

Assessment for HE Programmes

PURPOSE

1. To ensure that the academic standards of the college's HE programmes are maintained in accordance with the Academic Infrastructure.
2. To ensure that the college's commitment to high quality learning opportunities is maintained.
3. To ensure that learners are aware, from the commencement of their programme, of all deadlines for the submission of assignments and coursework for summative assessment; and of the procedure for its submission and receipt.
4. To ensure that we identify any reasonable adjustments and special considerations for learners undertaking assessment in accordance with the relevant awarding body policy on reasonable adjustments and special considerations.
5. To conduct assessment procedures that are compliant with the requirements of the QAA and the college's awarding organisation partners.

SCOPE

All Higher Education programmes.

PROCEDURE

General Principles

1. All higher education programmes are expected to develop their own assessment strategy.
2. Learners will receive a diagnostic assessment at the start of their programme to identify attributes or skills that the learner has; and to identify any additional support needs.
3. Learners will be provided with a programme schedule that details the issue and submission dates of assignments and coursework.
4. Assessment practices must be constantly monitored for validity, equity and reliability. An effective assessment programme motivates learners and drives their learning. It determines their progression through their programmes and validates their success or failure in meeting programme outcomes.
5. Assessment tasks and associated criteria must be effective in measuring learner attainment of intended learning outcomes.
6. Information and guidance on assessment must be clear, accurate and accessible to all staff, learners and external examiners.

7. The range and type of assessment used must be clearly aligned to intended learning outcomes.
8. Assessment must be reliable through the consistent use of agreed marking and grading schemes and arrangements for moderation.
9. There must be robust arrangements to monitor, evaluate and demonstrate the fairness of assessments.
10. In conjunction with validating or awarding organisations, programmes must ensure learners are provided with information and guidance on their responsibilities within the assessment process (including assessment regulations), especially with regard to academic misconduct or the use of unfair means.

Assessment /Exam Boards

1. Assessment/Exam Boards must take place prior to learner certification and the annual Board of Studies' meeting. Ideally these should be carried out termly to discuss and agree learner grades. Minutes from the Assessment/Exam Boards must be brought to the HE client group meeting.
2. Exam boards must be chaired by college staff who have experience of managing HE.
3. Programme teams must keep accurate records of the procedures and decision of each exam board in their quality folders. To ensure confidentiality, the outcomes of exam board meetings are exempt from the college's usual policy of sharing information (ie class representatives attending meetings relating to curriculum and/or uploading minutes/findings to the VLE). Refer to (3) below.
4. Curriculum teams (excluding class representatives) will formally review and discuss academic assessments, quality assurance and final awarding grades in a confidential setting and in a timely manner.
5. The curriculum team exam board must take place prior to certification of any learners.

Conduct of Assessment

1. The purpose and requirements of assessment must be clearly communicated to learners at various stages of their programme, beginning with pre-course advice and induction.
2. Programmes must publish an assessment schedule with clear deadlines for the submission of assessed work and when such work will be returned. This must be planned with due regard to learner workload.
3. All assessment instruments administered to learners must be presented clearly with assessment criteria in direct relation to specified learning outcomes.
4. All assessment instruments must be internally moderated or verified in accordance with validating or awarding organisation requirements.
5. Late submission without extenuating circumstances may be subject to penalties as per the procedure on late submission **and in line with awarding organisation recommendations.**

6. Programmes must ensure that assessment supports learner learning, especially with regard to formative assessment, which must play an integral part in teaching and learning.
7. Programmes must ensure that learners with disabilities are not disadvantaged in the assessment process. This may involve the exploration and implementation of alternative methods of assessment.
8. Programmes must ensure that learners have adequate time to reflect on learning before being assessed.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Reasonable adjustments are adjustments that can be made to the assessment for a qualification so as to enable a disabled learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

Special consideration will be given to a learner who has temporarily experienced:

- An illness or injury, or
- Some other event outside of the learner's control

Which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had a material effect on the learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment.

The college recognise adjustments or special considerations may be required at the time of an assessment:

- Learners have a permanent disability or individual learning need/s
- Learners have a temporary disability, medical condition or learning need/s.
- Learners are indisposed at the time of the assessment.

