



Policies & Procedures

Assessment, Moderation & Verification Procedure

N **S** **C** **G**

NEWCASTLE
AND STAFFORD
COLLEGES GROUP

1. Introduction

1.1 This document identifies and describes the key expectations, features and activities relating to assessment. It covers the following areas:

- Assessment planning
- Assessment / Assignment design
- Formative assessment
- Submission of coursework
- Summative assessment
- Feedback
- Academic Appeals
- Malpractice
- Internal Verification
- External Verification and Moderation
- Standardisation
- APL
- Examinations
- Assessment Responsibilities and Duties

1.1 Teams are expected to maintain comprehensive records of all relevant activities in a readily accessible manner and to comply with the specific requirements of awarding bodies.

2. Assessment Planning

2.1 The Curriculum Leader is responsible for ensuring an up-to-date syllabus / programme specification is available to all staff on a programme team.

2.2 The Curriculum Manager is responsible for ensuring all programmes have a comprehensive Assessment Plan in place prior to commencement of the course and for ensuring the plans are fit for purpose.

2.3 The Curriculum Leader is responsible for the creation of a comprehensive assessment plan prior to commencement of the programme.

2.4 This plan should include:

- Mapping of all unit criteria to assessment activities, cross-referencing where possible.
- Calendar of assessment activities indicating issue of assessment tasks, deadlines, resubmission points and persons responsible.

2.5 Plans should be developed and regularly reviewed with due regard to:

- Sufficiency of assessment activities to ensure students are making good progress and receive regular feedback, but without overload.
- Integrated assignments which may span a range of units and criteria.

- Range of engaging and stimulating assessment activities to meet student needs and preferences.
- Early assessment on commencement of the course.
- Avoidance of 'bottlenecking' of deadlines, in particular to avoid 'end-loading' of assessment on continually assessed programmes.
- Appropriately experienced staff to lead the particular assessment activity.
- The progress of, and feedback from students.
- Consideration of individual needs, in particular to ensure that no students are unfairly disadvantaged and to ensure appropriate support for candidates with particular needs.

2.6 Assessments should not be planned in an isolated manner, but should be considered within the context of the programme as a whole.

2.7 It is particularly good practice to involve students in the planning of assessment and agreement of deadlines.

2.8 The Curriculum Leader is responsible for monitoring progress against the assessment plan.

2.9 For all programmes, assessment plans should be made available to staff delivering the programme, and to students who are studying on the programme in a suitable format.

2.10 The Assessment Plan may, if appropriate and fit for purpose, be incorporated with the Internal Verification Plan (see below).

3. Assessment/Assignment Design

3.1 Teams are encouraged to adopt a team-based approach to assessment / assignment design to support the development of highly engaging, innovative assessment activities, projects and assignments.

3.2 Opportunities for promoting Equality and Diversity within assignments should be fully considered.

3.3 Assignments should be clearly cross referenced to the Assessment Plan and Internal Verification Plan.

3.4 Assignments should be produced and issued only with approved College (or Staffordshire University if HE Course) front sheets.

3.4 Assignments should not be issued to students until signed off by the identified Internal Verifier.

3.5 Copies of all assignments should be made available electronically to students through iSite as part of their i-Site entitlement.

3.6 The effectiveness of assignments in supporting high levels of student success and enjoyment should be evaluated following delivery and assessment to inform future planning. Learner views should be sought to support this process via the student survey and focus groups.

4. Formative Assessment

4.1 All substantive assignments should be planned with the opportunity for a range of formative assessment activities to occur. For example, presentations of work in progress, group discussions, peer critiques, oral feedback. Learners and Staff are encouraged to maintain a record of formative assessment activity to support progress and development.

5. Submission and Resubmission of Coursework

5.1 Submission

Realistic deadlines for coursework submission will be considered during the planning of assessment for a programme.

Deadlines will be published and clearly communicated to students at the start of the course (see Assessment Plan above) and on issue of an assignment.

Learners are expected to meet deadlines for submission to support prompt and regular feedback on their progress in order to ensure students make good progress and to support successful achievement of their course of study.

Exceptions are made at the College's discretion where a student's personal circumstances may prevent work being handed in on time. Every attempt must be made by the student to inform their tutor / assessor of these circumstances at the earliest convenient time. In these situations a realistic deadline is negotiated with the individual concerned. If a student is studying on a HE course, they must adhere to the appropriate extenuating circumstances policy where work is submitted late.

