



Faculty of Humanities, Law and Social Science

Faculty Academic Standards Committee

Code of Practice 2006-7

This Code of Practice should be used together with the current University Quality Assurance Manual and the Regulations for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes of Study [hereafter Regulations]. Programmes seeking exemption from any of the Regulations (for example to comply with PSB requirements or to address issues of collaborative provision) should apply in the first instance through FASC. The Code provides staff guidance for all taught programmes in the Faculty on the following matters:

Page	
2	Unit assessment strategies
5	External moderation of assessment
6	Faculty generic marking scale
8	Intended learning outcomes and assessment strategies
9	Plagiarism
10	Programme approval, review and modification (PARM)
10	QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
10	PLP and Materials for students with special educational needs
11	Ethical Framework
11	Placement Learning
11	Collaborative Provision and student exchange schemes
12	Exceptional factors affecting student performance
13	Associate Lecturers
13	Retention and Attendance
13	PDP

This Code (together with other quality assurance information) is available online:
<http://www.hlss.mmu.ac.uk/staff/fqa/>

The **Quality Assurance Manual** referred to throughout is available on-line at:
http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/quality_assurance.php

The **Regulations** referred to throughout are available on-line at:
http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/grad_regulations.php

1. UNIT ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

- 1.1 Unit assessment strategies may comprise any authorized combination of assessed course work and/or examinations that comply with the assessment load specified in this Code. Assessed course work may be: essays, exercises, tests in class, group work, original compositions, oral presentations, book reviews, literature searches, projects or other approved forms. Examinations may vary in number of questions to be attempted, duration, whether seen or unseen, etc, provided that they comply with paragraph 1.2. All such matters shall be determined in relation to the intended learning outcomes of the programme, stage and unit concerned, as specified in the relevant definitive document and programme specification.
- 1.2 Unit assessment strategies shall be devised and approved through the University's programme approval and review or modifications procedures. They must be comparable across the Faculty with units of the same credit value and level, and appropriately differentiated from units of varying credit value and level.
- 1.3 Units are normally valued at 20 credits. Where approved, half and double units shall equate to 10 or 40 credits respectively.
- 1.4 Unit assessment strategies comprise one or more elements of assessment. At undergraduate level an element worth 25% of marks in a 20 credit unit shall be, or be equivalent in rigour and student learning effort to, assessed course work of approximately 1,500 words or a one-hour examination answer. Although not an exact science, as far as possible the terms used to describe elements of assessment should be consistent across the Faculty (see illustrative glossary below). Any approved combination of elements of assessment, each with their own value, is permitted provided that the total is equivalent to the standard unit assessment load stipulated in this Code, that each individual element of assessment is linked to its unit's intended learning outcomes, and that each element has specific assessment criteria. 'Approved' means that the assessment strategy has been permitted after programme approval, review or modification, is detailed in the programme's definitive document unit syllabus pro-forma, and conforms to the Faculty model. So, a programme team may assess a 20 credit unit entirely by assessed course work (for example, by four essays each of 1500 words, two papers each of 3000 words, one project-type extended piece of writing of 6000 words, a portfolio (requiring a variety of work), or entirely by examination.
- 1.5 Formal examinations must conform to the Faculty's Examinations Regulations and Procedures handbook and be approved by the Faculty's Senior Administrative Officer. A standard examination may be no longer than three hours in length (excluding extra time permitted for candidates with special needs). Class tests should follow the guidance in 1.10 below.
- 1.6 A unit assessed by project normally requires a single element of assessed course work worth 100% of unit marks in total, such as an extended piece of writing, analysis of research or fieldwork, or a piece (or portfolio) of creative writing, that might require the completion of a series of tasks with a schedule of related submission dates. A project-type piece of extended writing (or short dissertation) for a 20 credit unit shall be equivalent to assessed course work totalling approximately 6,000 words, and a standard dissertation for a 40 credit double unit shall be equivalent to assessed course work totalling approximately 12,000 words.
- 1.7 The assessment criteria for each element of assessed course work included in a unit assessment strategy shall be issued in student documentation and recorded on the Faculty Coursework Database. They may also be published online or on notice boards.

