Assessment Code of Practice

## Academic Governance Approval

## Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC)

## Academic Sponsor

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students)

## Professional Services Owner

## Assistant Registrar (Quality, Assessment and Partnerships)

Assistant Registrar (Student Records, Operations and Returns)

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# Assessment Types and Components

## Assessment Types

All assessments are defined within one of three broad assessment types which are;

* Written Exam
* Coursework
* Practical

### Arrangements for assessment setting, completion, marking, moderation and alternative assessments are different for each type of assessment.

### Written Exam

### Written exams are written assessments that are attempted by all students simultaneously. Academic integrity is maintained through monitoring either in-person (via invigilation) or online (via proctoring). Written exams are structured to include one or more of the following question types:

* Multiple choice questions
* Mathematical/statistical questions
* Short answer questions
* Long answer questions (including essay-style questions)

### Coursework

Coursework assessments are produced by students over a period, without monitoring. Academic integrity is maintained retrospectively, through similarity analysis and academic scrutiny. Coursework assessment is most often written, but not exclusively so, and includes the production of audio and/or visual content. A coursework assessment must result in the creation of a tangible product (physical or digital) by the student.

Practical

Practical assessments are delivered live by students at a set time. Academic integrity is maintained through direct observation by one or more assessors. Practical assessments do not result in the creation of a tangible product by the student and marking is therefore usually conducted synchronously with the assessment. Marking can take place later where an audio-visual recording of the assessment is made.

## Assessment Components

The assessment components for each module are detailed in the Module Specification for the relevant module.

Changes to module specifications must be approved as outlined in the Programme Design and Development Code of Practice.

When defining assessment components, a balance must be found between setting clear expectations for students about what is expected, and providing sufficient flexibility for academic staff to develop the assessment brief and ensure the assessment remains relevant within the context of the subject area.

To achieve this balance, the following assessment component descriptions and definitions should be used when describing assessment components on the module specification.

Innovation in the design of assessment components is encouraged. Where a proposed assessment does not fall within the current definitions, the module leader should speak to Academic Services.

### Written Exam

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Component | Quantification | Example | Assessment focus | Definition |
| Written exam | Time limit | Written exam (2 hours) | AcademicScientificProfessional | A formal, traditional, examination which is scheduled and invigilated and consists of one or more questions including multiple choice questions, long answer questions, short answer questions or statistical/mathematical questions |

