

Staff Guidance for In-Term Assessments (2022-23 Academic Year)

*Arick Shao (UG SEB Chair)
Robert Johnson (PGT SEB Chair)*

[Last updated: 10 November, 2022]

This document provides a summary of details and policies regarding in-term assessments for SMS modules during the 2022-23 academic year.

1. Assessment Patterns

This section details the possible assessment patterns for modules. These profiles are officially set in SIS before the start of the academic year.

Note: *Module organisers were sent the assessment profile for their module prior to the start of the term. See that message for more precise details.*

The main point to keep in mind is to **please follow your given assessment pattern**, and to **avoid deviating from what is listed there**. There are several reasons for being strict on this:

- The centralised system for handling ECs (*see Section 2.5*) is tied to the assessment pattern on SIS and is not flexible in this regard. Hence, any deviations will result in hours of extra work when doing mark processing at the end of the academic year.
- What students see in their official results is tied to the SIS assessment pattern as well. If you do deviate from the SIS pattern, then students will see nonsense numbers in their individual assessment marks, even if their total module mark is correct.

In addition, **do make sure you communicate the correct assessment profile to your students on your QMPlus page**.

1.1. Standard Modules (UG)

These refer to modules that have a final exam and do not have additional requirements mandated by the IFoA. For these modules, the assessment pattern is as follows:

- [20%] Courseworks (2-5 total) or mid-term
- [80%] Final exam

1.2. IFoA Modules (UG)

A number of our modules are associated with IFoA (*Institute and Faculty of Actuaries*) exemptions for actuarial students and have additional requirements mandated by the IFoA:

- MTH5120: Statistical Modelling I
- MTH5124: Actuarial Mathematics I
- MTH5125: Actuarial Mathematics II
- MTH5126: Statistics for Insurance
- MTH5131: Actuarial Statistics
- MTH6101: Introduction to Machine Learning
- MTH6112: Actuarial Financial Engineering
- MTH6113: Mathematical Tools for Asset Management
- MTH6139: Time Series
- MTH6157: Survival Models

In particular, for these modules, at least 30% (by mark) of assessments must consist of special types of coursework. As a result, these modules do not follow the standard assessment pattern.

Instead, **each of these modules has one or two in-term assessments, along with a final exam**. A consequence of this is that you may have to write extra assessments for students who have ECs for all their in-term assessments (*see Section 2.6*).

Note: *There are a few modules that are associated with IFoA exemptions but do not have additional coursework requirements:*

- *MTH5129: Probability and Statistics II*

- *MTH6141: Random Processes*
- *MTH6154: Financial Mathematics I*

These modules are considered “standard” and follow the usual 20%/80% assessment pattern.

For further information on IFoA modules and their assessment patterns, please consult *Chris Sutton*, who runs our actuarial programme.

1.3. Special Modules (UG)

These refer to modules that do not have final exams:

- MTH4112: Actuarial Professional Development I
- MTH5001: Introduction to Computer Programming
- MTH5127: Actuarial Professional Development II
- MTH5200: Mathematical and Actuarial Work Experience
- MTH5200A: SMS Placement Tutorial
- MTH5555: Study Abroad Year
- MTH6110: Communicating and Teaching Mathematics
- MTH6138/MTH717U: Third Year Project / MSci Project
- MTH6150: Numerical Computing with C and C++

These modules have only coursework assessments (e.g. programming assignments, dissertations) or are pass/fail. Otherwise, there is little in common among these modules.

1.4. Foundations (SEFP) Modules

We are also responsible for mathematics modules in the Foundations (SEFP) programme:

- SEF015: Discrete Mathematics
- SEF026: Essential Foundation Mathematics
- SEF040: Mathematics A
- SEF041: Mathematics B

For these modules, there is no standard assessment pattern. The assessment details are set by SEFP, but this is done with approval and input from our School.

Moreover, all the mark entry is done directly by SEFP. Thus, policies regarding in-term assessments are primarily handled through SEFP, and Foundations module organisers should look first to SEFP for guidance. Here, we only provide approval and advice to SEFP as needed.

Note: *On the other hand, we are fully in charge of the exam setting and scrutiny process, so exams for the above modules go through the same process as those for MTH modules.*

1.5. PGT Modules

For MSc modules, there is a greater range of assessment patterns. Please refer to the email from the PGT SEB Chair (*Robert Johnson*) on 26 September 2022 and ask if you have any questions.

2. Assessment Policies

This section details various policies regarding in-term assessments.

2.1. Assessment Types

There are many different types of in-term assessments you can implement. For example:

- **Coursework:** This is the most standard option. You assign problems to students, and they must submit their solutions (*online, usually through QMPlus*) by some set deadline.
- **Mid-term test:** Another option is to have a quiz or test (*most likely online, via QMPlus*) that students have some specified time to sit. However, note for heavily timed tests (less than 24 hours), you will also have to consider exam access arrangements (*see Section 2.4*).

