



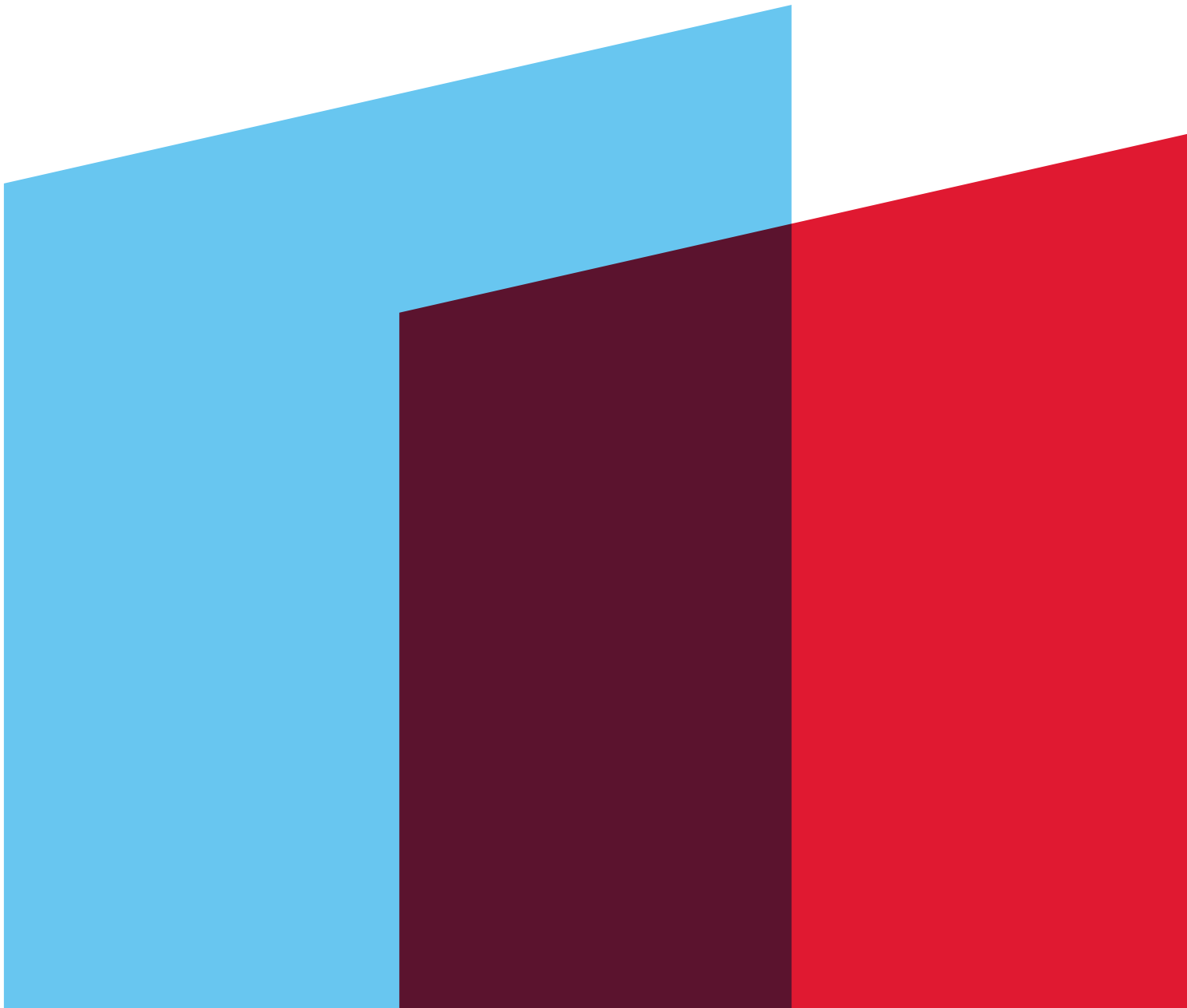
**MTU**

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Mumhan  
Munster Technological University