- 1.8 The submission dates for assessed coursework will be agreed at Programme level and submitted to the Faculty office who will be responsible for issuing all students with a complete set of submission dates on enrolment.
- 1.9 The credit value, level, and assessment strategy of a unit shall not vary between programmes of study on which that unit is formally registered.
- 1.10 A unit registered at more than one level must have a separate unit syllabus proforma, intended learning outcomes and assessment strategy, appropriate to each level of the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.
- 1.11 Class tests at undergraduate level:**
- a. All assessment must comply with the University Regulations.
 - b. Class tests are regulated by the Regulations Section 15.0: 'Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations'. These apply to any form of formal assessment which determines progression or which contributes to a student's final mark or classification.
 - c. A class test may be considered for use as an element of the assessment strategy of a unit if appropriate as a means of demonstrating achievement of the unit's intended learning outcomes.
 - d. A proposed change to any element of the assessment strategy of a unit, such as the introduction of a class test, is subject to the University's approval, review and modification procedures. It must be identified as a discrete element of the assessment strategy, linked to appropriate intended learning outcomes, relate to the learning and teaching strategy, and be set out in a revised Unit Syllabus Description for inclusion in the programme's Definitive Document.
 - e. The nature and requirements of a class test must be specified in unit documentation, together with any other elements of assessment, and issued to students at the commencement of the unit. Students must also be provided with at least fourteen calendar days notice of the date, time and venue of any test [Regulations 15.4 – 15.5].
 - f. A class test normally takes the form of a single supervised event assessing a group of students (comprising, for example, written or oral exercises). It must conform to the 'Unit Assessment Strategies and indicative glossary of elements of assessment' specified in Section 1 of this Code of Practice. An element of assessment consisting of a one hour class test would therefore normally be worth 25% of unit marks in a 20 credit unit.
 - g. The date of a class test should be advised to the Principal Faculty Administrator on the Unit Assessment and Submission Profile Sheet, to ensure that it is entered on the Faculty Assessment Database.
 - h. A class test must where appropriate be conducted according to the University's regulations for invigilated examinations [Regulations 15.7 -15.14].
 - i. The organisation of a class test is the responsibility of the home department of the programme/subject concerned, not the Senior Faculty Administrator.
 - j. Immediately on completion of a class test, it is the department's responsibility to provide the Faculty Coursework Receipting Office with a list, signed by all students who attended.
 - k. A student absent without good cause from an examination or assessment [such as a class test] may be deemed by the Board of Examiners to have failed the examination or assessment concerned [Regulations 17.9]. Unauthorised absence will therefore receive a zero mark.
 - l. The University's regulations for reassessment [Regulations Section 9] apply to the failure of any unit.

- m. Where a student misses an in-class test due to exceptional factors the Programme Leader will determine the appropriate timing of the assessment in regard to allowing the student to take the test on one occasion only as if for the first time. This may take place prior to the summer examinations boards and will take place no later than the period prior to the September re-sit boards. Where a student misses an in-class test without having any exceptional factors, the re-sit should generally take place after the examinations board has determined each student's full profile of results and will take place no later than the period prior to the September re-sit boards.
- n. When preparing for the possible introduction of a class test, a Programme Leader must consider how to address the assessment of any students for whom there are exceptional factors affecting performance or whose special education needs have been recognised in a Learning Support Plan issued by the Learning Support Unit.
- o. Where an in-class assessment cannot easily be regarded as an examination and treated accordingly, the Programme Leader shall liaise with the chair of FASC in order to determine the appropriate method by which re-sits are to be determined.

Indicative glossary of elements of assessment

The following list of elements and their value is based on a standard 20 credit unit. It is for guidance, and is not prescriptive. However, good practice should encourage the Faculty to adhere to a common set of definitions.

Book review	800 words	10% of unit marks
Short oral presentation	(c.5 minutes)	10%
Literature search	1000 words	15%
Seminar paper	1000 words	15%
Essay	1500 words	25%
Report	1500 words	25%
Research paper	3000 words	50%
Portfolio	6000 words	100%
Project/short dissertation	6000 words	100%
Examination answer	one hour	25%
Standard dissertation	12,000 words	40 credit unit, which may be assessed by a single percentage mark, or sub-divided into sections totalling 200 marks.
Postgraduate paper	4-6000 words	100%

2. EXTERNAL MODERATION OF ASSESSMENT

This section of the Code should be read in conjunction with the University's External Examiners: Institutional Code of Practice (Quality Assurance Manual) and the University's policy on moderation of summative assessments (Quality Assurance Manual).

