

Maximum Assessment Loads Policy

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Maximum Assessment Loads Policy December 2015			
Document author and department		Responsible person and department	
Rebecca Broome, Deputy Academic Registrar, Academic Registry		Professor Paul Hayes, Directorate	
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[www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/
curriculumandqualityenhancement/filetodownload,11086,en.pdf](http://www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/curriculumandqualityenhancement/filetodownload,11086,en.pdf)

Maximum Assessment Loads Policy

Summary

What is this Policy about?

The Maximum Assessment Loads Policy represents agreed unit maximum assessment loads permitted by the University. The overriding consideration is that the assessment is meaningful, does not overload staff or students and permits the provision of timely feedback.

Who is this Policy for?

This document will be of most interest to new and existing students, academic staff and External Examiners.

It will be of interest to the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and it may also be of interest to the wider public.

How does the University check this Policy is followed?

All units are amended through the Unit Modification Approval Form and have to be signed off by the Head of Department who signs off the Unit Modification Approval Form, the Associate Dean (Academic) and the Faculty Validation Officer. Exemptions from this Policy have to be approved by the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessments and Student Regulations).

Who can you contact if you have any queries about this Policy?

If you are external to the University and you have any questions about this Policy please contact the University's Quality Management Division (QMD) at qmd@port.ac.uk.

If you are internal to the University please contact your Faculty Associate Dean (Academic).

1. Introduction

The following represents agreed unit maximum assessment loads permitted by the University. The overriding consideration is that the assessment is meaningful, does not overload staff or students and permits the provision of timely feedback. This Policy should be considered alongside the University's Examination and Assessment Regulations, section 4 – Nature of Assessment, and the University's Curriculum Framework document.

The written piece of coursework and the examination still tend to be the main assessment artefacts in many subject areas. Whilst the University actively encourages the use of a range of artefacts that demonstrate the Learning Outcomes, it is recognised that it is not possible to list all types of artefact that may be submitted. Nor is it possible to give equivalence between, for example, the endeavour required to produce a 3,000-word essay or write a poem, build a model, create a website or design and make a garment. This must be left to academic judgement. Group work is encouraged, but thought needs to be given to the nature of the artefact, how it will be marked and how marks will be apportioned. The assessment load for the group artefact should not be considered to be the maximum individual load multiplied by the group number.

The following tables are prescriptive in that:

- The examination times are prescribed according to the weighting. This has the advantage of facilitating standard examination lengths and therefore promoting efficient timetabling.
- The maximum summative assessment **load** for Level 4 has been increased from the earlier version of this Policy to now be the same as Level 5 and 6. This does not mean the requirement for formative assessment at Level 4 is in any way reduced. Formative assessment at Level 4 remains essential to support the student learning process and as an aid to teaching and, as such, all Level 4 units should have some element of assessment that is purely or substantially formative or diagnostic.
- There is no maximum **number** of assessment artefacts at level 4. However, a maximum of three separate artefacts are proposed at Level 5 and beyond per 20/30 credit unit to promote some consistency of student experience, improve efficiency and reduce overall assessment. This does not mean that coursework assignments (especially those that require students to incorporate earlier feedback) cannot be staged and count as one piece of work (although it is recognised that feedback will be given on each staged submission).

In-class tests

An in-class test is defined as a short formal examination which is set during teaching blocks and is used to progressively test students' learning. These are typically organised within a School or Department and are not timetabled through the University's timetabling software. It is expected that, as far as practicable, in-class tests will be conducted under the same rigorous conditions as for University examinations. Where there is a resounding pedagogic rationale to conduct in-class tests, care should be given to ensure students are not unduly exposed to examination fatigue. In-class tests form part of the total assessment loads.

2. Levels 4, 5, 6 (and Level 7 for Integrated Master's courses) – 20 credits

Where 40-credit units are offered, the maximum examination length permitted will be three hours, only one examination during the six-week consolidation and assessment period will be possible and the maximum length of coursework assignments will be less than double the 20-credit load.

Units assessed through means of a single summative assessment will be the exception. In such cases, opportunities for formative feedback will be identified.

