**UNISTATS Definitions of assessment methods**

In determining the percentage of assessment in each category only summative assessments should be included. The time spent on formative assessment should be reflected in the calculation of learning and teaching methods.

**Note on set exercises: the categorisation of set exercises will depend on the nature of the exercise being set.**

* Set exercises conducted in class or taken home will normally be coursework e.g. in class or online MCQ, quiz.
* Set exercises performed under exam conditions and not involving the use of practical skills should be treated as a written exam.
* Practical exercises should be identified as Practical.

1. **WRITTEN EXAM**

**Exam: A question or set of questions relating to a particular area of study**

Written exams usually occur at the end of a period of learning and assess whether students have achieved the intended learning outcomes. They may be 'seen', where the student is aware in advance of the question(s) they are expected to answer, or 'unseen', where the questions are only revealed 'on the day'. In an 'open-book' exam, a student is allowed to use a selection of reference materials during the assessment. The questions asked as part of a written exam may be essay, short answer, problem or multiple-choice. Written exams usually (but not always) take place under timed conditions. Exams that are taken home should be counted as coursework.

**Set exercises (exam):** Set exercises performed under exam conditions and not involving the use of practical skills should be treated as a written exam.

1. **COURSEWORK**

**Written assignment, including essay: An exercise completed in writing**

Written exercises that typically have deadlines attached but which are not carried out under timed conditions. A well-known example is the essay, where students are required to write about a particular topic or answer a question in depth. Other examples include written briefings on particular topics.

**Report: A description, summary or other account of an experience or activity**

There are many different kinds of report - often students are required to produce a report after participating in a practical activity such as fieldwork, laboratory work, work experience or placement. Reports typically have a prescribed format.

**Dissertation: An extended piece of written work, often the write-up of a final-year project**

A dissertation is a substantial piece of writing deriving from research that a student has undertaken. Dissertations are the result of a student's independent work, carried out under the guidance of a supervisor. Different subject areas may follow different conventions in relation to the production of dissertations. (Note that other outputs from projects are listed separately).

**Portfolio: A collection of work that relates to a given topic or theme, which has been produced over a period of time**

Typically, a portfolio contains a number of pieces of work, usually connected by a topic or theme. Students are usually required to organise the collection of examples and the portfolio often includes some reflective accounts (diaries/logs). Examples include, in education, that students may collect in a portfolio essays around particular teaching methods, lesson plans, teaching materials that they have developed and a report about the teaching experience itself. For the purposes of the UNISTATS, examples also include the creative arts portfolio which may contain a strong practical element.

**Set exercises (coursework):** Typically, set exercises will not be conducted under exam conditions and will therefore normally be coursework. (see also note above)

**Project output (other than dissertation): Output from project work, often of a practical nature, other than a dissertation or written report**

Students are assessed on the output of a period of project work (other than in the form of a dissertation or written report). Examples are diverse and include the staging of a play or other performance, a piece of artwork, a new product or a poster.

**3. PRACTICAL**

**Oral assessment and presentation: A conversation or oral presentation on a given topic, including an individual contribution to a seminar**

Examples of oral assessments and presentations might include conversations, discussions, debates, presentations and individual contributions to seminars. This category would also include the viva voce exam which is typically used by institutions in specific circumstances such as clarifying assessment decisions reached via other means.

**Practical skills assessment: Assessment of a student's practical skills or competence**

Practical skills assessment focuses on whether, and/or how well, a student performs a specific practical skill or technique (or competency). Examples include clinical skills, laboratory techniques, identification of or commentary on artwork, surveying skills, language translation or listening comprehension, and so on.

**Set exercises (Practical): Questions or tasks designed to assess the application of knowledge, analytical, problem-solving or evaluative skills**

Examples might include data interpretation and data analysis exercises and problem-based or problem-solving exercises. Set exercises involving the use of practical skills, whether performed under exam conditions or not, should be treated a practical.