Note: *If you are considering having an on-campus invigilated in-term assessment (either on paper or on computer), then **do consult the Director of Education (Shabnam Beheshti) and the relevant SEB Chair before doing so.** Similar to final exams, it is unclear what invigilated assessments will be approved by the Faculty Deans.*

2.2. Assessment Submission

While there is flexibility in how you implement your in-term assessments, the main requirement to keep in mind is that **the number of submission points for your assessments should match the given assessment pattern for your module.**

For example, suppose you are running a “standard” module, with 5 in-term courseworks. Then, you should give your students 5 submission points for these courseworks – for instance, one submission due approximately every two weeks.

Note: *On the other hand, in the preceding example, you can be flexible in how you structure your courseworks. For example, in a standard module, it is fine to have 10 weekly courseworks, as long as these are submitted 2 at a time, so there are 5 total submission points. However, do avoid having 10 separate submissions (as this leads to more possible ECs than entries in SIS).*

Note: *Also, definitely avoid “tricky” schemes, like “best x out of y courseworks”.*

2.3. Late Submissions

The School has standard policies for dealing with late submissions.

In short, for each coursework submission, you have two options:

1. Upload solutions to the coursework onto QMPlus **immediately after the deadline.** If you do so, then all late submissions can be given 0 marks.
2. Otherwise, you will have to implement QMUL’s late submission policy:
 - Five marks (out of 100 total) are deducted for every 24 hours that the submission is late.
 - A submission that is more than 7 days late is given 0 marks.

Unless you have very compelling reasons to do otherwise, **please go with option 1**, which is easier administratively. For this, *please do make sure you upload your solutions as soon as the deadline passes.* (Regardless of which option you choose, do make clear on your QMPlus page and in your communications what your module’s late submission policy is.)

Note: *In general, a missed submission can be excused through a successful EC claim (see Section 2.5). In option 2, late submission penalties can also be waived through a successful EC claim.*

2.4. Timed Assessments

While it is possible to have online timed assessments, they do come with additional complications, and great care must be taken to ensure that these assessments are implemented properly.

In particular, one should do the following:

1. Students need to be notified of timed assessments well in advance, at the beginning of term. Not doing so will generally lead to trouble for the Maths Office.
2. The timing for the assessment should take the following form:
 - *Students will have a 2x-hour period for which the assessment is available, and for which students must complete and submit their solutions. Moreover, the assessment is designed so that it can be completed in x hours.*

For example, if you are holding a midterm test that is doable in 2 hours, then you should give your students 4 hours to do it.

Note: *In particular, point 2 is critical, as having this setting means that we do not need to manually give extra time to students with special arrangements.*

Note: *Timed assessments are not subject to the late submission policy in the previous section.*

Note: *In-person timed assessments are also possible for modules having in-person exams, although these are not encouraged at this point. Here, the current advice is that the School must resource any invigilation duties, and students with exam access arrangements must be held in a separate space.*

2.5. Excused Absences

Students may obtain excused absences from in-term assessments for a variety of reasons (illness, bereavement, etc.). These are handled via EC (*extenuating circumstances*) claims that students may submit to the Maths Office.

EC claims are handled centrally by the Maths Office. Thus, you should not deal directly with EC claims, and you can direct students to the Maths Office if they have any queries regarding ECs.

The usual policy is that *if a student obtains an EC for an in-term assessment, then that assessment is discounted from the total mark for the module.* (However, see the next section for exceptions to this.) This discounting is also handled centrally, thus you will not need to worry about this.

2.6. Reassessments

By university regulation, *a module is only allowed to discount up to 20% of total marks.* Luckily, this does not affect standard modules (which conveniently have 20% in-term assessments).

On the other hand, this rule does affect a number other modules:

- Modules with additional IFoA requirements (at least 30% in-term assessments).
- Some coursework-only modules.

For these modules, **if a student has approved ECs for in-term assessments totalling more than 20% of total marks, then they will be required to sit a replacement in-term assessment at a**

later date. These reassessments will be held in July, or during the following academic year (if the student submits additional ECs).

For these cases, you are responsible for writing an extra in-term assessment for these students, and for making sure that these students sit the extra assessment at the right time. This is essential, as **the student cannot pass or fail the module until this extra assessment is attempted.**

2.7. Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct cases for any in-term assessment worth 30% or less of the module (this holds for all UG in-term assessments) can be handled entirely within the School, as long as the student is not a repeat offender. For more significant assessments, any charges of academic misconduct needs to be submitted to the central *Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office (ACCO)*.

For information on academic offences, in particular on how to move forward with them, contact the *Academic Misconduct Officer (Oliver Jenkinson)*.