NATIONAL FORUM  
FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING  
AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

# Draft Departmental Assessment Guidelines Framework Document



# Draft Assessment Guidelines for Programmes in the School of Social Sciences

The primary intention of this document is to encourage academic staff in the School of Health and Social Sciences (HSS; MTU, Kerry Campus) to undertake renewed reflection and discussion on:

1. how to guide consistency of workload and weighting of assessment along the relevant national framework of qualification levels (6-9) in taught programmes;
2. guidance on grading and options in terms of feedback tools, including rubrics.

This discussion document is developed in the context of MTU Quality Assurance procedures and National Assessment and Standards. This document may contain apparent contradictions in relation to formal quality assurance policies and procedures, and latter must always be applied. Any agreed approaches and initiatives will be supported separately by updated documentation and workshop-style training to encourage greater awareness of the need for a consistent approach to standard assessment methodologies. While this applies to all academic staff, it may be of particular benefit to new academic staff.

<https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Generic%20Major%20Awards%20-%20QQI%20Awards%20Standards.pdf>

<https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Determinations%20for%20the%20outline%20National%20Framework%20of%20Qualifications.pdf>

## **HSS Policy Statement:**

Assessment is a core academic (knowledge, skills and competencies development) activity and an essential component of the learning process. The main purpose of assessing students are to encourage student learning, to make judgements about student achievements, and to distinguish between different levels of knowledge, skills and competences among students, against intended learning outcomes and award standards. Assessment also provides feedback for the teaching process. HSS is committed to an inclusive approach to teaching and learning experiences for our students with equitable access to assessment strategies which demonstrate the students' achievement of module and programme learning outcomes and of their professional potential. HSS is committed to the student experience and graduate attainment and its power to impact positively on the community and society outside of MTU.

## **Assessment and Feedback:**

An assessment is a task which requires a minimum level of performance (i.e. demonstration of a module learning outcome and required competencies) in order to pass that assessment. Thereafter, evidence of greater knowledge, skill and / or competence, is awarded higher grades in accordance with an assessment scheme / rubric. Feedback explains how marks or grades are derived from assessment. Through feedback students develop the skill to identify specific qualities and actions required .to enhance their mark attainment in assessments. Students can than take steps to develop and improve their personal; assessment success.

## **Guiding Assessment and Feedback Principles:**

The assessment and feedback strategies of student knowledge, skill and competence in each module is governed by the following principles:

Assessments should be:

- Determined on pedagogical grounds;
- Used to ensure adequate knowledge, skills and competence in relation to the learning outcomes and competencies of the module in question, and as they relate to the stage, and or programme learning outcomes, and to allow grading of that knowledge, skill and competence;
- Based on learning that has been prescribed to the students in the module in question and, where appropriate, in preceding prerequisite modules, during the programme of study;
- Used to enhance student performance rather than to compel performance;
- Used to meet minimum competency standards or to demonstrate 'fitness to practice' as per ACC;
- Transparently measurable;
- Permit additional or alternative assessment as per MTU QA;
- Supportive of enhanced scholarship, content accrument and development of graduate skill requirements;
- Experienced during module delivery and post module delivery;
- Actionable for each student;
- Include assessment instructions (specifications), requirements and marking scheme/ rubrics;
- Obvious as to how achievement of module learning outcomes/competencies are assessed;
- Clear how on feedback will be delivered;
- Clear as to what options are open to students who do not show sufficient evidence of having achieved module learning outcomes in assessments or in whole modules;
- Clearly in line with assessments as per ACS. If change needed must be applied through Programmes and Planning sub-committee.

