

Assessment policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The term 'assessment' in these regulations is used comprehensively to incorporate all forms of examination employed to judge that a student has fulfilled all requirements and attained the standard required for the award in question. 'Assessment' in these regulations is also to be defined according to the specific regulations of each programme and is interpreted, in case of dispute, by the relevant Assessment and Examinations Board.
- 1.2. Each Institute programme will be subject to its own specific assessment regulations, and to Institute-wide generic regulations with which the programme specific regulations shall be compatible. Thereby each programme handbook contains comprehensive details of the assessment scheme specific to that programme.
- 1.3. Assessment in any instance may be:
 - 1.3.1. Diagnostic, providing an indicator of a learner's aptitude for a programme of study and possible areas of need;
 - 1.3.2. Formative, informing development through providing feedback;
 - 1.3.3. Summative, providing a measure of achievement in relation to the learning outcomes in a programme;Or it could be a combination of these.
- 1.4. The process of assessment seeks to:
 - 1.4.1. Enable students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the objectives of the programme of study and achieved the standard required for the award they seek.
 - 1.4.2. Inform students of the judgment made about the quality of their work;
 - 1.4.3. Provide guidance to the student as to how the quality of his/her work may be developed and enhanced;
 - 1.4.4. Provide recorded information on which the progression and final decision on a student's fulfilment of a programme's objectives may be based.
- 1.5. For these reasons students shall be apprised of the assessment processes that will apply within their programme.
- 1.6. The Board of Examiners shall be responsible for interpreting the assessment regulations for the programme if any difficulties arise; and shall be guided by the Institute's and the validating body's requirements for validated awards, together with good practice in Higher Education.
- 1.7. Therefore, an Assessment and Examination Board operating within its terms of reference may not have its academic judgements in themselves, questioned or overturned.

2. Principles of assessment

- 2.1. All Institute assessment regulations shall seek to relate assessment requirements to the objectives of the programme. Therefore, it is within these programme assessment regulations that Examiners, acting impartially and within methods providing comparability and equity of treatment, are required to formulate their judgments on student performance.
- 2.2. In this sense, assessment criteria, processes and judgements should seek to establish the achievement of individual students in fulfilling programme objectives.
- 2.3. In order to ensure that these assessed achievements are consistent with national standards for comparable awards, the Institute requires that an External Examiner be associated with all assessments counting towards a validated award.
- 2.4. Programme Committees shall monitor the efficacy of programme assessment and examination requirements and processes and all External Examiner comments about these matters shall be reviewed regularly by Programme Committees.
- 2.5. Any recommendations to the Academic Board from a Programme Committee for changes to its assessment or examination requirements shall be reviewed in the first instance by the Academic Standards Committee, whose comments shall be made available to the Academic Board.
- 2.6. In collaboration with the Academic Registrar, Programme Directors are required to ensure that the assessment requirements together with progression regulations for their programmes are made known to students.
- 2.7. Additionally, students shall be informed about the Institute's 'Academic Appeals' regulations and procedures that relate to the grounds on which requests to Boards of Examiners to review their decisions may be made. See Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure on the website.
- 2.8. It is the responsibility of students to participate in examinations and to submit work for assessment as required. If a student fails to participate in examinations or submit work for assessment without good cause, the examiners have authority to deem the student to have failed the assessments concerned
- 2.9. If a disabled student is unable to be assessed by the methods specified in the assessment regulations, the Institute will examine all possibilities of alternative forms of assessment and examination, in consultation with the Institute's Accessibility Co-ordinator.
- 2.10. The Assessment and Examinations Board will be advised any reasonable adjustments made to the assessment processes via the Programme Director's report to the board. The board will be invited to comment on the appropriateness of the proposed alternative assessment methods, bearing in mind the learning outcomes of the programme and the need to assess the student on equal terms with other students.
- 2.11. If special arrangements cannot be made the reasons for this will be communicated in writing to the student. Failure to implement any special arrangements formally agreed would be considered as grounds for an appeal.

