UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

COVER SHEET

DATE OF MEETING

Continuous assessment guidance

Confidential: No

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Consultation/Background Context: Extensive consultation was carried out with the Associate Deans, Academic Registry, CADI and the Education Strategy Group.

Strategy and Financial Implications: None at this point. This guidance supplements the new Assessment Regulations.

Executive Summary: Continuous assessment (CA) is an approach to summative assessment that provides opportunities for students to be evaluated throughout the module, rather than relying mainly on a final assessment. It encourages ongoing engagement, attendance and active learning, and facilitates regular feedback through multiple elements, such as in-class elements, quizzes and role-plays, among other instruments. This document provides detailed guidance for the implementation of CA.

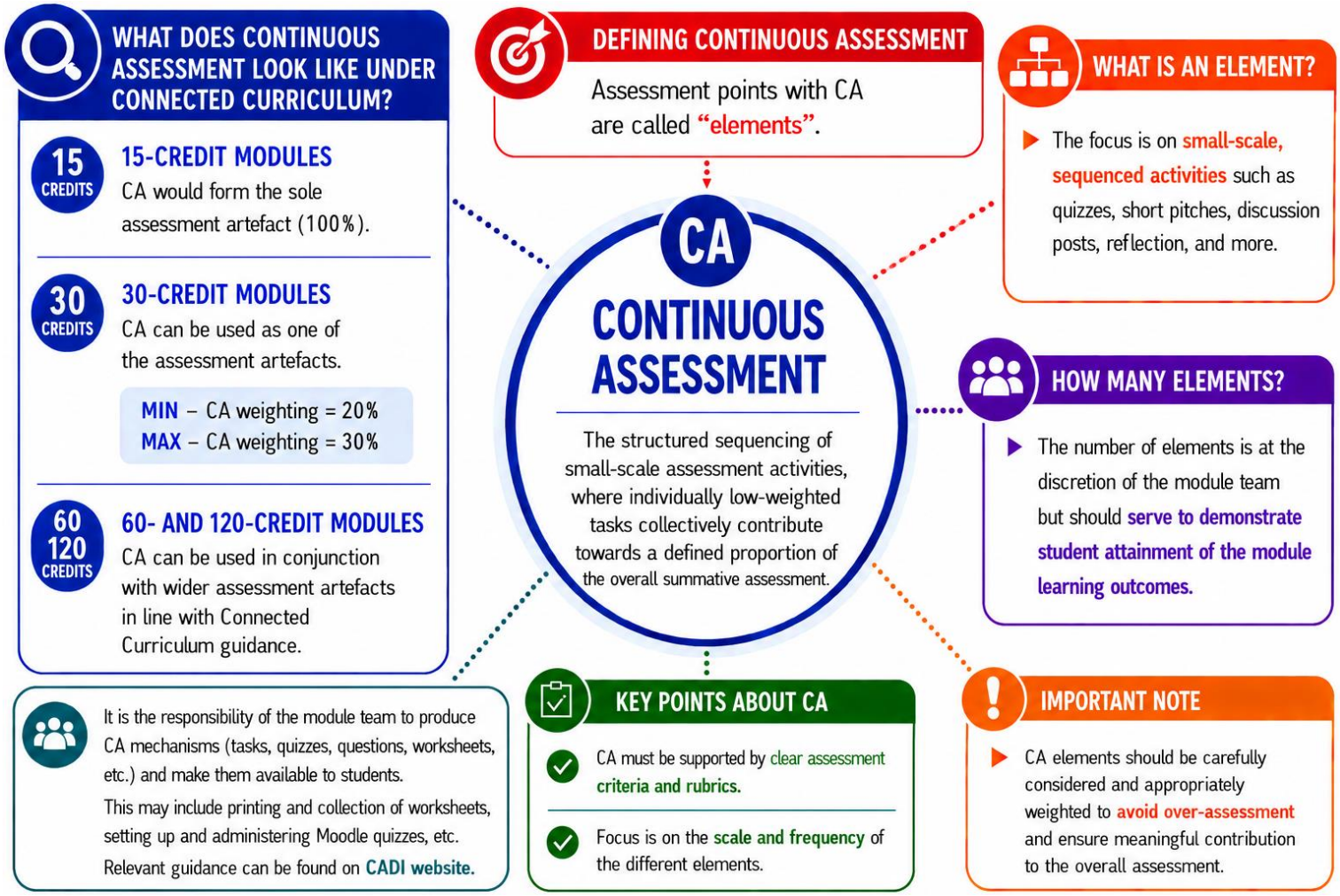
Recommendation(s) for Action: UESEC is requested to approve this guidance for circulation across all Faculties.

