

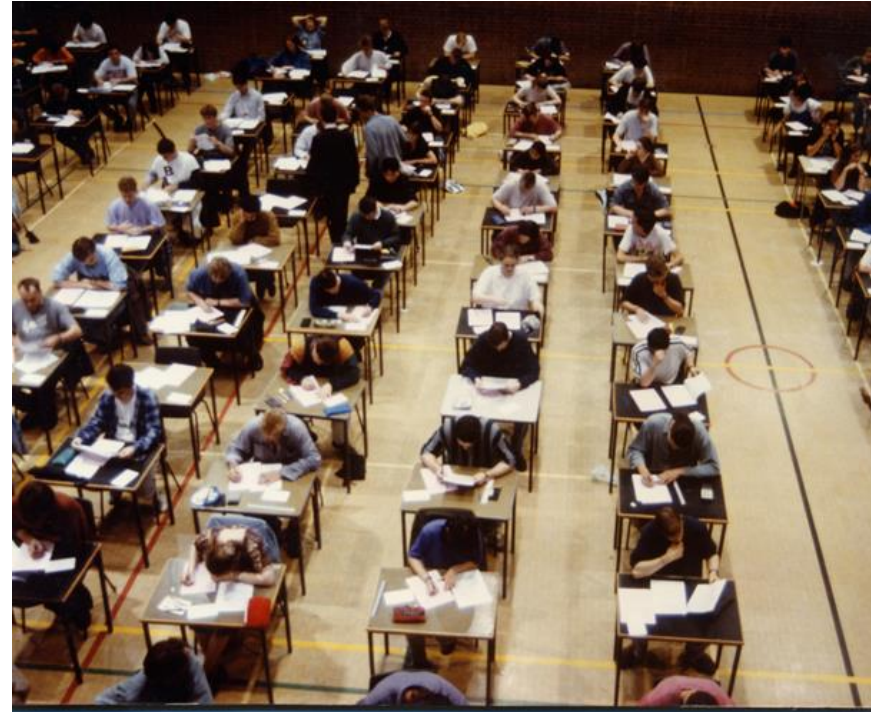
The use of examinations as a form of assessment



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Outline

- The number and spread of exams across the University;
- Exams as a form of assessment;
- Feedback on exams in practice;
- Exams and student satisfaction.



The number and spread of exams across the University (PSE);

UG

School	Course -work	% Course -work	Exams (+ Class Tests)	% Exams	Practicals	% Practical
ARCHI	34	87%	2	5%	3	8%
CHEMY	84	47%	70	39%	25	14%
COMSC	80	67%	35	29%	4	3%
EARTH	222	69%	65	20%	34	11%
ENGIN	188	49%	184	48%	12	3%
MATHS	35	36%	61	64%	0	0%
PHYSX	316	88%	45	12%	0	0%
PSE	740	58%	452	35%	82	6%
All	2692	62%	1407	32%	247	6%

PGT

Exams (+ Class Tests)	% Exams
8	14%
16	33%
17	35%
5	28%
49	38%
14	54%
15	20%
124	31%
394	18%

The number and spread of exams across the University (BLS);

UG

School	Course-work	% Course-work	Exams (+ Class Tests)	% Exams	Practicals	% Practical
BIOSI	139	52%	92	34%	37	14%
DENTL	47	51%	11	12%	35	38%
HCARE	107	60%	36	20%	36	20%
MEDIC	60	64%	31	33%	3	3%
OPTOM	21	24%	52	60%	13	15%
PHRMY	16	33%	21	43%	12	24%
PSYCH	34	49%	26	37%	10	14%
BLS	424	51%	269	32%	146	17%
All	2692	62%	1407	32%	247	6%

PGT

Exams (+ Class Tests)	% Exams
12	24%
10	7%
70	14%
33	40%
0	0%
6	15%
10	43%
141	17%
394	18%

The number and spread of exams across the University (AHSS);