There must be a single set of examiners, both internal and external, responsible for assuring the standard of assessment of all students who study a particular unit. This means that any work from students taking a unit should be moderated by the same external examiner irrespective of the programmes of study of those students.

External examiners must be consulted about draft assignment tasks and examination questions, to confirm that they are appropriate to the unit level and permit the demonstration of unit learning outcomes (External Examiners: Institutional Code of Practice). Their suggestions must receive a formal response.

Internal examiners for a unit should mark all student work in each element of assessment, express their judgement of each element for each student by using an integer percentage mark decided by reference to the programme's approved assessment criteria or to the Faculty generic marking scale, and provide a written record justifying the mark awarded. Unless they wish to indicate uncertainty about the category of a particular piece of work, borderline marks (e.g. 49%) should be avoided. Work must be internally moderated according to the University's policy on summative assessments approved by the Academic Board.

Examination answer booklets must remain anonymous throughout the whole internal marking and moderation process. Names should only be revealed after internal marks have been agreed.

Examiners are encouraged to use the whole range of marks available.

Once internal examining is completed, unit marks are calculated automatically for each student using the Faculty Assessment Database.

The external examiner then moderates students' work through samples which should reflect the full range of marks, applying particular attention to proposed failures and first class awards. It is recommended that the sample should normally comprise between 10% and 20% of student work from every unit, covering a range of work from every classification category based on the unit mark, and including the highest and lowest unit marks awarded. For assessed course work, the internally moderated agreed mark and comments of internal examiners should be recorded, preferably on a structured feedback form, with a copy attached to all work sent to the external examiner. For examinations, the internally moderated agreed mark and comments of internal examiners should be recorded on the inside cover of the examination answer booklet (not within the booklet adjacent to or appended to the candidate's text), in accordance with the guidance provided by the Faculty's Senior Administrative Officer.

All elements comprising the unit assessment should be sent to the external examiner for any student whose work is included in the sample, together with the comments of internal markers. Any additional sampling (for example, in the case of the moderation of the work of an individual student across all units) should be determined by agreement between the internal and external examiners. Together with the sample, the external examiner must be provided with a complete list of all marks awarded for each candidate in the unit concerned, together with information on unit learning outcomes, assignment titles and examination papers (if not already provided earlier) so that (s)he may moderate the overall standard of marking, formally confirm all marks, and verify that unit learning outcomes have been demonstrated by candidates. Internal and external examiners must be informed of any amendments to marks as a result of moderation.

This process must be completed before the meeting of the Board of Examiners, and the marks then returned to the Board should be regarded as **confirmed marks**. The tasks of the Board of

Examiners require the receipt of marks moderated and confirmed by the internal and external examiners for all units.

Marginal marks that have been moderated and confirmed must not be amended by the Board unless there has been administrative error. Any special circumstances revealed to the Board may be dealt with by the appropriate use of the power of discretion in deciding the level of any award.

3. FACULTY GENERIC MARKING SCALE

The following marking scheme aligns with the descriptors in the University's Regulations Section 7.4.1 and is intended to offer guidance for the assessment of essay-type assessed course work and examination answers. Programme teams are required to publish specific assessment criteria for all elements of assessment, that conform with the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, the QAA Code of Practice and relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. All marks awarded must be expressed as integer percentage marks for transmission to students, external examiners and for presentation to Boards of Examiners. Internal and external examiners are required to use a common scale for all marks they award. Marks on the Faculty scale fall into one of five categories, the four honours classifications or fail. For each category of the scale there is a generic descriptor that is intended as a guide to both candidates and examiners as to the academic standard of work meriting that category. All marks awarded are provisional until formally confirmed by Board of Examiners.

Students on all Stages of all programmes are entitled to receive feedback on request for their assessed course work. Formative assessment should be recorded on a structured feedback form and a copy issued to the student.