3. Assignment and examination questions

- 3.1. For each degree programme there shall be a sub-committee of its Assessment and Examination Board to determine the suitability of assignments and examination questions and the relationship between them.
- 3.2. Each such sub-committee normally consists of three members: the Programme Director and two tutors.
- 3.3. The assignment and examination questions shall thence be submitted to the External Examiner for comment and approval before finalisation.

4. Submission of assessed work

- 4.1. Details of how and when to submit work for assessment can be found in the programme handbook.
- 4.2. Instructions for the use of the electronic submission system can be found on the internet, under *Current students/Advice and study skills*.
- 4.3. Work submitted for a summative assessment component cannot be amended after submission, or re-submitted.

5 Academic Freedom

- 5.1 Maryvale Institute is a Catholic foundation, motivated by Catholic faith, and operating as an agency of the Catholic Church. As such, its educational efforts are in the first place directed towards the Catholic community, but it is open also to others outside that community, and indeed is anxious to form links and develop points of contact and mutual understanding with those of other religious traditions.
- 5.2 The Institute's principal purpose is to promote systematic reflection on the meaning and implications of the Christian message, according to the Roman Catholic tradition, and on the relationship of that message to the whole realm of human knowledge, life and culture.
- 5.3 It approaches this task from a perspective of faith and in the hope of fostering and informing faith. It hopes that its efforts may help to equip Catholic students to engage more fruitfully in the life and mission of the Catholic Church, and that they may assist all students to play a more discerning and constructive role in the life of the society in which they live. Its immediate aim, however, is the promotion among all of a critical understanding of the substance and implications of Catholic faith and of the relationships that exist between this and other fields of enquiry. A necessary aspect of the development of such understanding is the honest examination and evaluation of divergent positions and arguments in a reasoned, responsible and balanced manner. Every enterprise of intellectual enquiry rests upon initial presumptions, whether acknowledged or otherwise. One advantage, in the case of Maryvale, is that such presumptions are clear to all and fully acknowledged. They are moreover themselves open to examination and critique.

- 5.4 Maryvale programmes are often concerned with elements of a variety of disciplines, in addition to theology – such as philosophy, history, archaeology, sociology, psychology, biology. The aim always is to study each of these elements with due academic objectivity, and in accordance with their own methodologies and principles. This approach accords with that set out in the Declaration on Christian Education of the Second Vatican Council.
- 5.5 “In the institutions under its control the Church endeavours systematically to ensure that the treatment of the individual disciplines is consonant with their own principles and with their own methods, and with a true liberty of scientific enquiry.” (“Gravissimum Educationis” 10)
- 5.6 Catholic Theology itself operates within certain parameters and according to certain norms. As one of the most important authoritative Church documents concerning Catholic Higher Education observes, 15.4.2.1 “It has proper principles and methods which define it as a branch of knowledge. Theologians enjoy this same freedom so long as they are faithful to those principles and methods.” (“Ex Corde Ecclesiae)
- 5.7 The Institute supports the freedom of academic teachers, including teachers of Catholic Theology, to enquire, publish and teach within the norms proper to their discipline. In regard to students, it encourages open enquiry and debate; it makes no attempt at any inquisitorial enforcement of orthodoxy, and while it may well, in assessments and examination, require evidence of accurate understanding of Catholic positions and teachings, it does not base the assessment of students on the perceived conformity of their views with Catholic orthodoxy.

6 Intellectual property

- 6.1 The general principle is that students who are not in the employment of the Institute will own any intellectual property they create in the course of their studies or research activities.
- 6.2 Maryvale keeps copies of theses and dissertation in its Library as a permanent record of research and academic activity at the Institute. At the time of submission of a dissertation or thesis consent will be sought from the student to hold this copy.
- 6.3 Students may, if they wish, share their work with their fellow students, however this must be unmarked work only; marks and tutor comments are not the students’ property.
- 6.4 Care must be taken when sharing work to avoid the encouragement or facilitation of plagiarism.
- 6.5 It is not recommended for students to share their work through Facebook or student forums, this is classed as publishing and may restrict future use of the work.

7. Assignment and examinations feedback

Comments on assignments

- 7.1 Comments from markers are annotated on the text of each assignment. A brief summary and targets for improvement will appear on the assignment top sheet.
- 7.2 If your programme uses Turnitin comments from markers are annotated within the Turnitin Feedback Studio for each assignment. A brief general comment and targets for improvement will appear in the Feedback Studio '@Grading Form'.