UG

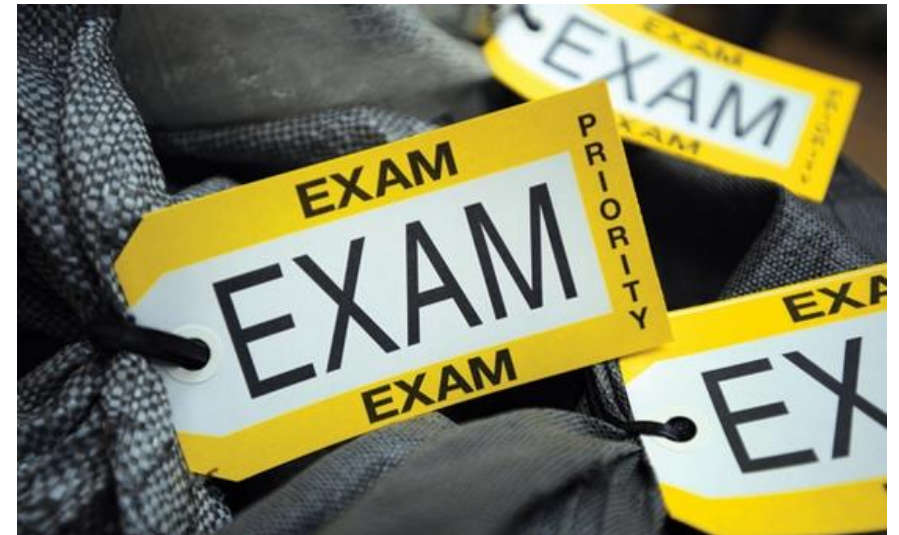
School	Course-work	% Course-work	Exams (+ Class Tests)	% Exams	Practicals	% Practicals
CARBS	151	50%	149	49%	2	1%
ENCAP	143	75%	48	25%	0	0%
GEOPL	80	86%	11	12%	2	2%
JOMEC	92	92%	8	8%	0	0%
LAWPL	175	65%	95	35%	0	0%
MLANG	257	68%	123	32%	0	0%
MUSIC	77	68%	25	22%	11	10%
SHARE	400	70%	166	29%	3	1%
SOCSI	103	72%	40	28%	1	1%
WELSH	50	70%	21	30%	0	0%
AHSS	1528	68%	686	31%	19	1%
All	2692	62%	1407	32%	247	6%

PGT

Exams (+ Class Tests)	% Exams
88	33%
0	0%
2	2%
2	2%
11	13%
3	9%
1	3%
19	10%
3	4%
0	0%
129	13%
394	18%

The number and spread of exams across the University

- Has not significantly changed in the last ten years (in number or nature);
- Varies both between Schools in individual Colleges and between Colleges;
- There are more exams at higher levels in UG programmes in AHSS and PSE;
- There are significantly less exams in PGT provision in both AHSS and BLS;
- Roughly 1/3 of exams are taken in the Autumn, 2/3 in Spring
- There has been a significant increase in requests for Specific Provision over the past 10 years;
- ‘Class Tests’ are concentrated mainly in a small number of Schools.



Exams as a form of assessment

The areas to consider ...

- Pedagogy and practicalities;
- Discipline specific needs and requirements;
- Influence and impact on learner behaviour;
- Purpose, alignment and potential 'backwash';
- Outcomes achieved by different students and different student groups;
- Incidence of Unfair Practice.



Feedback on exams

j) Students are informed of how to get feedback on exam performance.

- Schools shall provide feedback on exam performance, give students information of the ways in which this will be made available, and set out how their approach is best suited to the discipline and exam formats used by the School. They should adopt strategies that feed forward and help guide future learning and performance, and ensure that students' expectations are managed effectively. As a minimum, Schools should provide summary written feedback to the whole cohort within 4 working weeks of the Examination. Other ways in which exam feedback could be made available include:
 - written feedback for individual students on exams completed at the end of the first semester;
 - opportunities for immediate post-exam discussion on exam papers with whole cohorts;
 - the provision of model answers and/or marking schemes, and;
 - structured discussion with personal tutors to review and reflect on academic performance and future learning plans.
- Where students have failed assessments they shall have the opportunity to receive one-to-one support. Schools shall inform students of the ways in which students can view completed exam scripts in accordance with the Regulations and Guidance in section 7.8 of Senate Assessment Regulations. Schools should seek to adopt practices that can facilitate this.