First Class Excellent/outstanding

70%-100%

Fine work that demonstrates all learning outcomes for the task or assignment in a well balanced way. In examination scripts, the question is fully answered, with excellent understanding and independent critical thought. There is evidence of the capacity to make connections with issues not directly raised by the question in such a way as to show wide reading and/or research. Appropriately extensive familiarity with secondary literature, relevant research findings, or, for example, thorough understanding of both primary and secondary sources. In assessed course work, the same features will be present together with a high level of accuracy, insight and clarity in analysis, a cogent and logical structure backed by research in depth, full, accurate citation and the critical use of materials. Presentation is excellent throughout.

Second Class, upper division: 2(i) Very Good

60%-69%

Learning outcomes achieved at an advanced level. All the strengths noted in the 2(ii) descriptors with, in addition, the following indications of very good work: in both assessed course work and examinations there is an accomplished demonstration of understanding and coherent organisation, expressed in clear and accurate use of language, with few, if any, errors or misunderstandings. There is evidence of substantial knowledge, for example through the relevant use of secondary sources, together with accurate analysis, consistency of argument, method or approach. The work is thoughtful, not merely rehearsing memorised material. Assessed course work is well presented, with logical structure, fluent expression, proper use of referencing and bibliographical material. Work near the top of the category will show some evidence of complexity and subtlety. Work near the bottom will be proficient at least, but possibly mechanical. Feedback will stress all relevant strengths, whilst suggesting precise areas for even better performance in future.

Second Class, lower division : 2(ii) Good

50%-59%

Satisfactory work, achieving learning outcomes at a level significantly above threshold. In both assessed course work and examinations there is an obvious attempt to answer the question or address the topic, for example by showing evidence of reasonable familiarity with, understanding of, and acknowledgement of, relevant basic sources of information. There will be a fair indication of knowledge, but less reliance on lecture notes or the uncritical use of introductory texts would improve the work. Analysis and evaluation are present, but could be more thorough or better integrated. Structure and presentation are good enough to make the argument clear, although this might be improved by more attention to grammar, style or presentation. Work near the bottom end of this category could be improved by fuller content, addressing the required criteria for the task more directly, more consistent application of relevant skills. Work near the top of this category will be generally competent. Feedback will indicate signs of promise whilst emphasising room for improvement in a variety of possible areas as a way of progressing to better quality or more consistent performance in future.

Third Class Threshold achieved

40%-49%

All learning outcomes demonstrated at basic threshold level. Feedback will acknowledge that the minimum pass standard has been achieved, but also emphasise room for improvement through fuller, more sophisticated understanding of fundamental issues, greater knowledge or evidential base, improved deployment of skills listed in the assessment criteria required for the specific task or assignment. In examinations this improvement might take the form of better understanding of the question or topic, improved clarity in argument or approach, more focus on relevant material, greater consistency of argument. In assessed course work this might take the form of less use of quoted or paraphrased material, better formal acknowledgement of sources. Exposition, analysis and evaluation could also be improved. If appropriate, advice from the Learning Support Unit should be suggested.

Fail Below threshold

35%-39%: Marginal failure; unit may be eligible for compensation if required learning outcomes for Stage or Programme have been demonstrated.

Unsatisfactory work that fails to demonstrate at least one of its required learning outcomes. This might include failure to achieve the level of discussion of a threshold pass answer, or be unfinished. In examinations, this could take the form of inadequate engagement with the question because of misunderstanding, or poor time management leading to a seriously incomplete answer. Assessed course work could be scappily presented, poorly expressed or structured, badly organised, contain errors or omissions, or show significant failures of comprehension. However, certain learning outcomes might have been achieved to minimum threshold standard, and there could be a rudimentary grasp of the topic, evidence of understanding of, or competence in, the general area, and this should be noted in feedback, together with recommendations for action to improve, possibly including advice from the Learning Support Unit, if appropriate.

20%-34%: comprehensive failure; unit ineligible for compensation

Extremely weak work that fails to demonstrate almost all of its required learning outcomes. Little attempt to answer the question or manifesting major misunderstanding. Hardly any assessed course work should be poor enough to fall in this band: if it does, any advice offered will presumably have been ignored and there is little apparent attempt to produce work of acceptable standard. Examination scripts are badly garbled and/or largely inapplicable to the question asked. Feedback will warn that repeated work of such quality will prevent progress on the unit or programme, and suggest urgent actions for improvement including, if appropriate, help from Learning Support or Student Services.