Comments on examination scripts

- 7.3 Examination markers provide a minimum text, 1 – 2 lines, on each script by way of justification and comment. This goes to the moderator of the scripts and the Assessment and Examinations Board.

Written feedback to students after examinations

- 7.4 The grades for the examination and for the year are given to students. Scripts and comments on the scripts are not returned. When an award stage has been reached, eg. HE Certificate or HE Diploma, students receive a transcript of their achievements for that award.

Tutorial feedback

- 7.5 Tutorial feedback is available during one to one tutorials following the examinations, or arranged individually with students by agreement with the Programme Director at the individual student's request.

8. Policy on Late Assignments

- 8.1. The importance of meeting deadlines for submitting assignments cannot be over-emphasised. The discipline of doing so is an essential part of all academic programmes, and is a particularly important aspect of distance-learning degree programmes, in that the effort to meet deadlines assists the student in developing regular patterns of study.
- 8.2. It must also be said that once a student begins to miss deadlines and falls behind with work, it becomes increasingly difficult to do justice to the programme. Assignments are inevitably rushed in the attempt to make up for lost time. Once one assignment is late, the next tends to be as well, making it difficult to return to a steady pattern of study. Moreover, the learning which takes place on the degree programme is sequential and this feature is lost if a student is trying to write two assignments more or less simultaneously in an attempt to catch up with work.
- 8.3. For these reasons, then, and also to ensure the smooth running and administration of the programmes, it is important that there are clear guidelines concerning assignment deadlines.
- 8.4. Students must do their utmost to submit all their work by the assignment deadlines. Failure to do so disrupts not only their own study patterns but also the workloads and working patterns of the Programme Team and Markers.

- 8.5. Course work shall not normally be accepted beyond this final deadline set in any academic year. Permission to submit after the deadline may only be granted by the Programme Director for medical, compassionate or other serious reasons on the provision of corroborating evidence (eg. medical certificate) and on submission of assignment deadline extension request form available on the website – see page 31.
- 8.6. The Programme Director may, at his or her discretion, grant an extension subject to the penalties shown below.
- 8.7. Any extension of more than two-thirds of the time to the deadline for the next assignment shall not normally be granted without a revised timetable for that student's remaining assignments being agreed.
- 8.8. Work submitted late without permission being given shall incur the following penalties:
 - 8.8.1. Up to one week lowest mark within the grade given
 - 8.8.2. One to three weeks lowest mark one grade below that given (for example one grade below = reduction from a B grade to a B-, or a C+ to a C)
 - 8.8.3. Three to five weeks lowest mark two grades below that given
 - 8.8.4. Over five weeks lowest mark three grades below that given

OR, for OU validated programmes:

- 8.8.5. Submission within 6 working days: a 10% reduction for each working day late down to the basic pass mark and no further.
- 8.8.6. Submission that is late by 7 or more working days: submission refused, mark of 0. A working day is defined by the partner and submission after the deadline will be assumed to be the next working day.
- 8.9 The Programme Director will contact any student who fails to submit an assignment. A student who fails to submit three consecutive assignments without explanation will be deemed to have withdrawn from the programme.

9 Assignments which exceed the word length

- 9.1 It is important that assignments submitted by students are of a standard length, both because of the importance of writing with clarity, precision and conciseness, and because of the need to ensure comparability in terms of student assessment.
- 9.2 The expected word length for assignments is specified in programme handbooks
- 9.3 Assignments should include a word count. Footnotes should be kept short and are not included in the word count. Misuse of footnotes will be penalised. Bibliography and quote references are not included in the word count.
- 9.4 Assignments which exceed the word length by anything up to 10% are acceptable.
- 9.5 Assignments which exceed the word length by more than 10% must be agreed beforehand with the Programme Director. The Programme Director will agree to this only in certain circumstances – for example, where necessary appendices form part of the assignment; eg. Lesson plans or schemes of work or supporting empirical data in some MA material.
- 9.6 If a student submits work which exceeds the word length by more than 10% without prior permission being gained from the Programme Director, the academic tutor will deduct marks from the work at the rate of 1% for every 100 words over the limit.