Feedback on exams (in practice)

- Cohort feedback
 - via Learning Central, via email, via workshops;
 - Histograms – mean, sd, marks per question etc.
 - Model answers, example scripts
 - Generic comments – common errors, marks per question, specific questions
- Individual feedback
 - Via Personal tutors, via module leaders, via supervised access to scripts, via pigeon holes;
 - Review annotations, individual comments, breakdown of marks, generic review of strengths etc.
 - Normally offered to students who fail modules

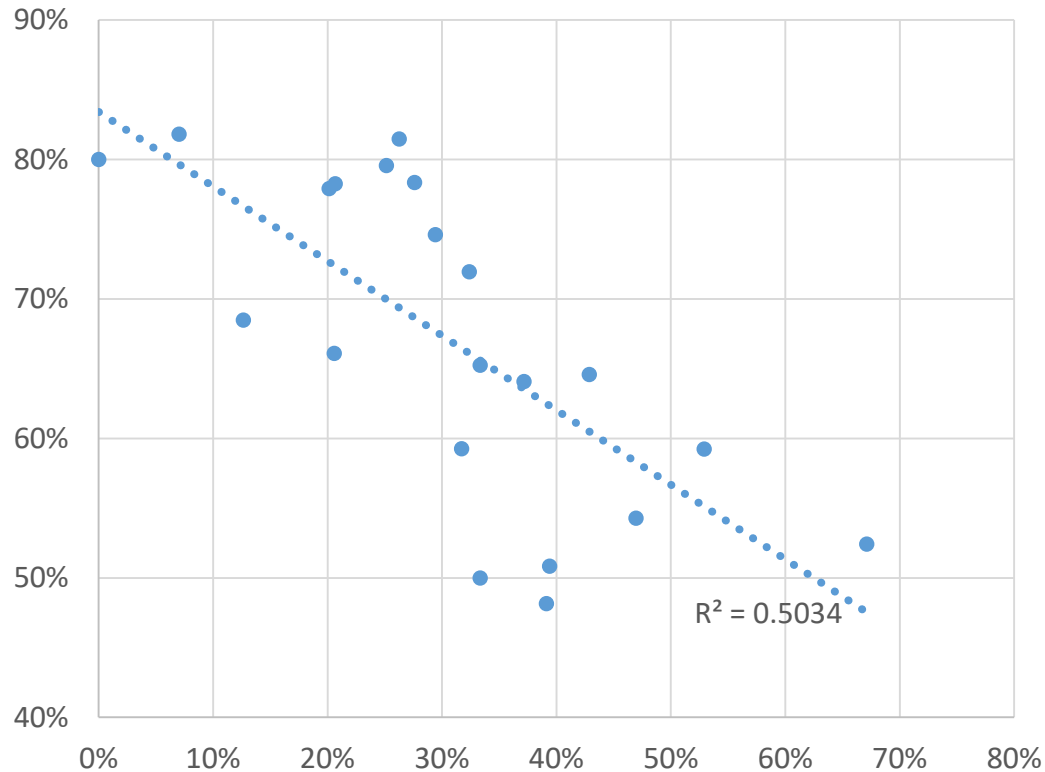
Feedback on exams - issues

- Advice / guidance to students in advance of the exams;
- Variation in practice within an individual School (between individuals / sections);
- Within 20 working days, before an Exam Board, at the start of the next session?
- A justification of marks or an aid to future learning?
- Using feedback and 'closing the loop'?