10%-19%: irrelevant or barely started work

No required learning outcomes demonstrated. No attempt to address the question or an answer of, for example, no more than approximately one hundred words. In assessed course work this band is probably unachievable without a deliberate intention to submit either illiterate, almost completely irrelevant, material, or virtually nothing at all. In examinations this band covers those answers that range from nothing more than a paragraph, to pages of meaningless text without coherent discussion. Such work indicates serious problems, urgent steps should be taken to identify these and take appropriate action.

0%-9%: Virtually worthless work

Total irrelevance, complete avoidance of the question, or no more than a few words attempted. Evidence of serious problems, to be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

N.B. work suspected of plagiarism is not covered by this scale.

4. INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

These notes are intended to supplement current guidance on the preparation of programme approval or review documentation, programme specifications and proposed modifications to programmes or units.

An 'outcomes-based' approach to learning requires the identification of the minimum threshold of appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes that will be acquired by the successful completion of a distinct block of study, be it a programme, stage or unit. To achieve a pass mark, that successful completion must be formally demonstrated, so learning, teaching and, most particularly, assessment must support this. Assessment must therefore be appropriate for the specific learning outcomes identified, and must be linked to those specified outcomes.

In an ideal world it is preferable to plan a set of intended learning outcomes first, and then proceed to determine how these may best be tested. However, things are rarely that simple, and staff often find themselves having to design intended learning outcomes that are appropriate for, and fit, an existing assessment regime. Nevertheless, everything regarded as important enough to be an intended learning outcome must be demonstrated formally by the student. This demonstration – i.e. assessment – must be documented, so that there is a record that it has been satisfactorily achieved, its quality above threshold (pass) level calculated (so that it can be classified), and the process moderated internally and externally.

At unit level, the following points should be noted:

- ULOs summarise a unit's essential purpose
- ULOs predict the knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes that students will have learned as a result of passing the unit; they list the new things a student will know and/or be able to do by the end of the unit not the process by which they acquire those outcomes
- ULOs should preferably be few in number (remember that each separate required outcome is an additional opportunity to fail), be expressed simply and clearly, and be understandable by all constituencies (particularly students).
- ULOs should not be listed unless students are required to demonstrate them formally.
- If you wish to prioritise a particular ULO, reflect this in its assessment weighting
- ULOs must be appropriate to the level of the unit (e.g. Level 1: accurate knowledge; Level 2: application; Level 3: analysis, synthesis. For further guidance refer to the QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications Appendix 1 (see below section 7) and relevant Subject Benchmarking Statements. ULOs must also relate appropriately to the Programme and Stage learning outcomes (refer to the Programme Specification for these).

In completing a unit syllabus pro-forma it might well be important to mention other significant aspects of a unit's syllabus, for example, things which might be termed more general aims or key themes, or areas of knowledge and understanding that are encouraged, that might be cumulative, or that might be expected to develop sometime after the unit is completed. Equally, there could be subsidiary, possibly broader, objectives which should (rather than must) be acquired by those who take the unit, but that could best be described as hoped-for by-products, desirable but perhaps inherently difficult to measure ('soft learning' seems to be the latest jargon for important but more intangible aspects). If they are not formally assessed ('hard learning'), failure to acquire them cannot result in failure of the unit, so they should not be a specific requirement, i.e. they are not intended learning outcomes. Instead such items may, for example, be placed either in the curriculum section of the pro-forma or in the 'additional notes and comments' section at the end.