Assessment plan	Examination	Maximum length essays/ reports/portfolios	Other – presentations, poster, performance, in-class tests, other artefact
100% coursework		4,000 words (via a maximum of three artefacts, except at Level 4)	
		2,500 words (via a maximum of two artefacts, except at Level 4)	One other assessment, e.g. presentation, in-class or online test or poster, etc.
		1,500 words	Two other assessments, e.g. presentation, in-class or online test or poster, etc.
Coursework >50% but <100% Examination <50% but >0%	1 hour	3,000 words (via a maximum of two artefacts, except at Level 4)	
	1 hour	1,500 words	One other assessment, e.g. presentation, in-class or online test or poster, etc.
	1 hour		Two other assessments, e.g. presentation, in-class or online test or poster, etc.
50% examination/ 50% coursework	1.5 hours	2,500 words (via a maximum of two artefacts, except at Level 4)	
	1.5 hours	1,000 words	One other assessment, e.g. presentation, in-class or online test or poster, etc.
	1.5 hours		Two other assessments, e.g. presentation, in-class or online test or poster, etc.
Examination >50% but <100% Coursework <50% but >0%	2 hours	2,000 words (via a maximum of two artefacts, except at Level 4)	
	2 hours	1,000 words	One other assessment, e.g. presentation, in-class or online test or poster, etc.
	2 hours		Two other assessments, e.g. presentation, in-class test or poster, etc.
100% examination	3 hours		

3. Levels 7 and 8 – 30 credits

Assessment plan	Examination	Maximum length essays/ reports/portfolios	Other – presentations, poster, performance, in-class tests, other artefact
100% coursework		6,000 words (via a maximum of three artefacts)	
		5,000 words (via a maximum of two artefacts)	One other assessment, e.g. presentation, in-class or online test or poster, etc.
		4,000 words	Two other assessments, e.g. presentation, in-class or online test or poster, etc.
50% coursework/50% examination			
Coursework >50% but <100% Examination <50% but >0%	1 hour	5,000 words (via a maximum of two artefacts)	
	1 hour	4,000 words	One other assessment, e.g. presentation, in-class or online test or poster, etc.
	1 hour		Two other assessments, e.g. presentation, in-class test or poster, etc.
50% examination/50% coursework			
50% examination/ 50% coursework	2 hours	4,000 words (via a maximum of two artefacts)	
	2 hours	2,500 words	One other assessment, e.g. presentation, in-class or online test or poster, etc.
	2 hours		Two other assessments, e.g. presentation, in-class and online test or poster, etc.
Examination >50% but <100% Coursework <50% but >0%			
Examination >50% but <100% Coursework <50% but >0%	3 hours	3,000 words (via a maximum of two artefacts)	
	3 hours	2,000 words	One other assessment, e.g. presentation, in-class or online test or poster, etc.
	3 hours		Two other assessments, e.g. presentation, in-class or online test or poster, etc.
100% examination			
100% examination	4 hours		

4. Project reports/work-based learning reports/dissertations/portfolios

The word count takes account of the fact that often additional assessments (e.g. proposals, interim reports, posters, presentations) will also contribute to the overall assessment load and these are to be included in this maximum load. Innovative and 'real world' approaches such as short papers, customer briefs etc. are encouraged and are likely to have considerably reduced word counts (although no less endeavour) than given below.

The word counts listed below are maximum loads, and are inclusive of any margin (e.g. $\pm 10\%$) that is accepted department practice. Figures are exclusive of footnotes, appendices and bibliography/references.

Undergraduate (Levels 4–6 and Integrated Master's Level 7)		Postgraduate (Levels 7 and 8)	
20 credits	40 credits	30 credits	60 credits
5,000	10,000	8,000	15,000

University of Portsmouth
Academic Registry
University House
Winston Churchill Avenue
Portsmouth PO1 2UP
United Kingdom

T: +44 (0)23 9284 3195
F: +44 (0)23 9284 3319
E: corporate-governance@port.ac.uk
W: www.port.ac.uk