## **Module Assessment Strategies should be established such that:**

- A maximum of 3 separate assessment tasks per module (note that this precludes the bundling of different assessment tasks into a single assessment);
- Where a required professional accreditation or competency is being assessed as a requirement, a Pass / Fail grade with 0 marks allocated may be used. In this case the Pass / Fail grade does not contribute to the maximum number of three assessments per module;
- All assessment tasks are weighted at least 20% of the total module assessment strategy;
- Final written examinations are weighted at 30% or more;
- Final practical examinations are weighted at 30% or more. A minimum grade of 40% applies to such final practical examinations where practical exams assess 'fitness to practice' and cannot be assessed in theory / written exams. In these exams, students exhibiting consistently (e.g. on three occasions without correction) unsafe practices in the assessment will fail with a maximum grade of 25%;
- Assessments are designed with feedback in mind and therefore include an opportunity to give feedback to student during and post module.

### **Special regulations for assessments must be included in the programme ACS and must be applied consistently. Special regulations include:**

- A minimum grade of 30% is a requirement for assessments weighted 30% or more, otherwise the component must be repeated, re-submitted or supplemented by additional, specified work;
- A minimum grade of 30% applies to Final written examinations, subject to a weighting of 30% or more of the module assessment strategy;
- A minimum grade of 40% applies to final practical examinations. In these exams, students exhibiting consistently (on three occasions without correction by the student) unsafe practices in the assessment will fail with a maximum grade of 25%;
- Where a minimum grade is a requirement in any particular assessment, the students must attempt that assessment. Where a student does not attempt an assessment with a specified minimum grade (e.g. 30% in an assessment weighted 30% or more), then the student will not pass the module without sitting the assessment, submitting the work or undertaking different work, and achieving at least the minimum grade required. The consequences of not attempting an assessment or not achieving a minimum assessment grade are made explicit to students.

The volume of work in relation to the weighting of an assessment is guided by the following tables:

Year 1:

Assessment Weighting	Essay, Assignment, Case Study, Literature Review, [Always referenced]  Log, Blog, Learning Journal, etc.	In-Class Assessment (1 hour); Final Exam Scheduled (2 hour); Final Exam Other (1 hour).	Final Practical Examination, Intermediate or Final Presentation,
< 30%	500 words Information review, opinion, justification.	In-Class: Max. 30% of module content. Typically, MCQ and Short-Answer questions.  Final Exam Other: No, weighting too low.  Final Exam Scheduled: No, weighting too low.	Typically, 5-7 minutes of focussed assessment time. More time can be incorporated before and after for preparation, warm-up, questions, etc.
<b>30 – 40% (minimum grade applies)</b>	1000 words with review, opinion, justification, conclusion.	In-Class: Max. 30% of module content. Typically, Short-Answer questions, ask for descriptions, definitions, diagrams, comparison, purpose information.  Final Exam Other: Typically, Short-Answer questions. Limited choice.	Typically, 10 minutes of focussed assessment time. More time can be incorporated before and after for preparation, warm-up, questions, etc. Presentations may include basic poster presentation or demonstration.

		<p>Focus on specific module topics. Ask for descriptions, definitions, diagrams, comparison, purpose information.</p> <p>Final Exam Scheduled Typically, medium-length-answer questions, with limited choice. Focus on major module topics. Ask for descriptions, definitions, diagrams, comparison, purpose information.</p>	
<b>45 – 65% (minimum grade applies)</b>	1500 words with methodology, focussed literature review, opinion, justification, conclusion.	<p>In-Class: Weighting too high.</p> <p>Final Exam Other: Weighting too high.</p> <p>Final Exam Scheduled Typically, medium-length-answer questions, with choice and mandatory sections. Focus on entire indicative syllabus. Ask for descriptions, definitions, diagrams, comparison, purpose information. 50% weighting recommended.</p>	Typically, 20 minutes of focussed assessment time. More time can be incorporated before and after for preparation, warm-up, questions, etc. Presentations should incorporate significant / detailed poster presentation.