UNIT ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

- The purpose of unit assessment is to enable students to demonstrate achievement of all ULOs, so there must be a clear link between ULOs and the assessment strategy.
- The assessment strategies selected must permit that demonstration and allow the evaluation of its standard.
- Each element of assessment should relate to specific ULOs (one way to achieve this is to number each ULO). Each ULO should be assessed by an appropriate method, and each element of assessment linked to its specific related ULO(s).
- It is best not to claim that each element of assessment (e.g. essay and examination) addresses every ULO. If it does, why bother to have more than one element? If a number of elements of assessment are required to be attempted, it is preferable that each relates to its own specific ULO(s).
- Assessment strategies should not include details of curriculum outline and/or assessment criteria. Be clear about the difference between the sections of the unit syllabus pro-forma.
- Unit assessment load must comply with Section 1 of this Code of Practice.
- The assessment strategy must describe the specific task(s) to be undertaken to demonstrate each ULO.
- The unit assessment strategy should comply with, and help demonstrate, the Programme and Stage assessment strategies.

Assessment criteria should specify how different levels of performance are distinguished.

5. PLAGIARISM

The University's definition of plagiarism is as follows:

- i. the representation of another person's work, without acknowledgement of the source, as one's own; or
- ii. the unacknowledged incorporation in a student's work of material derived from the work (published or otherwise) of another, examples of which are:
 - a) the unacknowledged inclusion of another person's work;
 - b) the unacknowledged summarising of another person's work;
 - c) the unacknowledged and/or unauthorised use of the ideas of another;
 - d) copying the work of another person with or without that person's knowledge or agreement and presenting it as one's own.

<http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/downloads/reg/16.pdf> §16.24

It is important to note that there is no notion of 'wilfulness' required here. Much plagiarism is accidental rather than deliberate. It is still plagiarism.

Any definition of plagiarism in programme documentation (handbooks, etc) should use the above form of words, to avoid confusion.

Evidence suggests that lifting material from websites for inclusion in student coursework is becoming routine.

The best solution is prevention not detection and punishment.

Do your students know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it? Get them to use the Faculty plagiarism WebCT tutorial developed by Bill Johnston and Margaret Kendall. Have a look at it at <http://odl.mmu.ac.uk> using the guest i/d and password 'plagiarism_guest' (no quotes). Any queries to b.johnston@mmu.ac.uk

There is a useful guide for staff, including a set of up-dated FAQs at <http://www.ltu.mmu.ac.uk/plagiarism/index.php> intended to answer your questions about plagiarism and suggest ways of discouraging and detecting it. This also includes a description of and links to the JISC Plagiarism Detection Service.

If you suspect plagiarism, do not ignore it. The problem will not go away on its own.

You must report your suspicions to your Head of Department. They are required to investigate and decide whether or not there is a case to answer, not you.

And if you don't think plagiarism is anything to do with you, take a look at the following sites (and be worried):

<http://www.elizabethhall.co.uk/>

<http://search.directessays.com>

<http://www.essayfinder.com/>

<http://www.ukessays.com/>

Compiled by Wm Johnston, summer 2006

6. PROGRAMME APPROVAL, REVIEW AND MODIFICATION

Guidance on these procedures is available in the University's Quality Assurance Manual. Each procedure is initiated at Faculty level and must be approved in the first instance by the home department and by FASC. Staff are recommended to consult the principal faculty administrator if they would like advice and assistance in formulating proposals, further information about the procedures themselves, or help with the preparation of documentation. (Note: until Christine Shuttleworth's post is replaced contact the Faculty Registrar, Pauline Ford on PARM matters in the first instance).

7. QAA FRAMEWORK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

For descriptors for different levels and qualifications refer to:

FHEQ Appendix 1: Qualification descriptors:

(<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/crntwork/nqf/ewni2001/contents.htm#annex1>)

This is particularly useful when compiling or updating definitive documents.

8. PLP and MATERIALS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Personal Learning Plans

The Learning Support Team provides Departments with PLPs where appropriate. These are constructed on the basis of an analysis done by the LS team of the students' needs and Programme teams should make every attempt to implement these plans. Where a Programme Leader feels that a particular PLP should be revised on the basis of certain Programme

requirements then they should, in conjunction with the Departmental Disability coordinator, contact the LS team in order to establish a more appropriate plan.