Learners who have not submitted work to the deadline should be considered 'at risk' by the programme team, interventions put in place and their ongoing progress monitored until such a time that the team is confident the student is back on track.

5.2 Resubmission of Work

Where work submitted is incomplete, not all tasks have been attempted, or work has been assessed and does not meet the required standard to meet the student's minimum target grade, it should be returned to students with clear guidance on what is required to improve along with details of further support and guidance available to them. A deadline for resubmission will be agreed,

The student should be considered 'at risk' by the programme team and their ongoing progress monitored until such a time that the team is confident the student is back on track.

The work will be re-assessed, further feedback provided and the subsequent attainment will be that which is recorded on the student's file. Should work still not be at a standard which meets the student's target grade, further interventions may be put in place, including involvement of parents where appropriate, or referral to other college support services.

If a re-submission is required the Awarding Body guidelines will be adhered to in terms of limiting potential grades / scores.

5.3 Hand-In of Work

Learner work should be treated with utmost care, security and respect.

Faculties and curriculum teams will implement a suitable practical process for the recording and tracking of submission of work. This will be communicated to students during their induction.

Learners should be informed it is their responsibility to ensure work is delivered safely to the member of staff responsible for assessing the work.

Where possible, students should be encouraged to maintain a duplicate back-up copy of any work submitted, or to submit work electronically.

It is desirable wherever possible to retain student work on the College premises for assessment and verification. To minimise risk of damage, or loss of student work, it should not be taken off College premises for assessment unless there is a suitable back-up copy in existence.

It is the responsibility of the member of staff to ensure work is returned safely and in good condition to individual students. Learner work should be retained for no longer than required to complete assessment and internal verification in a timely manner, or than is required by the awarding body.

6. Summative Assessment

- 6.1 Integral to all assessments is the comparison of progress with target grades. Learners set aspirational targets on all full-time programmes and Level 3 students also have a minimum target grade calculated on the basis of GCSE achievement.
- 6.2 Assessment documentation should include clear reference to target grades, related to current performance.
- 6.3 Learners are expected to reflect on, evaluate and record their views on their own performance as an integral part of summative assessment.
- 6.4 Assessment should be recorded only in an approved College format. For full-time programmes, the primary mechanism for tracking assessment outcomes is ProMonitor.
- 6.5 New or inexperienced assessors will be supported and guided by the Curriculum Leader. Training needs will be identified and supported.
- 6.6 New or inexperienced assessors' assessment decisions must be checked more regularly as part of the internal verification sampling strategy.
- 6.7 Work should be returned to students with detailed feedback within a maximum period of 10 working days (except in Staffordshire University programmes, where university requirements apply).

7. Feedback

7.1 The College place great importance on the value of high quality feedback to aid student progress and provides detailed guidance in a separate document – Guidelines on Assessment Feedback.

8. Academic Appeals

8.1 Full details of the Academic Appeals procedure are in separate guidelines.

8.2 All students should be made aware of the appeals procedure within their induction to the programme.

8.3 All appeals should be documented and records retained by the Curriculum Leader.

9. Malpractice

9.1 See separate guidelines on Assessment Malpractice.

10. Internal Verification

10.1 The Curriculum Manager is responsible for ensuring that effective internal verification processes which fully meet the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies are embedded within the planning, delivery and assessment of all qualifications.

10.2 The Curriculum Manager will, where required, seek and maintain accreditation for this lead role from the relevant awarding body (e.g. Edexcel OSCA2).

10.3 The Curriculum Leader is responsible for the effective planning, management and implementation of internal verification within programmes to fully meet the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies.

10.4 All verifiers will be suitably experienced and will hold the qualifications required to indicate competence where it is a requirement of the awarding body.

10.5 A comprehensive plan of internal verification is required for all programmes – this may be integrated with the Assessment Plan where appropriate.

10.6 Internal verification activity should be planned in a timely and proactive manner to minimise risks relating to assessment. The planning strategy should reflect the range of candidates, assessors, assessment methods, forms of evidence and locations for assessment.