### Coursework

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Component | Quantification | Example | Assessment focus | Description |
| Professional practice report | Word count | Professional practice report (1000 words) | Professional | A structured piece of writing which imitates, or directly replicates a format which students might expect to undertake when working in the relevant sector. |
| Subject specific exercise | Varies – seek advice from academic services | Subject specific exercise (…) | Professional | An exercise which imitates, or directly replicates an activity which students might expect to undertake when working in the relevant sector but which is not a structured written report. Current examples include; equine ration exercises, coding exercises, circuit design exercises, species identification tasks, and wine tasting exercises. |
| Skills portfolio | Number of skills | Skills portfolio (6 skills) | ScientificProfessional practice | A portfolio which evidences a series of skills, techniques or behaviours this could be presented as a physical item, for example a laboratory notebook, or in a digital format. |
| Scientific report | Word count | Scientific report (2000 words) | Scientific | A piece of structured writing which follows the format and style of a traditional scientific or laboratory report, through which a student demonstrates learning gained from an in-depth analysis of a topic using primary research techniques. |
| Essay | Word count | Essay (1800 words) | Academic | A piece of structured writing through which a student presents an explanation, argument or analysis regarding a specific question or topic using secondary research, or critical analysis. |
| Academic poster | Word count | Academic poster (500 words) | Academic | A traditional academic poster, presenting academic information through a combination of visual imagery, charts and text with consideration for both the content and layout of the poster. |
| Literature review | Word count | Literature review (2000 words) | Academic | A piece of structured writing through which a student presents an overview of academic sources which provides a description, summary and critical evaluation of these sources in relation to the research problem under investigation. |
| Research proposal | Word count | Research proposal (1000 words) | Academic | A piece of structured writing in which a student summarises a proposed research problem, setting out the central question which will be investigated with reference to current academic literature. |
| Dissertation | Word count | Dissertation (9000 words) | Academic | An extended piece of structured writing through which a student demonstrates learning gained from an in-depth analysis or study of a topic using either primary or secondary research techniques. A dissertation is used as a capstone assessment for a degree programme. |
| Grant application | Word count | Grant application (1000 words) | Academic | A piece of structured writing which replicates the format of an academic grant proposal. |
| Research paper | Word count | Research paper (1500 words) | Academic | A piece of structured writing, replicating the format of an academic journal, through which a student demonstrates learning gained from an in-depth analysis or study of a topic using either primary or secondary research techniques. |
| Online test | Time limit | Online test (30 minutes) | AcademicScientificProfessional | A timed, online quiz which consists of one or more questions including multiple choice questions, long answer questions, short answer questions or statistical/mathematical questions. The rubric for an online test may be similar in format to a formal written exam but online tests are not invigilated. The test may take place at a scheduled time, or may be available for students to complete at any point during a longer period of time; once started the test must be completed within the time limit. |
| Problem sheet | Word count or Question type | Problem sheet (short answer questions) or problem sheet (1000 words) | AcademicScientificProfessional | An assignment which consists of one or more questions including multiple choice questions, long answer questions, short answer questions or statistical/mathematical questions. The rubric for a problem sheet may be similar in format to a formal written exam but problem sheets are not invigilated or scheduled. Students are given a defined period of time, usually 1 or 2 weeks, to complete the problem sheet and submit their answers. |
| Written self-reflection | Word count | Written self-reflection (500 words) | AcademicScientificProfessional | A loosely structured, or unstructured piece of writing through which a student reflects on their own learning and development with regards to a specific activity, for example an individual assessment or a placement. |
| Audio-visual media | Time limit or Slide limit | Audio visual media (5 minutes) or Audio-visual media (6 slides) | AcademicScientificProfessional | An item of audio and/or visual media including videos, pre-recorded presentations, podcasts etc. |
| Textual and visual media | Word count | Textual and visual media (800 words) | AcademicScientificProfessional | An item of textual and/or visual media including magazine articles, posters leaflets, infographics or press releases. |

### Practical

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Component | Quantification | Example | Assessment focus | Description |
| Presentation | Time limit **or** Slide limit | Presentation (5 minutes) **or** presentation (6 slides) | AcademicScientificProfessional | A live presentation delivered by the student, in-person or virtually. (see ‘audio visual media’ for presentations which are pre-recorded) |
| Role-play | Time limit | Role-play (10 minutes) | Professional | A timed role-play between two or more students, or between a student and a third-party participant. The participant must not be the assessor. |
| Skills observation | Time limit **or** Number of skills | Skills observation (10 minutes) **or** skills observation (5 skills) | ScientificProfessional | In person observation of a student demonstrating a skill or technique for example wildlife handling, or demonstration of a laboratory technique. |
| Peer review | Not applicable | Peer review | AcademicScientificProfessional | An individual peer review of a practical assessment by other students, for example of a presentation. |

# Assessment Submission

## Assessment Submission

Submission deadlines for each assessment component are detailed in the Module Specification for the relevant module. Changes to module specifications must be approved as outlined in the Programme Design and Development Code of Practice.

Assessments must be submitted by the deadline.

Where assessment submission takes place via Turnitin, an assessment will not be considered ‘submitted’ unless the student has received a submission receipt.

### Late Submission

Assessments that are submitted within 5 working days of the deadline must be marked as normal (to ensure students receive proper feedback) however the mark must be capped at 40%.

Where an assessment is submitted within 5 working days of the deadline the Academic responsible for marking should update the assessment status in Quercus to “late – capped at 40” and enter a gross mark of “40”. The uncapped mark should be added as a note on the assessment (e.g. “uncapped mark = 67%”).