The following suggestions may benefit students with particular educational needs:

- Student materials (handbooks, handouts, etc.) should potentially be available in a variety of formats to help students with special educational needs, although many of the following suggestions might be considered good practice for all students. Try to have all materials available in electronic format, so they may be formatted appropriately (as different educational needs often conflict). Material placed on the web may then be manipulated by students by using their own browser settings.
- Whilst the provision of full lecture notes is not a requirement, the availability of short information sheets giving the main objectives, basic headings and guidance for each lecture is recommended.
- For some dyslexic students, font size should preferably be no less than 14, without serifs (e.g. Arial or Comic Sans), bold is helpful but avoid underlining, italics, large blocks of continuous text, boxes, frames and borders. Unfortunately for other dyslexic and SEN students, this may not be the best format. Keeping an unformatted version of student materials on computer would allow amendment for individual requirements on request, without too much extra work for staff.
- The use of white (especially shiny) paper for photocopies or print-outs should also be avoided. Cream is often considered a better colour. Faculty photocopying facilities and Departmental Offices should be equipped with blank paper in a variety of colours.
- **See also Regulations Appendix 3: Guidelines on Examination and Assessment Arrangements for disabled students and students with learning difficulties.**

<http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/studserv/learningsupport/disability/welcome.html>

9. ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

The Faculty Ethics Committee is required to submit an annual report to the University Academic Ethics Committee confirming compliance with the Academic Ethical Framework. The Framework applies to all relevant research or projects undertaken by staff, taught or research postgraduate students and undergraduate students. It is the responsibility of each department to have mechanisms in place to ensure that the consideration of the ethical implications associated with academic activities at all levels is made clear to all staff and students. Such mechanisms must go beyond the inclusion of procedures in relevant handbooks. Any such activity must be approved, recorded, and submitted in an annual report to the Faculty Ethics Committee. This applies to any research, project, investigation, enquiry, survey, or placement which involves interaction with sentient beings (including the use of data derived from that interaction), or raises any questions of legality.

Refer to the Quality Assurance Manual for full details of the ethical framework.

10. INSTITUTIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE: PLACEMENT LEARNING

Please note that this applies to all 'planned and intended parts of an academic programme' (including short, extended, full-time, part-time, paid, unpaid, assessed, non-assessed, formal learning, experiential learning, studying or working abroad). The Code is available on-line, as part of the MMU Quality Assurance Manual.

11. INSTITUTIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE: COLLABORATIVE PROVISION AND STUDENT EXCHANGE SCHEMES

Particular requirements apply to the approval, review and modification procedures associated with collaborative provision. These are explained in the Institutional Code, which is available on-line as part of the MMU Quality Assurance Manual. Please note that an annex to the Code

applies to all student and educational exchange schemes. Under the Code, in addition to the normal requirements for approval of an exchange scheme, departments must have arrangements to satisfy themselves that all students will be following appropriately comparable curricula consistent with the stage and programme aims and learning outcomes of the MMU programme on which they are formally enrolled.

12. EXCEPTIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

The Regulations contain the definitive account of the processes by which exceptional factors are taken into account by examinations boards. These cover the granting of extension for late assessed coursework, the non-attendance at examinations as well as any other instance where performance may have been adversely affected.

The following general guidance is offered to supplement the relevant sections of the Regulations, which are as follows: Section 7.9: Penalties for Late Submission of Coursework; Section 17: Student Attendance and Absence, Sickness & Factors Affecting Assessment Performance; Appendix 1: Student Sickness Certification Procedure; Appendix 2: Procedure for Students to Disclose to Boards of Examiners Exceptional Factors Affecting their Assessment Performance; Appendix 3: Guidelines on Examination and Assessment Arrangements for disabled students and students with learning difficulties.

The Regulations require that students must be informed of deadlines for the submission of assessed course work at the commencement of each Stage [Section 7.7]. They are equivalent to examination dates and must be enforced rigorously and equitably. They are not guidelines to be hoped for, but the last possible date to submit work without penalty. Students and staff should be aware that, to ensure proper scheduling of work, sound habits of time management, and fairness to all those being assessed, extensions are only approved in exceptional circumstances, based on the consistent application of common criteria and conditions.

It is, however, easier to state broad principles than to apply them in individual cases. All staff are aware that serious cases are sometimes easier to judge; it is the 'moderately serious' that are the most difficult to deal with. No set of tariffs or examples will be comprehensive, so none is given here.