<p><b>70 – 80%</b></p>	<p>2000 words with methodology, focussed literature review, own data or other raw data, analysis, interpretation, conclusion.</p>	<p>In-Class: Weighting too high.</p> <p>Final Exam Other: Weighting too high.</p> <p>Final Exam Scheduled Typically, medium-length-answer questions, with no choice or significant mandatory sections. Focus on entire indicative syllabus. Ask for descriptions, definitions, diagrams, comparison, interpretation, some evidence of independent sourcing of information.</p>	<p>Oral Presentation: Not Recommended. Weighting too high.</p> <p>Exception, where oral exam is used as an alternative final assessment method for special cases.</p> <p>Practical Examination: Not Recommended, Weighting too high.</p>
<p><b>100%</b></p>	<p>Normally not recommended</p>	<p>In-Class: Weighting too high.</p> <p>Final Exam Other: Weighting too high.</p> <p>Final Exam (Scheduled); Not recommended for first sittings. 100% weighting can be used for Final Exam re-sit where the examination covers all module learning outcomes.</p>	<p>Oral Presentation: Not Recommended. Weighting too high. Exception, where oral exam is used as an alternative final assessment method for special cases.</p> <p>Practical Examination: Not Recommended, Weighting too high.</p>

Year 2:

Assessment Weighting	<p>Essay, Assignment, Case Study, Literature Review, [Always referenced]</p> <p>Log, Blog, Learning Journal, etc.</p>	<p>In-Class Assessment (1 hour); Final Exam Scheduled (2 hour); Final Exam Other (1 hour).</p>	<p>Final Practical Examination, Intermediate or Final Presentation,</p>
<p>&lt; 30%</p>	<p>1000 words Information review, compare / contrast, own opinion with justification.</p>	<p>In-Class: Max. 30% of module content. Typically, MCQ and Short-Answer questions.</p> <p>Final Exam Other: No, weighting too low.</p> <p>Final Exam Scheduled: No, weighting too low.</p>	<p>Typically, 5-7 minutes of focussed assessment time. More time can be incorporated before and after for preparation, warm-up, questions, etc.</p>
<p><b>30 – 40% (minimum grade applies)</b></p>	<p>1500 words with review (broader scope to reflect weighting), compare / contrast literature, conclusion.</p>	<p>In-Class: Max. 30% of module content. Typically, Short-Answer questions, ask for descriptions, definitions, diagrams, comparison, purpose information.</p> <p>Final Exam Other: Typically, Short-Answer questions. Limited choice. Focus on specific module topics. Ask for descriptions, definitions, diagrams, comparison, purpose information.</p> <p>Final Exam Scheduled</p>	<p>Typically, 10 minutes of focussed assessment time. More time can be incorporated before and after for preparation, warm-up, questions, etc. Presentations may include basic poster presentation or demonstration.</p>



		Typically, medium-length-answer questions, with limited choice. Focus on major module topics. Ask for descriptions, definitions, diagrams, comparison, purpose information.	
<b>45 – 65% (minimum grade applies)</b>	2000 words with methodology, focussed literature review (broader scope to reflect weighting), compare and contrast information, give own opinion with justification, conclusion.	In-Class: Weighting too high.  Final Exam Other: Weighting too high.  Final Exam Scheduled Typically, medium-length-answer questions, with choice and mandatory sections. Focus on entire indicative syllabus. Ask for descriptions, definitions, diagrams, comparison, purpose information. 50% weighting recommended.	Typically, 20 minutes of focussed assessment time. More time can be incorporated before and after for preparation, warm-up, questions, etc. Presentations should incorporate significant / detailed poster presentation.
<b>70 – 80%</b>	2500 words with methodology, broader-ranging literature review, own data or other raw data, compare and contrast information, analysis, interpretation, give own opinion with justification, conclusion.	In-Class: Weighting too high.  Final Exam Other: Weighting too high.  Final Exam Scheduled Typically, medium-length-answer questions, with no choice or significant mandatory sections. Focus on entire indicative syllabus. Ask for descriptions, definitions, diagrams, comparison, interpretation, evidence of independent sourcing of relevant information.	Oral Presentation: Not Recommended. Weighting too high.  Exception, where oral exam is used as an alternative final assessment method for special cases.  Practical Examination: Not Recommended, Weighting too high.
<b>100%</b>	Normally not Recommended	Not recommended.  Final Exam (Scheduled); Not recommended for first sittings. 100% weighting can be used for Final Exam re-sit	Oral Presentation: Not Recommended. Weighting too high. Exception, where oral exam is used as an alternative final assessment method for special cases.

