



Maintaining fair assessment for university students in academic year 2020/21

Scotland's higher education institutions reassure all students that fairness will continue to be a defining feature of assessment processes in 2020/21.

Scotland's higher education institutions remain committed to ensuring that student assessment, and the processes that lead to progression and graduation, are underpinned by the fundamental principles of fairness, integrity and reliability as well as those of quality and standards. This is core to the value that university qualifications hold for all who rely on them.

Universities recognise that students have continued to face major disruption to their studies and personal lives, because of the pandemic. Any student in need of academic support, related to assessment or otherwise, is encouraged to contact their institution as early as possible.

Institutions approached the 2020/21 academic year working to a dual-delivery model of in-person and online teaching. Adjustments were made to academic content, delivery and assessment methods in anticipation of continued disruption. As the pandemic continues to have a major impact, all institutions are carefully reflecting on their policies for assessment this year, including procedures to recognise and mitigate exceptional circumstances that might otherwise adversely affect individual students' performance. Student representatives have been involved in the preparation for this academic year and continue to be so. Some institutions are confident that they already have in place policies that will ensure fairness, whilst others may introduce additional measures. Aspects of the normal academic process will be key to this, particularly institutions' exam boards which ensure that the marks that students receive are fair, consistent and recognise student achievement. External examiners provide independent assurance of quality and standards.

It is not possible or desirable for every institution to take the same approach to assessment. This has always been so and remains the case when responding to the challenges brought by the pandemic. Yet every higher education institution meets the [Quality Assurance Agency's \(QAA\) Quality Code](#) requirements for assessment and academic standards in higher education and has considered the [QAA's resources](#) produced in response to COVID-19.

Any student in need of further information or support regarding their degree programme is encouraged to speak to their institution so they can receive advice specific to their circumstances.

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