The adjustment will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the learner. An adjustment cannot be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment and must be in accordance with the awarding body policy on reasonable adjustments and special considerations.

Meeting deadlines

1. As part of the process it is important for learners to meet all of the deadlines set. Learners should be supported by their tutors to develop the time management skills required to facilitate this.
2. All tutors should issue learners with a unit delivery plan and assignment submission dates for the year to enable students to plan for this effectively.

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3. It is important that learners are not advantaged by having additional time to complete assignments where there are no extenuating circumstances.
4. A tutor may refuse to accept work that is late without extenuating circumstances. This should be made clear to the learners and information contained in their student handbook should draw their attention to this and the consequences of failing to meet the deadlines.
5. Learners may be given extensions for legitimate reasons. Such as hospitalisation at the time of submission. Each case must be considered fairly and equally. Where an extension is granted this should be recorded and the new deadline made clear.

Marking and Grading

1. Programmes must publish and implement consistently, clear criteria for the marking and grading of assessments.
2. Programmes must employ a rigorous system of internal moderation of marks.
3. Programmes must ensure that assessment decisions are recorded and documented accurately and systematically.
4. Programmes must ensure that the decisions of relevant examination boards are published as quickly as possible.
5. Appeals against assessment decisions must be made in accordance with the colleges and awarding organisation appeals procedure.

Feedback

1. Programmes must ensure that feedback is provided to learners on assessed work in a way that promotes learning and facilitates improvement.
2. Feedback to learners must be given as soon as is possible for the assessment event in order to facilitate optimum learning.

Resubmissions

(Please refer to individual awarding organisation's requirements)

For non-RQF qualifications

1. Learners may be allowed 1 resubmission where they have failed to meet all the criteria on their first submission or if they have only achieved at Pass or Merit where the following conditions will apply:
 - The learner has met initial deadlines set in the assignment, or has met an agreed deadline extension.
 - The assessor judges that the learner will be able to provide improved evidence without further guidance
2. If a learner has not met the conditions listed above, the assessment board must not authorise a resubmission.
3. This information must be made clear to the learners at the start of their course and should be included in their student handbook.

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Reference: QAA QC - B6 Indicator 16 Boards of examiners/assessment panels apply fairly and consistently regulations for progression within, and transfer between, programmes and for the award of credits and qualifications

Because every assignment contributes to the final qualification grade, it may be appropriate for the Programme Leader to authorise one opportunity for a learner to resubmit evidence to meet the assessment criteria targeted by an assignment.

A learner may be offered a resubmission if they have achieved a Pass or Merit, or not met the Pass criteria. The assessment board can only authorise a resubmission if all of the following conditions are met:

- The learner has met initial deadlines set in the assignment, or has met an agreed deadline extension
- The assessor judges that the learner will be able to provide improved evidence without further guidance
- The assessor has authenticated the evidence submitted for assessment

If a learner has not met the conditions listed above, the assessment board must not authorise a resubmission.

Reference: QAA QC - B6 Indicator 16 Boards of examiners/assessment panels apply fairly and consistently regulations for progression within, and transfer between, programmes and for the award of credits and qualifications.

For RQF qualifications

1. Learners who, for the first assessment opportunity, have failed to achieve a Pass for that unit specification shall be expected to undertake a reassessment.
 - Only one opportunity for reassessment of the unit will be permitted.
 - Reassessment for course work, project or portfolio-based assessments shall normally involve the reworking of the original task.
 - For examinations, reassessment shall involve completion of a new task.
2. A student who undertakes a reassessment will have their grade capped at a Pass for that unit.
3. A student will not be entitled to be reassessed in any component of assessment for which a Pass grade or higher has already been awarded.

If a learner has not achieved a pass overall within a unit the assessment board may authorise the full repeat of a unit

- The overall grade of that unit is capped at a pass
- Units can only be repeated once
- Original and repeated unit assessments must be submitted to the external examiner or verifier.

Monitoring, Review and Dissemination

The HE Key Client Group will review this procedure every two years or as necessary.