Addendum - Reassessment Protocols for Deferred Students

The University decided that from 2018/2019, modules would be reassessed in one of two ways:

1. Like-for-like
2. Reassessment Instrument (replacing everything that had gone before)

All module specifications were updated to include the chosen reassessment method, to take effect in 2018-2019.

A briefing note was constructed and circulated, detailing how marks would be treated, including the following paragraph:

Capped and Uncapped Marks

Whether a student is referred or deferred, the reassessment process is identical, so the student will move to the reassessment method for that module, whether like-for-like, or reassessment instrument. The system instruction to cap or uncap marks is handled by a separate process, and is not relevant in selecting a reassessment method.

However, for clarity, the process will operate such that for a student who is referred or deferred on a module using like-for-like reassessment, the module mark will be calculated using the marks for retaken components and any components that were passed. A referred student’s module mark will be capped at the pass mark; for a student who is deferred, the module mark will be uncapped.

For a student who is referred or deferred on a module using a reassessment instrument the module mark will be the mark for the reassessment instrument. A referred student’s module mark will be capped at the pass mark; for a student who is deferred, the module mark will be uncapped.

Although this procedure is reflected in the Guidance for Examiners Document for 2018/19, currently registered students who entered the University in 2018/19 or earlier retain the right to be assessed under the credit conventions in force at the point of their initial registration. The use of the instrument of reassessment method, which requires that the final mark achieved through this single replacement piece of assessment should stand in isolation as the final mark for the module, creates the potential scenario where under deferral a student might be treated disadvantageously in comparison to the credit conventions and the established practice within the School in place at the point of their initial registration.

The University has undertaken not to disadvantage students by the introduction of regulatory changes during the course of their registration. The credit conventions as applicable to currently registered students allow for the final module mark under deferral to be aggregated from all the marks achieved for the assessments taken on the module. A check is therefore required to ensure that the final module mark arrived at in such cases under the single instrument method of reassessment would not be a lesser mark than the final module mark that would have been achieved under the previous method of mark aggregation, where such had been the established practice within the School for previous cohorts.

Example: a student gets very good coursework marks, but misses the exam. They are deferred by the BoE, but their module’s reassessment method is 100% exam. This means that their original coursework marks will be replaced by a new, 100% exam mark. Imagine the example scenario...

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where a student scores first class marks for several pieces of assessed coursework but misses the exam for acceptable concessionary reasons and is deferred. They then score a mark of 40% in the 100% exam. Under the single instrument method of reassessment the mark of 40% would ‘overwrite’ the first class coursework marks and become the final module mark. It is this type of unfair scenario that the proposed comparison check is intended to prevent.

A communication has been sent to all students to assure them that where there is a discrepancy between their reassessment instrument mark and their final module mark as would have been derived under the old rules (i.e. where some marks were carried forward), they will not be disadvantaged and will be awarded the better of the results achieved through these two means.

The action agreed to ensure that this necessary check takes place is as follows:

- All students will be required to undergo reassessment according to the method described in the module specification;
- The BoE must identify all students who fall into the category of deferred, with 100% reassessment instrument, and having started their course prior in or before the academic year 2018/19.
- They should then calculate the difference between the mark as it stands (using the reassessment instrument) and the mark as it would have been derived by the School in previous years (carrying forward any relevant marks and using the reassessment instrument to supplement the deferral result), where such had been the established practice within the School in previous years.
- In such cases, the reassessment method which yields the higher result should be used and this calculation and process must be clearly recorded on the composite marksheet (or exam board marksheet), in order that the final module mark on SDS can be updated.

Note: any solution will need to be in place for all current students until they leave or complete their courses. This may be some years hence, possibly in some few cases up to the maximum period of registration of eight years. This will need careful management in future years.

*Nb. The issue does not affect referral candidates, since the best final module mark they can achieve will be a capped mark; nor does it affect anyone with a like-for-like reassessment pattern, since they will retain any pass marks achieved on the individual components. Unlike deferred candidates, students who are referred will not be disadvantaged by the introduction of the change in practice during the period of their registration.*