

QAC pre-approved course structure/assessment changes

The change of the winter 2020 teaching term dates, the move to blended delivery of courses from September 2020 and the potential to be unable to have face to face exams in December 2020 necessitates changes to courses in terms of their structure and the types of assessments being used. All of these will require QA approval, but this will be a light touch, rapid process that does not require submission of change forms through the Curriculum Management System. The approval process is summarised in the flowchart in Appendix 1. To expedite the approval process, the Quality Assurance Committee has produced a list of “pre-approved” changes. This is not, by any means, an exhaustive list but gives staff an indication of what we look for in assessments, for example. Course coordinators can, of course, choose to incorporate different changes to their courses and are invited to discuss their proposals with their [School QAC representative](#) in the first instance. The primary, over-arching principle is that the assessments must enable you to determine if a student has met the learning outcomes for the course.

Pre-approved changes:

1. Teaching format changes:

The University of Aberdeen Blended Learning approach is a combination of face-to-face on-campus teaching and learning, where safe and possible, and online delivery where teaching cannot yet be in person. Principles and guidance for blended learning are available [here](#). The QAC will approve the following changes to face-to-face teaching, where required:

Original	Approved changes
Face to face lectures	On-line lectures delivered in either live or recorded format
Face to face tutorials	Group sessions using Blackboard Collaborate (or similar) Discussion boards with clear expectation given for number/extent of required postings from students
Field courses /labs / performances / other practical activities	Virtual field courses/labs where available Reports based on data given by lecturer Postponing practical activities until later in the year if the practical experience is an important learning outcome (e.g. music performance with others) If considering a shift in half session for a practical course, consider how the credits/workload will balance across the year, i.e. changes may be needed to a second half session course to accommodate the extra practical work from the first half session

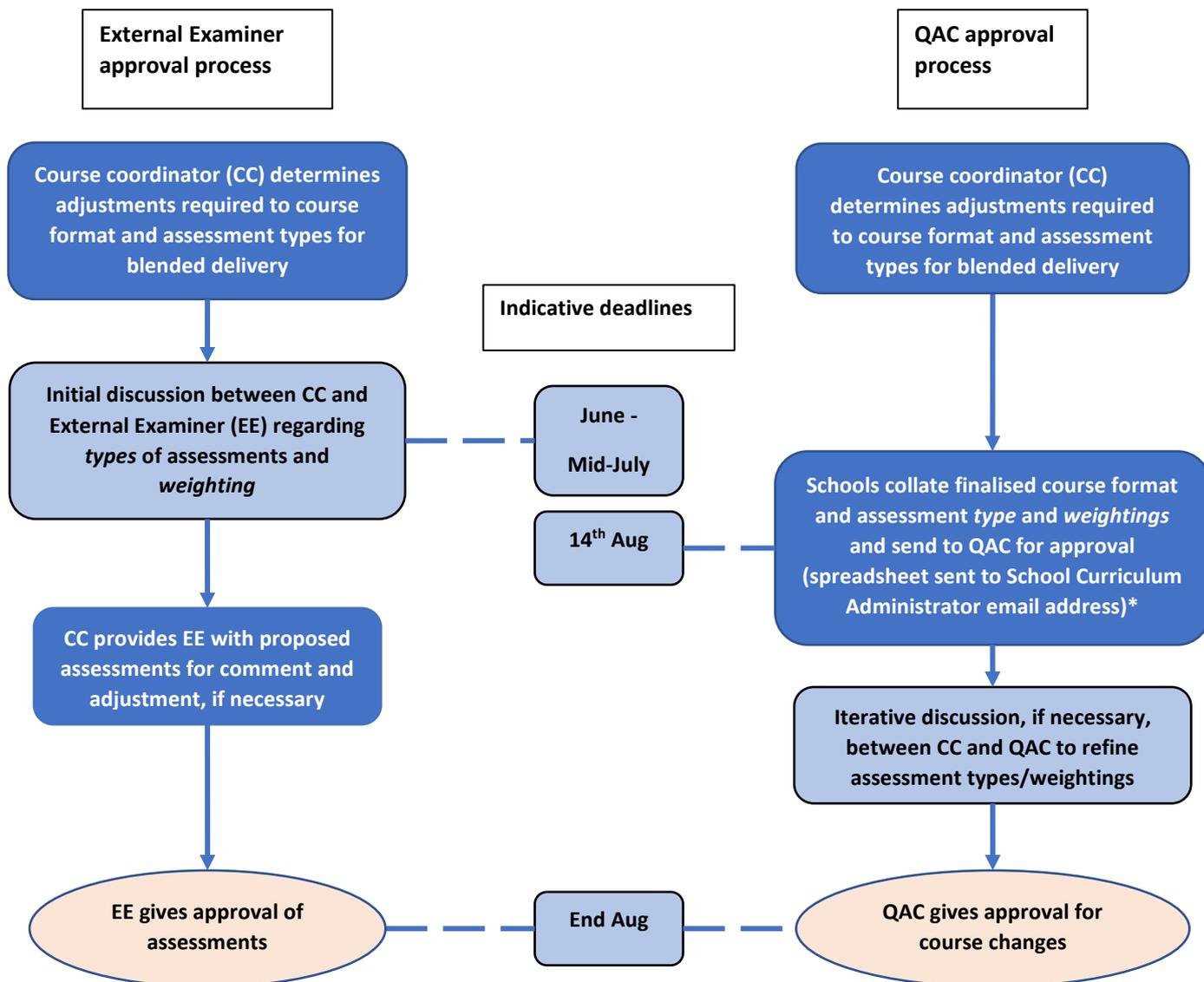
2. Assessment changes:

Guidance on alternative assessments can be found [here](#) and some examples of good practice can be found [here](#). The following is a non-exhaustive list of assessment changes that QAC will approve.

Original	Approved changes
<p>Assessment weightings, e.g. 40% continuous assessment:60% exam</p>	<p>Courses with heavy “final exam” weightings can be split into smaller assessments with an equivalent workload and mark regime, spread throughout the term.</p> <p>Each course should have at least two assignments. Splitting assessments throughout the term encourages engagement and spreads the assessment risk for students.</p> <p>Beware of over-assessment. One 3h exam with four essay questions should not be replaced by four essays of 1500 words, for example. As a very rough rule of thumb, one 3h exam corresponds to approx. 3000 words</p>
<p>Tutorial participation grade</p>	<p>a) Discontinue this grade and spread the grade to other elements of assessment.</p> <p>b) Continue with the grade but give clear direction on how participation is measured in the online environment (e.g. number of posts in discussion boards, with some indication of quality expected [i.e. not simply ‘I agree’]). Course coordinators need to consider whether student engagement must be synchronous or whether asynchronous participation would be sufficient or even advantageous</p>
<p>Face to face exams:</p> <p>a) Short answer-type exams</p> <p>b) Other exams</p>	<p>a) <i>Multiple choice questions</i> or extended matching questions that are machine graded; or keep as short answer assessments, submitted and graded online. Although MCQ are more traditionally used at lower levels they can be made discriminating enough to use at L3, 4 or 5 but in that case, they should not have a high weighting.</p> <p>b) “Take-home assessments” or “open book exams” as were used in May 2020. If needed for professional body requirements (or other pedagogic reasons) you can limit the time available for students to complete the assessment (potentially timed within a 48h period to take differing time zones into account)</p> <p>For both the above, questions should be amended to reduce reliance on factual recall and to be more dependent on application/problem solving/critical analysis. This will also reduce the potential for academic misconduct (plagiarism, in particular).</p>
<p>Presentations:</p> <p>a) Oral</p>	<p>a) <i>Individual presentation:</i> Self-recorded via Panopto or other suitable recording means; presentation via Skype/Teams; submission of</p>

b) Poster	<p>slides for a presentation along with a commentary (to ensure accessibility)</p> <p><i>Group presentations:</i> use of collaborate (or similar) to allow the group to prepare the presentation followed by submission of the slides plus commentary from each group member of their “section” or their input. <i>NB, QAC do not like group assessment to form more than 40% of the total course grade</i></p> <p>b) These can still be submitted as a poster with written or verbal recorded commentary to add detail. A virtual Q&A session or dialogue might also be added to allow further elaboration or exploration by the student and / or staff member.</p>
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Appendix 1: Approval process flowchart



* Schools should collate the changes being made and send to QAC, if possible, as a single spreadsheet. However, if course coordinators wish, they can discuss their proposals and get verbal approval from their [QAC contact](#) in advance of the School submission. Where equivalent courses are delivered at a different campus, the course coordinators should liaise to ensure the changes made are applicable to both campuses.