

**PENALTIES FOR OVER-LENGTH COURSEWORK, INCLUDING  
DISSERTATIONS**

- 1 Ideally students should adhere to the prescribed word counts published by Departments/Divisions or programmes of study. In terms of penalties, however, assessed work that is more than 10% longer than the prescribed word count<sup>1</sup> should not be accepted for submission (i.e. it will not be date-stamped or otherwise recorded as formally submitted), but immediately returned to the student with instructions to reduce the word length. The work may then be resubmitted, noting that penalties for late submission will apply.
- 2 For work which exceeds the upper word limit by 20% or more, a mark of zero will be recorded although the assessment will be considered to be complete.
- 3 If submitted work is subsequently found to have an inaccurately stated word count and to exceed the upper word limit by at least 10% and by less than 20%, the mark will be reduced by ten percentage points. However the mark cannot be reduced below the minimum pass mark, assuming that the work merited a pass. (I.e. the penalty will not be used to fail a student because they have exceeded the stated word count by more than 10% but less than 20%.)
- 4 For discipline specific practices such as tables, pictures and graphs, Departments/Divisions should specify in the student handbooks whether these are recorded as part of the upper word limit or how they will be counted. (For example, Departments/Divisions could specify that only one figure or one table etc. is allowed as part of the coursework.)

Agreed at Academic Committee – 11 May 2010

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<sup>1</sup> In most cases MS Word should be used to determine the word count. The word count should include the main text but not a bibliography or appendices.