Equality and Diversity Implications: This guidance takes account of relevant EDI policies and guidance.

Health and Safety Implications: None.

Connected Curriculum Guidance on Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment (CA) is an approach to summative assessment that **provides opportunities for students to be evaluated throughout the module**, rather than relying mainly on a final assessment. It encourages ongoing engagement, attendance and active learning, and facilitates **regular feedback through multiple elements**, such as in-class elements, quizzes and role-plays, among other instruments.



Use of CA is well documented in the literature, primarily due to its numerous benefits, but it also involves some challenges. CA supports deeper learning by encouraging or even requiring students to **engage** with the module material regularly and consistently. Through ongoing feedback, students can understand their progress, adjust study strategies early, and improve their performance. This approach is also linked to better **attendance**, especially when low-weighted, in-class elements are used regularly.

CA is also beneficial for the module team. Teaching staff can see where and which students struggle, adapt their practice and/or offer additional support. CA elements should be designed to assess a broader range of knowledge and skills - critical thinking, teamwork, communication, reflection, creativity. They also promote equity and accessibility by reducing anxiety and dependence on a single assessment.

However, as CAs require regular engagement with elements and content, they increase workload throughout the term, with students having to manage multiple deadlines. CAs also require academic staff time for assessment design, marking and feedback, accommodating reasonable adjustments to ensure fairness and consistency, and adherence with UoP AI guidance.

CAs can be designed and applied in several ways, depending on the overall module assessment strategy, aim and intended impact of CA, and coverage of learning outcomes, which is often linked to the weighting of the CA instruments being used. In a 30-credit module, CA can be used alongside 1 or 2 other assessment artefacts. In a 15-credit module, if CA is used, it can be used alongside 1 assessment artefact. In a 60-credit or 120-credit modules, multiple CA assessments could be used, but attention must be paid to avoid overassessment.

CA refers to small, frequent, low-pressure elements that contribute a small percentage to the overall module mark. Low-weighted CA is often used for helping students improve and remain engaged through in-class elements and quizzes. Low-weighted summative CAs are feedback-focused and help students check their learning regularly. They are often used for formative feedback, and they are equally effective as summative assessment tools. When employed as summative assessment, the weighting of these kinds of CAs is generally a small fraction of the overall mark. CA elements should be distributed across the term(s), as appropriate. Minimum permissible CA weighting is 20% (cumulative), as explained in the Connected Curriculum documentation, and typically not higher than 30%. Summative CAs are considered cumulative **portfolio-type** artefacts in SITS during 2026-27 academic year, as explained in the Connected Curriculum documentation.

Indicative summative CA grid

Legend: S = synchronous (preferred), A = asynchronous, O = oral, W = written, B = blended (oral & written); IC = in-class, OC = outside class.

Category	Examples of typical elements	Sync/Async	Written, oral or blended	Location	Authenticity
Problem solving	In-class quizzes and elements; group case work; mini-projects (individual or collaborative)	S	B	IC	High
Quick knowledge checks	Applied quizzes hosted in the VLE, ideally started in class	A	W (online)	OC	Low
Performative practice	Elevator pitches; crits; practical demonstrations; presentations, simulations; professional conversations and role-plays	S	O	IC or live online	High
Discussion and community	Discussion forum posts or similar measurable contributions	A	W (or audio)	IC or OC	Medium
Process documentation	Sketchbooks, iterations, logbooks, design development	Mainly S	W (or drawn)	IC or OC	Medium

Best practice in implementing summative CAs

- Clear alignment with learning outcomes (elements focused on skills and competencies)
- Transparency (clearly state rubrics, deadlines and grading criteria)
- Balanced workload (avoid clustering deadlines)
- Meaningful feedback (timely, constructive and actionable)
- Inclusivity (provide variation in assessment types, offer alternatives when needed)
- Authentic elements (real-world, scenario-based, applied)

Logistical challenges for low-stakes summative CAs

UoP is committed to providing excellent student experience, which includes active learning, regular feedback, and accessible and inclusive assessment methodologies. Low-stakes summative CAs are known to boost student attendance and engagement. They are generally well received and appreciated by students. Nonetheless, overuse of these instruments can quickly lead to overassessment, with students being asked to complete elements for several concurrent modules. Therefore, it is important to oversee and manage use of CA load across the course and the academic year and to ensure diversity of assessment methods is maintained, in line with the AI guidance. In practice, CA provides a valuable set of tools to enable the implementation of 'Track A Hybrid' (see Table 1 of the AI guidance), as it enables the use of synchronous and asynchronous assessment instruments in a variety of ways within the module's overall approach to assessment.