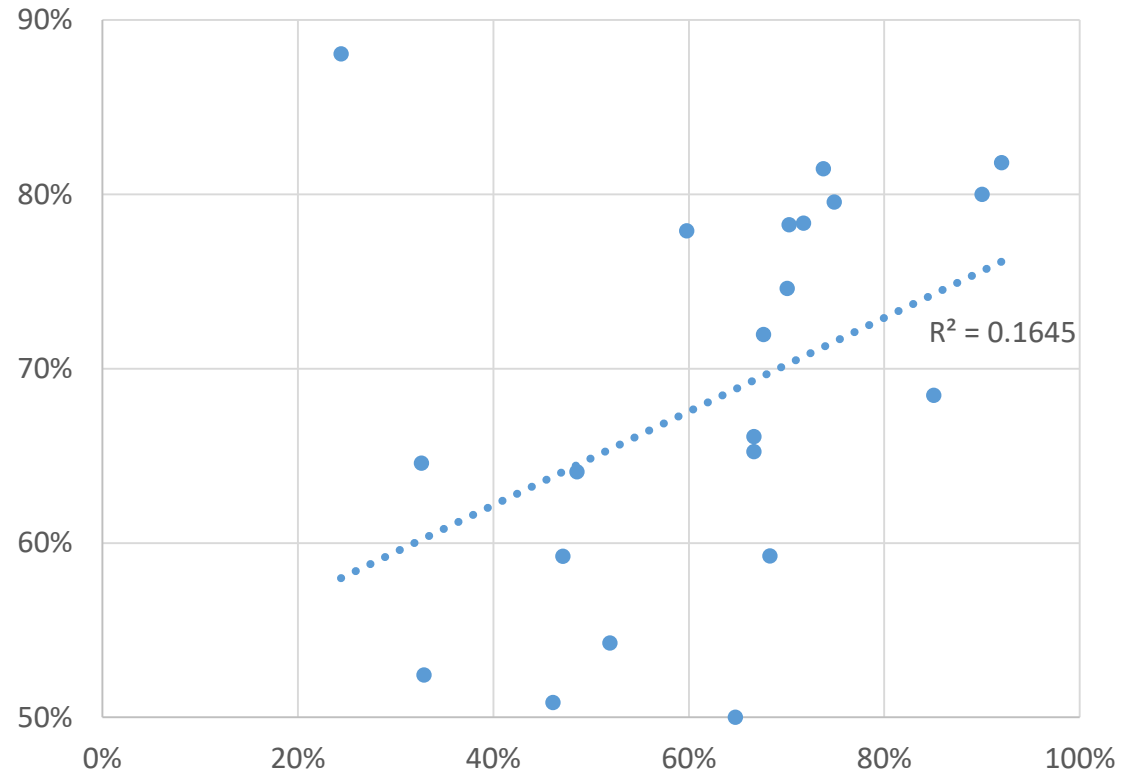


Exams and student satisfaction (UG)