		where the examination covers all module learning outcomes.	Practical Examination: Not Recommended, Weighting too high.
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**Year 3:**

<b>Assessment Weighting</b>	<b>Essay, Assignment, Case Study, Literature Review, [Always referenced]  Log, Blog, Learning Journal, etc.</b>	<b>In-Class Assessment (1 hour); Final Exam Scheduled (2 hour); Final Exam Other (1 hour).</b>	<b>Final Practical Examination, Intermediate or Final Presentation,</b>
< 30%	1500 words with distilled review (broader scope to reflect weighting), compare / contrast literature, conclusion.	In-Class: Max. 30% of module content. Typically, MCQ and Short-Answer questions.  Final Exam Other: No, weighting too low.  Final Exam Scheduled: No, weighting too low.	Typically, 5-7 minutes of focussed assessment time. More time can be incorporated before and after for preparation, warm-up, questions, etc.
30 – 40% (minimum grade applies)	2000 words with review (broader scope to reflect weighting), compare / contrast literature, conclusion.	In-Class: Max. 30% of module content. Typically, Short-Answer questions, ask for descriptions, definitions, diagrams, comparison, purpose information.  Final Exam Other: Typically, Short-Answer questions. Limited choice. Focus on specific module topics. Ask for	Typically, 10 minutes of focussed assessment time. More time can be incorporated before and after for preparation, warm-up, questions, etc. Presentations may include basic poster presentation or demonstration.

		<p>descriptions, definitions, diagrams, comparison, purpose information.</p> <p>Final Exam Scheduled</p> <p>Typically, medium-length-answer questions, with limited choice. Focus on major module topics. Ask for descriptions, definitions, diagrams, comparison, purpose information.</p>	
45 – 65% (minimum grade applies)	<p>2500 words with methodology, focussed literature review (broader scope to reflect weighting), compare and contrast information, give own opinion with justification, conclusion.</p>	<p>In-Class: Weighting too high.</p> <p>Final Exam Other: Weighting too high.</p> <p>Final Exam Scheduled</p> <p>Typically, medium-length-answer questions, with choice and mandatory sections. Focus on entire indicative syllabus. Ask for descriptions, definitions, diagrams, comparison, purpose information.</p> <p>50% weighting recommended.</p>	<p>Typically, 20 minutes of focussed assessment time. More time can be incorporated before and after for preparation, warm-up, questions, etc. Presentations should incorporate significant / detailed poster presentation.</p>
70 – 80%	<p>3000 words with methodology, broader-ranging literature review, own data or other raw data, compare and contrast information, analysis, interpretation, give own opinion with justification, conclusion.</p>	<p>In-Class: Weighting too high.</p> <p>Final Exam Other: Weighting too high.</p> <p>Final Exam Scheduled</p> <p>Typically, medium-length-answer questions, with no choice or significant mandatory sections. Focus on entire indicative syllabus. Ask for descriptions, definitions, diagrams, comparison, interpretation, evidence of independent sourcing of relevant information.</p>	<p>Oral Presentation: Not Recommended. Weighting too high.</p> <p>Exception, where oral exam is used as an alternative final assessment method for special cases.</p> <p>Practical Examination: Not Recommended, Weighting too high.</p>