10 Minimum requirements

- 10.1 To obtain an award students are required to complete all parts of the programme's approved assessment and comply with all regulations relating to their programme of study.
- 10.2 The minimum aggregate pass marks for awards are:
40% for undergraduate programmes
50% for postgraduate programmes.
- 10.3 These minima apply to assessments, modules, stages and qualifications.

Assessment scores

- 10.4 All undergraduate assessment will be marked on a percentage scale of 0-100.

% Scale Score	Performance Standard
70+ (A- to A+)	Excellent pass (1 st Class (Hons))
61-69 (B to B+)	Very Good pass (Upper 2 nd Class (Hons))
53-60 (C+ to B-)	Good Pass (Lower 2 nd Class (Hons))
45-52 (C- to C)	Pass (3 rd Class (Hons))
40-44 (D)	Borderline Pass
0-39 (E)	Fail

- 10.5 All postgraduate assessment will be marked on a percentage scale of 0-100. Taught postgraduate awards may include merit and/or distinction classification.

% Scale Score	Performance Standard
70+ (A- to A+)	Distinction
60-69 (B- to B+)	Merit
50-59 (C- to C+)	Pass
0-49 (D)	Fail

- 10.6 The final grade for an individual assessment component will be determined after completion of a quality assurance process (e.g. moderation).

11 Determining outcomes

Module outcomes

- 11.1 The overall module mark or grade shall be determined as set out in the assessment strategy detailed in the module specification and published in the programme handbook.
- 11.2 In order to pass a module a student must achieve the requirement of the module as set out in the module specification and published in the programme handbook
- 11.3 A student who passes a module shall be awarded the credit for that module. The amount of credit for each module shall be set out in the programme specification and published in the programme handbook.

Progression and qualification outcomes

- 11.4 The paths through which students are required to progress through the programme, and the elements identified as compulsory or optional, are set out in the programme specification.
- 11.5 Honours degrees are classified as:
- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| First class | Aggregate mark of 70% or above |
| Upper Second class | Aggregate mark between 61% and 69% |
| Lower Second class | Aggregate mark between 53% and 60% |
| Third class | Aggregate mark between 45% and 52% |

Stage requirements

- 11.6 Each stage of an undergraduate programme, ie. HE Certificate and HE Diploma is expected to consist of a total of 120 credits; usually completed over two years part time study.

- 11.7 In order to complete and pass a stage of a programme, a student must acquire the total credit set out in the programme specification at the approved qualification level for the award, or have been exempted through advanced standing.
- 11.8 Where a student fails a module, the following may apply in the first instance:
- 11.8.1 Resit – a second attempt at an assessment component following a failure at first attempt.
- 11.8.2 Compensation – the award of credit by the Board of Examiners for a failed module(s) on account of good performance in other modules at the same credit level where the learning outcomes have been met.

Borderlines

- 11.9 The Assessment and Examination Board for each programme has its own established regulations for the identification and resolution of borderlines.
- 11.10 In general, where the result of the assessment calculation creates a mark of 0.5% or greater this will be rounded up to the next full percentage point (e.g. 69.5% is rounded to 70; 59.5% to 60%; and so on). Where the calculation creates a mark below 0.5% this will be rounded down to the next full percentage point (e.g. 69.4% is rounded to 69%; 59.4% to 59%; and so on). For the purposes of rounding up or down, only the first decimal place is used.

Failed assessments

- 11.11 No work which has passed can be re-submitted in order to improve a grade.
- 11.12 Every student has the right to re-submit failed work once. Further resubmissions in the case of students studying for credits and awards up to and including level 6, are at the discretion of the relevant Assessment and Examinations Board.
- 11.13 On re-submission the highest grade that can be achieved is 'PASS'.

