The University encourages a mixed method of assessment, as appropriate to the nature of individual courses. As part of Curriculum Reform, the use of different forms of assessment has been encouraged, for example, assessment of Sixth Century Courses focuses on student activity and formal unseen written examinations are not part of the assessment.

Prescribed Degree Assessments

The assessments which contribute a specified percentage of the overall assessment prescribed for a course or programme are described as Prescribed Degree Assessments. For undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses the Catalogue of Courses indicates whether a course will be assessed entirely by written examination, by in-course assessment, by submission of a dissertation/project report, by oral/practical examination, or by a combination thereof. Details of the assessment arrangements for resit examinations are also provided.

Summative and Formative Assessments

Prescribed degree assessments are summative assessments. Some courses will also include elements of formative assessment which differ from summative assessments in that they do not contribute towards the final mark for a course or programme: they are primarily for the benefit of students in gauging their knowledge and ability at the time of the assessment.

Some honours and postgraduate taught programmes will also have summative assessments which are not linked to a specific course: e.g. a General Paper or oral examination that might relate to the programme as a whole or to part of a programme. These are detailed under the prescription for the programmes concerned in the University Calendar and in course handbooks.

The ultimate authority for conduct of all prescribed degree assessments resides with the Head(s) of the relevant School(s) or, in the case of certain interdisciplinary programmes, an Honours Programme Co-ordinator. References hereafter to Heads of School refer to such Programme Co-ordinators where relevant.