100%	Not Recommended	Final Exam (Scheduled); Not recommended for first sittings. 100% weighting can be used for Final Exam re-sit where the examination covers all module learning outcomes.	Not Recommended
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**Year 4:**

<b>Assessment Weighting</b>	<b>Essay, Assignment, Case Study, Literature Review, [Always referenced]  Log, Blog, Learning Journal, etc.</b>	<b>In-Class Assessment (1 hour); Final Exam Scheduled (2 hour); Final Exam Other (1 hour).</b>	<b>Final Practical Examination, Intermediate or Final Presentation,</b>
<b>&lt; 30%</b>	1000 – 1500 words Information review, opinion, justification, conclusion.	In-Class: Max. 30% of module content. Typically, MCQ and Short-Answer questions.  Final Exam Other: Weighting too low.  Final Exam Scheduled Weighting too low.	Typically 15 minutes of focussed assessment time. More time can be incorporated before and after for preparation, warm-up, questions, etc.
<b>30 – 40% (minimum grade applies)</b>	2000 words with review, critical analysis, argument, opinion, justification, conclusion.	In-Class: Max. 30% of module content. No choice. Typically, Short-Answer questions, requiring more critical analysis, compare and contrast, synthesis, etc.  Final Exam Other:	Typically, 20 minutes of focussed assessment time. More time can be incorporated before and after for preparation, warm-up, questions, etc. Presentations may include basic poster presentation or demonstration.

		<p>Typically, Short-Answer questions. Limited choice. Focus on specific module topics. Requiring more critical analysis, compare and contrast, synthesis, etc.</p> <p>Final Exam Scheduled Typically, medium-length-answer questions, with limited choice. Focus on major module topics. Requiring more critical analysis, compare and contrast, synthesis, etc.</p>	
<b>45 – 65% (minimum grade applies)</b>	2500 words with methodology, focussed literature review, critical analysis, argument, opinion, justification, conclusion.	<p>In-Class: Weighting too high.</p> <p>Final Exam Other: Weighting too high.</p> <p>Final Exam Scheduled Typically, medium-length-answer questions, with choice and mandatory sections. Focus on entire indicative syllabus. Requiring scientific approach, critical analysis, compare and contrast, synthesis, etc. 50% weighting recommended.</p>	Typically, 20 minutes of focussed assessment time. More time can be incorporated before and after for preparation, warm-up, questions, etc. Presentations should incorporate significant / detailed poster presentation.
<b>70 – 80%</b>	3500 words with methodology, focussed literature review, own data or other raw data, critical analysis, argument, opinion, justification, conclusion.	<p>In-Class: Weighting too high.</p> <p>Final Exam Other: Weighting too high.</p> <p>Final Exam Scheduled Typically, medium-length-answer questions, with no choice or significant mandatory sections. Focus on entire indicative syllabus. Assessing knowledge of discipline, scientific writing, critical analysis, compare and contrast, synthesis, etc.</p>	<p>Oral Presentation: Not Recommended. Weighting too high. Exception, where oral exam is used as an alternative final assessment method for special cases.</p> <p>Practical Examination: Not Recommended, Weighting too high.</p>

<p><b>100%</b></p>	<p>4000 – 6000 words with focussed literature review, methodology, own data, critical analysis, discussion, conclusion recommendations.</p>	<p>In-Class: Weighting too high.</p> <p>Final Exam Other: Weighting too high.</p> <p>Final Exam Scheduled Significant mandatory sections. Focus on entire indicative syllabus. Assessing knowledge of discipline, scientific writing, critical analysis, compare and contrast, synthesis, own experience, etc.</p> <p>Final Exam (Scheduled); 100% weighting can also be used for Final Exam re-sit where the examination covers all module learning outcomes.</p>	<p>Oral Presentation: Not Recommended. Weighting too high. Exception, where oral exam is used as an alternative final assessment method for special cases.</p> <p>Practical Examination: Not Recommended, Weighting too high.</p>
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