Design and approval of CAs is subject to the same **quality assurance processes** as all other summative assessments, including assessment approval, mark verification, etc. It is the **responsibility of the module team** to produce CA mechanisms (elements, quizzes, questions, worksheets, etc.) and make them available to students. This may include printing and collection of worksheets, setting up and administering Moodle quizzes, etc. Relevant guidance can be found on CADI and AR webpages.

When summative low-stakes CAs are used, it is advised that they comprise of several independent elements, which students are asked to complete weekly, biweekly, or several times across the term. In cases where students miss an element, and to avoid undue pressure on them, not all elements should be counted

towards the overall CA mark. For example, you could consider implementing eight instances of summative CAs and count the “best five” of them. In order to manage academic staff workload, summative low-stakes CAs are generally expected to be graded efficiently, and automated marking should be used whenever possible. Several practical examples are given below.

Continuous Assessment: Practical examples

1. In-class summative activities (preferred)

Students complete a set of elements, individually or as a group, during timetabled sessions throughout the term. There are no summative elements during the first and the last week of term. For example, the best 3 out of 4 (or 5) elements count towards the overall CA mark. This gives the best outcome for students and accounts for the possibility of a student missing an element, without a need for EC.

Students are told when these summative elements will be taking place. Elements could include quizzes (preferred), group work activities, mini projects, etc., or a combination of different elements. The element is submitted during the class, promptly graded, and marks and feedback are released to students.

Module leaders collate element marks and calculate the overall CA mark which is reported to Academic Service Centres via the standard process. Low-stakes summative CAs’ due date (one date for the whole portfolio artefact) should generally be the date when the last element is submitted. Students should submit digital CA artefacts through Moodle. If a physical artefact (e.g. worksheet) is submitted, it should be subjected to the same quality and retention processes as other physical artefacts, say written exams. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the module team to collect the submission, and after marking to bring it to Academic Service Centres.

If a group element approach is used, students should be supported and guided to work effectively as a member of team (see Groupwork guidance).

2. Weekly asynchronous summative quizzes

Students complete weekly Moodle quizzes, in their own time, throughout the term. There are no quizzes during the first and the last week of term. Best 5 out of 8 quizzes count towards the overall CA mark. This gives the best outcome for students and accounts for the possibility of a student missing a quiz or two, without a need for EC.

Students are told when the quizzes will be available and what the deadline for completion is. It is advised to keep the quizzes open for at least 48h. Students can attempt the quiz at any point during the time period and have a single submission opportunity. After the deadline, the quiz is automatically graded, and marks and feedback are released to students.

Module leaders collate weekly quiz marks and calculate the overall CA mark which is reported to Academic Service Centres via the standard process. Low-stakes summative CAs' due date should generally be the date when the last quiz closes.

Weekly asynchronous quizzes must not be in-class tests, nor should they be done under examination conditions. Weekly asynchronous quizzes could be a part of a wider portfolio-type assessment if a lower (5-10%) weighting is appropriate.

Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments must be embedded within the CA strategy. Students should be given time to complete each assessment component outside the classroom where needed. In addition, consolidation and assessment week provides an opportunity to complete any components missed during teaching weeks. For example, in-class quizzes can be completed after the session, and students who were unable to attend may complete them during consolidation and assessment week.

Overassessment

CA should form part of a structured and balanced assessment regime. CA should not be "added" to already congested assessment diets. If CA is introduced, something else must be removed or streamlined to keep the overall load proportionate and avoid over-assessing. Use CA critically as one element within the overall assessment strategy. Select CA instruments and formats that provide appropriate evidence for the achievement of the module learning outcomes. Treat the introduction of CA as an opportunity to review and redesign the module's overall assessment strategy, improve coherence and workload balance, while ensuring alignment with the University's AI guidance for teaching staff.

Deferral and referral assessments

Examples above explain ways in which students can be supported to undertake CA without a need for an EC for individual elements. However, module teams must be prepared for a scenario in which students are unable to complete all CA elements, and a deferral assessment is required. When in-class summative activities, weekly quizzes and similar low-weighted CA approaches are used, it is not practical for deferral and referral assessments to be the same as the main CA, and an alternative method should be employed. Deferral assessment must cover the same learning outcome(s) as the CA. Whenever possible and practical, deferral and referral assessments should be the same. Otherwise, a separate referral assessment should be designed as well. Referral assessments are undertaken online, unless PSRBs prescribe that they must be done on campus.