10.7 Internal verifiers cannot verify their own assessment activity.

10.8 All assessment instruments are verified prior to issue to students to ensure fitness for purpose and feedback provided to the author(s). Where assessment instruments do not meet expectations or requirements, actions are put in place to address the issues and signed off by the Internal Verifier prior to issue to students

- 10.9 Samples of assessment grading and feedback are reviewed in line with the requirements of the awarding body, with a particular emphasis on the quality of documented feedback to students.
- 10.10 Records of verification/moderation activity will be completed on College standard proforma unless it is a requirement of an awarding body to use particular documentation, in which case the latter takes precedence.
- 10.11 Staff involved with internal verification activity are expected to maintain up-to-date knowledge and experience through CPD to support their role.

11. External Verification and Moderation

- 11.1 Curriculum Managers, through liaison with the Head of Learning and Quality Systems/Quality Manager are responsible for ensuring the appropriate arrangements are in place for external verification and moderation to fully meet awarding body requirements.
- 11.2 Curriculum Leaders are responsible for ensuring the necessary evidence requirements for external verification or moderation activity are made available in an organised and presentable manner.
- 11.3 A copy of all external verifier or moderator reports must be forwarded to the Head of Learning and Quality systems.
- 11.4 Reports from external verification or moderation must be reviewed by the Curriculum Leader and course team and any actions arising incorporated in the relevant quality improvement plan.
- 11.5 Any serious issues must be brought to the attention of the appropriate Head of Faculty for monitoring of the required actions.

12. Standardisation

- 12.1 It is the responsibility of the Curriculum Manager to ensure that effective standardisation processes which meet the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies are embedded within the assessment all qualifications.
- 12.2 Curriculum Leaders are responsible for the planning, organisation and delivery of standardisation activities.
- 12.3 Where it is not possible for assessment to be completed as a team activity, it is considered good practice for teams to meet and standardise grading between assessors on a regular basis.
- 12.4 Where it is a requirement of the awarding body to attend external standardisation meetings, staff are expected to and supported to attend.

13. Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

13.1 Where appropriate, students have the opportunity to accredit prior learning and/or experience. This is carried out in accordance with the specific requirements of the relevant awarding body (Please see NULC HE APL Policy for HNC's/HND's and Staffordshire University APL Policy for any awards through Staffordshire University).

14. Examinations

14.1 Examinations form the key element of assessment within a range of college programmes.

14.2 Examinations may take a variety of formats including paper-based or on-line.

14.3 Separate guidance documents provide full details of the exam procedures currently in operation.

15. Responsibilities and Duties

15.1 All tutors and assessors have a responsibility to ensure the successful implementation of the Assessment Policy and associated Procedures and Guidelines.

15.2 Tutors and assessors have the primary responsibility for implementation of assessment, reflecting the nature of the subject. Assessors have the responsibility to design and implement assessment in ways that encourage and promote effective learning, and that measure student achievement effectively with reference to state intended learning outcomes. To make reasonable adjustments to the design and conduct of assessment to meet the needs of students with special educational needs and disabilities and to provide constructive and developmental feedback on assessed work. Tutors and assessors have a responsibility to update their knowledge and skill and attend training and development.

15.3 Tutors and assessors have a responsibility to ensure assessment as part of accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgements about students' prior learning and experience in relation to unit standards. Assessment must be valid and reliable as the students' own unaided work.

15.4 Internal verifiers, moderated by external verifiers/examiners have the primary responsibility for assuring the effectiveness of assessment.

15.5 Assessment/Examination Boards, under the guidance of the Director of Curriculum & Quality, have a primary responsibility for assuring the academic standards of the HE provision. Each Course Leader has a particular responsibility for ensuring the implementation of any actions agreed.

15.6 The College Quality Team has responsibility for monitoring assessment procedures and standards across the College.

15.7 The Director of Curriculum & Quality has responsibility, for setting and agreeing actions to ensure the Policy is implemented.

15.8 The Principal has overall responsibility for creating an ethos and environment that reflects the Policy.

16. Further Guidance for Higher Education Students

16.1 Higher Education students undertaking qualifications through Staffordshire University should refer to the University Assessment Guidance Policies and Procedure for further specific information:

http://www.staffs.ac.uk/assets/Assessment%20Principles%20Policy%20and%20Procedures%201516_tcm44-84939.pdf

16.2 Higher Education students undertaking qualifications through Pearson should refer to the Pearson Guidance (Level 4 – 7) document for further specific information about Pearson’s HE Provision:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/btec-brand/deliver-btec/BTEC-CentreGuide-to-Assessment-Level-4-7.pdf>