Compensation

- 11.14 Unless otherwise stated in the programme specification, compensation will be applied when the following conditions are met:
- 11.15 No more than 20 credits, or one sixth of the total credits, whichever is greater, can be compensated in any one stage of an undergraduate or postgraduate programme. (Compensation is not permitted for modules within awards of less than 120 credits in total.)
- 11.16 It can be demonstrated that the learning outcomes of the qualification level have been satisfied. The process for evaluating cases will be identified in the programme specification.
- 11.17 A minimum mark of no more than 5 percentage points below the module pass mark has been achieved in the module to be compensated.
- 11.18 Taking the module mark to be compensated into account, an aggregate mark of 40% has been achieved for the qualification level of the undergraduate.

- 11.19 In the case of postgraduate programmes, taking the module mark to be compensated into account, an aggregate mark of 50% has been achieved.
- 11.20 No compensation shall be permitted for any core project/dissertation module, as defined in the programme specification.
- 11.21 A student who receives a compensated pass in a module shall be awarded the credit for the module. The original component mark(s) (i.e. below the pass mark) shall be retained in the record of marks and used in the calculation of the aggregate mark for the stage or qualification.

12 Sitting examinations

- 12.1 No candidate may sit for an examination unless all coursework for the subject in which the examination is being taken has been completed.
- 12.2 Students wishing to sit examinations must submit their entry forms by the deadline date stated: normally the end of February. Failure to submit the entry form in time may result in the student not being entered for the examination.
- 12.3 Under certain circumstances any candidate who is unable to take an examination on the date given in the programme calendar may apply to the Examinations Administration Committee in advance to be allowed to sit the examination on the date allocated for resit examinations.
- 12.4 In order to ensure justice for all students, permission for deferral of an examination sitting will only be granted for medical, compassionate or other serious reasons and not for the simple reason of non-completion of work. Requests for such permission will require the provision of corroborating evidence (eg. medical certificate).
- 12.5 The application to defer the sitting of the examination must be submitted to the Examinations Secretary in writing by the deadline given on the examination entry form.
- 12.6 Examinations can only be taken on either the set date or the date of the resit examinations. Any candidate who fails an examination which is being taken for the first time on the date of the resit must wait until the following year's examination date to resit that examination.
- 12.7 Should a candidate find him/herself unable to attend an examination due to illness or emergency he/she must contact the Institute to inform the Examinations Secretary as soon as possible, preferably at least one hour prior to the examination start time if circumstances allow.

Students with learning difficulties or disabilities

- 12.8 Students with SpLD or disabilities requiring additional support will be assessed in line with the arrangements agreed in their 'Learning Support Agreement'.
- 12.9 The Accessibility Co-ordinator will liaise with the student and the Examinations Secretary and present a proposal of reasonable adjustments concerning examinations to the Examinations Administration Committee, so that any changes to

the original method of examinations agreed may be considered and so that the method may be monitored.

- 12.10 The Institute will assist the student within the framework of assessment as far as is possible, providing that any alterations to the standard method of examination are accepted by the Examinations Administration Committee.

13 Options for the repeat of study

- 13.1 If, having exhausted all permitted resit and compensation opportunities, a student is still unable to pass, the Board of Examiners may, at its discretion, permit one of the following repeat options:

Partial repeat as fully registered student:

- 13.2 The student is not permitted to progress to the next stage of the programme but must repeat the failed modules and/or components in full during the following academic year,
- 13.3 The student has full access to all facilities and support for the modules and/or components being repeated,
- 13.4 The marks that can be achieved for the modules and/or components being repeated will be capped at the module and/or component pass marks,
- 13.5 The student retains the marks for the modules and/or components already passed,
- 13.6 No further resit opportunities are permitted.

Partial repeat for assessment only:

- 13.7 As above, except that access to facilities and support will be limited to certain learning resources for the module(s) and/or component(s) being repeated. Participation will only be allowed for relevant revision sessions and assessments.

Full repeat:

- 13.8 This is only permitted where the student has extenuating circumstances;
- 13.9 The student does not progress to the next stage of the programme but instead repeats all the modules in the current stage during the following academic year,
- 13.10 The student has full access to all facilities and support,
- 13.11 The marks that can be achieved are not capped, and the student is normally entitled to the resit opportunities available. However, a student is not able to carry forward any credit from previous attempts at the stage.
- 13.12 Where resit, compensation and repeat opportunities have been exhausted, a Board of Examiners may recommend a student for an exit award.

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