving scripts on a module-by-module basis, but we are currently working with the E-Learning Unit to develop a technical solution that allows all marked submissions to be collated and displayed by entering the appropriate student ID.) In some Schools / Institutes, rather than a precis of the examiners’ comments for each of the exam scripts submitted by an individual student, it may be more appropriate to share summary comments for each module collated by the responsible examiners.

In providing students with feedback on 2019/20 assessments, all colleagues should remind students that feedback is provided solely to inform their preparation for and approach to future examinations. Students should be reminded that the results of any assessment can

only be appealed on the basis of procedural error or due to extenuating circumstances not made known previously to the SEB for 'good reason'; appeals cannot be made on the grounds of academic judgement and that is not the purpose of providing students with the opportunity to receive feedback on assessments completed in the preceding academic year.

In providing students with feedback on 2019/20 assessments, all colleagues should remind students that feedback is provided through results surgeries primarily to inform the student's preparation for, and approach to, future examinations. That said, Senate has approved the use of results surgeries as an opportunity for students to discuss their performance and get feedback before launching an appeal. (While not the primary purpose of the feedback session, they do form part of the informal stage of an appeal by allowing students to get and understand feedback at a local level.) Students should be reminded that the results of any assessment can only be appealed on the basis of procedural error or due to extenuating circumstances not made known previously to the SEB for 'good reason'; appeals cannot be made on the grounds of academic judgement and that is not the primary purpose of providing students with the opportunity to receive feedback on assessments completed in the preceding academic year.

**ANW, CP & AEM**

**09 October 2020**