Assessments that are submitted more than 5 working days after the deadline should not be marked and will be treated as a non-submission.

### Non-Submission

Assessments that are not submitted will receive a mark of 0%.

Where an assessment is not submitted the Academic responsible for marking should update the assessment status in Quercus to “Out of time 0 (zero) marks” and enter a gross mark of “0”.

## Exceptional Circumstances

Where there are exceptional circumstances, students can submit a request for an extension (coursework only) or a deferral.

### Extensions

Extensions can only be approved for coursework assessments.

Where an extension is approved the assessment submission will be extended by 10 working days. The extension does not change the University’s policy regarding late-submission and non-submission (above).

Coursework submitted by an approved extension deadline will be marked as normal and is therefore uncapped.

### Deferrals

Deferrals can be approved for any assessment (exams, coursework and practical assessments).

Deferrals will be approved for coursework, only where the circumstances are likely to extend beyond 10 working days.

Where a deferral is approved the assessment will be delayed until the relevant deferral deadline, as set in the Academic Calendar.

Deferred assessments will be marked as normal and are therefore uncapped.

### Definition of Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional circumstances are defined as circumstances which are;

* Unavoidable – the circumstances are beyond the student’s control
* Unforeseen – the circumstances arose suddenly and could not have been predicted
* Serious – the circumstances are having a significant impact on the student’s learning experience

Applications for extensions and deferrals will only be approved where it is demonstrated that the circumstances meet all three criteria.

Examples of exceptional circumstances may include;

* Serious short-term illness or injury, usually requiring medical attention from a GP or other doctor
* Temporary, acute worsening of a long-term disability, including mental health condition
* Death of a close relative/friend
* Victim of serious crime
* Participation in national/international sporting or cultural events

Examples of circumstances which are not considered exceptional may include;

* Minor illnesses
* Unawareness of assessment dates and deadlines
* Transport difficulties
* Holidays

### Documentary evidence

Applications for extensions and deferrals will only be approved where independent documentary evidence is provided. The exact type of evidence will vary depending on the circumstances.

Examples of acceptable independent documentary evidence may include;

* A medical certificate authorised by a GMC registered doctor
* A hospital admission report or appointment letter
* A birth certificate, or death certificate issued by an official Registrar
* A letter from a BACP accredited therapist
* A police crime report and incident number

### Process for requesting and approving extensions and deferrals

Requests for extensions or deferrals must be made through the Student portal. Requests must be made by the student and must be submitted before the assessment deadline. Requests that are submitted after the assessment deadline will be rejected.

Documentary evidence must be submitted via email to extensions@rau.ac.uk within 10-working days of submitting the request. Where documentary evidence is not provided within 10-working days the request will be rejected.

Requests will be considered against the criteria for exceptional circumstances (above). Where there is clear precedent for a request to be accepted or rejected then the decision will be made by an Officer in the Academic Services team. Where there is no clear precedent, or the circumstances of a case are more complex, the case will be reviewed and a judgement will be made by the Director of Academic Services.

Where an extension request is approved, Academic Services will update the assessment status in Quercus to “Extension” and add a note on the assessment. Academic Services will communicate the outcome to the student and module leader.

Where a deferral request is approved, Academic Services will update the assessment status in Quercus to “deferred” and add a note on the assessment. Academic Services will communicate the outcome to the student and module leader.

Where an extension or deferral request is rejected, Academic Services will add a note to the main student record. Academic Services will communicate the outcome to the student and module leader.

Where a request for an extension or deferral cannot yet be considered, as the documentary evidence has not yet been submitted, the academic responsible for marking the assessment should mark the assessment as normal, under the College’s policy for late-submission or non-submission as appropriate. If an extension or deferral is subsequently approved this will be updated by Academic Services.

Decisions made regarding exceptional circumstances are final. This does not affect a student’s ability to submit an academic appeal following publication of their results.