NSS Q9 (Detailed comments) and % exams

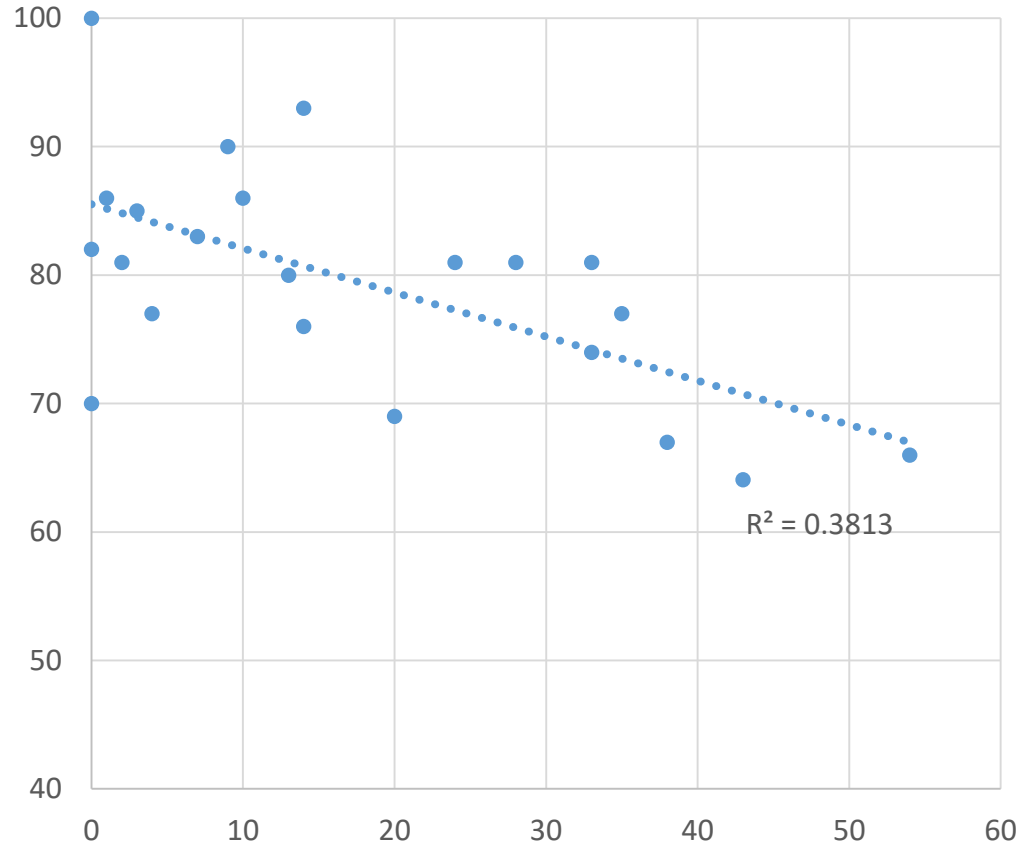


NSS Q9 (Detailed comments) and % of coursework

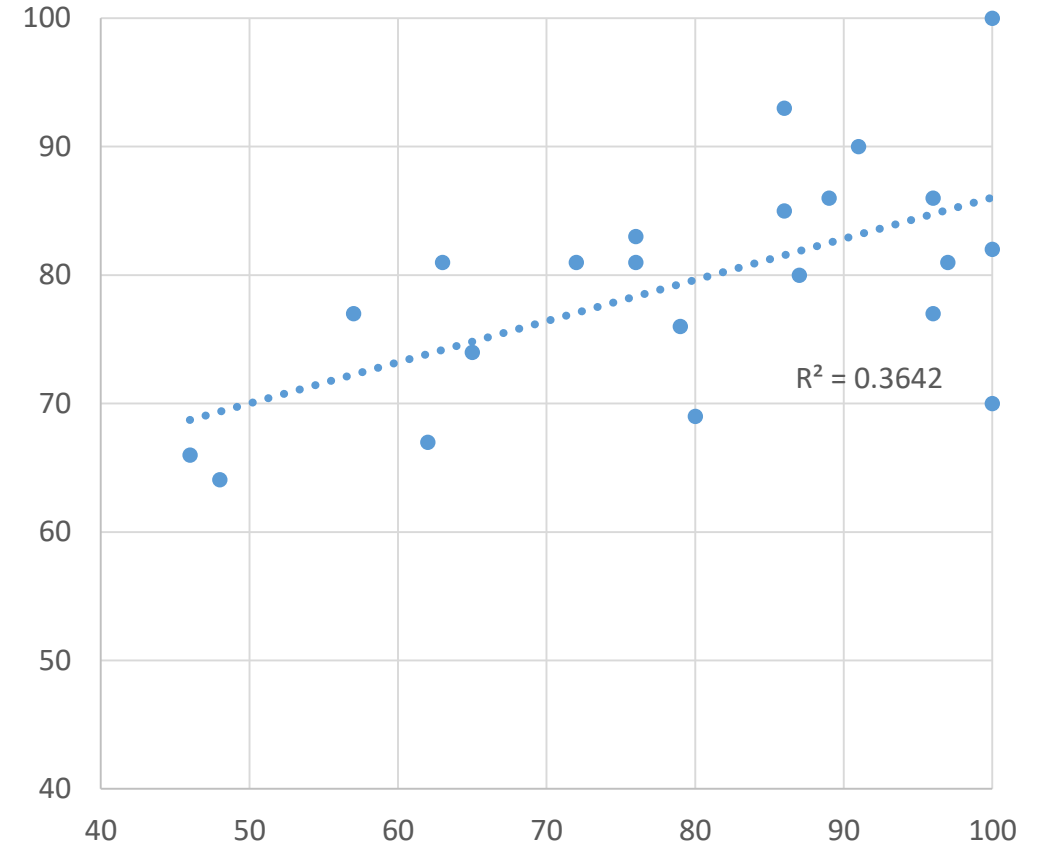


Exams and student satisfaction (PGT)

% Exams / Feedback is useful (PTES)



% Coursework / Feedback is useful (PTES)



Exams and student satisfaction

- Survey comments that focus on:
 - Organisation – exam scheduling, bunching, timetables etc.
 - Inconsistency – partic. in marking (both coursework and exams)
 - Lack of clarity / transparency – no information on what exam feedback to expect
 - Balance of assessments – mix of methods, sensible weightings, volume of assessments
- “How can I show all that I’ve learned and do my best when I have 6 examinations over 12 days”

The future of exams

- Has pen and paper had its day?
 - Pedagogy
 - Technology
 - Practicalities
- Will the demand for exam feedback decline?
 - Student expectations
 - Mark justification, 'grade grubbing', and feedforward
 - Processes, systems, and ways of working
- Exams that better reflect the workplace?
 - Open-book exams, standards, marking and criteria
 - Seen exams