The formal extension of the submission deadline for an element of assessed course work may be granted if, in the opinion of the programme leader (or alternative member of staff designated by the department to oversee the granting of extensions, and whose appointment has been confirmed to the Coursework Receipting Office in advance), for unforeseeable reasons beyond the control of the student, it is unreasonable to expect completion of the work by its specified submission date recorded on the Faculty Coursework Database.

An extension should normally be approved for no more than one calendar week, unless there are problems of such seriousness, and spreading across so many units, that the student's place on the programme is at risk (in which case it might be appropriate to consider deferral).

Documentation verifying the circumstances that have resulted in the request for an extension should be provided, although it is recognised that this is not always possible, so in such cases the programme leader must use her/his judgement and professional experience. In all cases the appropriate form must be completed and signed by the programme leader (or alternative – see above) and returned to the student for submission attached to the late work.

Factors affecting examination performance, or where exceptional factors relate to Stage or Award decisions:

All requests for the consideration of extenuating or mitigating circumstances should be logged and noted to ensure parity of treatment for all students. These cases must be discussed fully, and

evidence examined confidentially, by an appropriate review body or sub-committee before the meeting of the Board of Examiners. Any relevant information should be revealed to the External Examiner(s) in advance and clear recommendations then put to the Board. Confidential information relating to students must not be openly discussed at a Board of Examiners' Meeting, and clear guidance must be given to the Board in all such cases.

The University's procedures for students to disclose to Boards of Examiners exceptional factors affecting their performance during written examinations or other forms of assessment are explained in Appendix 2 of the Regulations.

13. ASSOCIATE LECTURERS

Most departments in the Faculty employ Associate Lecturers (the appropriate term for those undertaking hourly paid seminars or lectures). Where departments have a high reliance on Associate Lecturers (AL's) it has been found helpful to develop an AL code of practice (English) and an AL handbook (Sociology) which deal with such various issues from how to arrange photocopying to mentoring arrangements. These documents can be obtained from the respective departmental offices and may help other departments to develop systems which help AL's in their day-to-day work. It is felt appropriate for AL's to be involved in the following:

- The planning/updating of units
- Contributions to lectures as well as seminars
- Teaching on units at all levels of the curriculum

It should be noted, however, that it is not normal practice for an AL to be solely in charge of a unit at any level. Where a large part of the delivery of a unit is via an AL or a group of AL's there is an expectation that a full-time lecturer will have the overall responsibility.

14. RETENTION AND ATTENDANCE

Student retention is a key area for all Programmes and is a strategic objective within the University's corporate risk register. The Faculty has taken a number of measures to improve retention including:

- Provision of a Faculty Student Support Officer
- Implementation of a student attendance database and coursework receipting system
- The establishment of the Dean's Working Group on retention
- The implementation of Personal Development Planning.

Programme teams are expected to monitor retention data and report on this in the course of the annual monitoring and evaluation exercise. Quality Action Plans should incorporate strategies for addressing retention where necessary.

Advice and guidance on retention can be sought from the Faculty Widening Participation Office, Room 116, Geoffrey Manton.

15. PDP

All students in the Faculty (full-time, part-time and collaborative provision) must be provided with access to and support for personal development planning facilities. At a minimum, this should comprise at least three meetings a year with a personal or PDP tutor (either individually or in small groups), access to skills development sessions, careers advice and support for planning and reflecting on learning. At Stage one, a Faculty webCT resource is available and is supported by input from the Faculty Student Support Officer. Departments may choose where they locate the PDP in the student's programme and whether they wish to assess any components of it. They must make clear to students how they plan to deliver PDP and a statement should be included in the programme handbook.

For those on Combined Honours, any students not taking the Learning and Employability unit must be integrated into a departmental scheme. The Faculty Combined Honours coordinator will allocate students to one of their subjects for this purpose.

As an interim measure, pending the availability of Webct Vista ePortfolio, students should be encouraged to store electronic copies of their planning documents, skills assessments, learning logs, feedback etc in a specially created file area in their home area of the network.

At stages two and three, departments are required to show how they have implemented PDP. As a minimum, they should ensure students have a personal tutor and be directed to the Faculty-wide scheme of certification for attendance at development workshops and careers sessions.

Further information can be obtained from Liz Marr (l.marr@mmu.ac.uk ext 3034)