
Assessment Policy

1. Policy Statement

The aim of the Policy is to ensure that all assessments produce valid, authentic, reliable and sufficient evidence to make sound assessment decisions.

The assessment process remains open to inspection and both internal and external verification at all times, ensuring all students receive fair and accessible assessment.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all forms of assessment in all programmes offered by the College and are designed to meet the standards required by the Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition, JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations, QAA Quality Code (for Higher Education Programmes), and appropriate Awarding Organisations specifications and requirements.

This policy covers all stakeholders involved during the registration, assessment, quality assurance and claiming of externally accredited qualifications.

In the instance that an Awarding Organisation or HEI has a policy or procedures that supersedes this, then their policy and procedure will take precedence.

3. Definitions

Formative Assessments: These ongoing assessments provide regular feedback on student progress and inform adjustments to teaching strategies. Examples include quizzes, class discussions, and short assignments. These do not count towards a student's overall grades.

Summative Assessments: These assessments measure student achievement at the end of a learning unit, module, or programme. Examples include exams, reports or assignments, presentations, projects, and portfolios. These can be set by the Awarding Organisation or the College with approval from the Awarding Organisation.

Internal Examinations: These assessments are designed and/or administered by college staff and contribute to a student's overall grade. These will usually be sampled through the College quality assurance procedures and the Awarding Organisation.

External Examinations: These assessments are set and marked by external awarding organisations and are mandatory for certain qualifications.

4. Responsibilities

Oversight: The Quality Department is responsible for the overall oversight of the assessment policy.

Policy Compliance: The Vice Principal C&Q/Director SEQS is responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented and complied with across all departments.

Implementation:

Heads of Dept/Programme Managers/Programme Leaders/Lead IVs (or similar): Responsible for ensuring that assessments are designed and implemented in accordance with this policy and awarding organisation regulations for their programmes.

Lecturers and Assessors: Responsible for delivering assessments, providing timely feedback to students, and maintaining accurate records of student achievement.

Exams Team: Responsible for administering external examinations, ensuring secure exam conditions, and handling exam registration fees.

Additional Learning Support: Responsible for advising students on Exam Access Arrangements and ensuring they are implemented effectively.

5. Assessment Strategy

A clear assessment schedule will be made available to students at the beginning of each module or programme. This will be reviewed regularly and the College will ensure that students have access to the assessment policies and procedures. These include:

- a. Student Malpractice procedure
- b. Complaints procedures
- c. Academic Appeals Procedure

Lecturers and assessors will ensure that the assessment requirements for the course are published and this will include the following:

- a. Course handbook and programme specification
- b. Curriculum planner/student friendly scheme of work that includes assessment schedule or training plan
- c. Learning outcomes
- d. Assessment criteria
- e. Weightings and mode(s) of assessment for each unit.

Formal assessment opportunities are identified on schemes of work and on assessment schedules for students.

Students are expected to work to the deadlines set out in their assessment schedule (or year planner) and should be made aware from the outset of the consequences if they miss deadlines. It is important that all students are assessed fairly and consistently, and that staff do not give individuals an unfair advantage by giving them additional time to complete their assignments.

Assessments are carried out regularly and outcomes reported within 21 working days with written and verbal feedback. The information given to the student:

- a. Must show the formal decision and how it has been reached, indicating how or where criteria have been met.
- b. May show why attainment against criteria has not been demonstrated.
- c. Must not provide feedback on how to improve evidence but how to improve in the future.

Second marking, Internal Verification / Moderation and Standards Moderation will conform to awarding organisation requirements.

6. Feedback and Appeals

All students should be made aware of their right to appeal against an assessment decision and the most up to date procedure should be available. This will usually be the College procedure unless an Awarding Organisation or HEI has their own policy that supersedes. In which case, that policy will take precedence.

Students have the right to appeal against any assessment decision if they believe that a decision is unfair, using the appropriate appeals procedure.

Students are entitled to:

- a. access to fair assessment
- b. information about the appeals process
- c. support in making an appeal
- d. a prompt response to an appeal
- e. written feedback on the outcomes of each stage of the appeals process

Grounds for Appeal:

- a. Assessment undertaken by a national awarding organisation

- b. Internal assessment
- c. Assessment of an element of a course

If, after internal verification/moderation, the validity of the assessment methodology is confirmed, the grounds for appeal are:

- a. There has been a significant administrative error
- b. The assessment was not conducted in accordance with the approved Awarding Organisation regulations for the course
- c. There was a procedural irregularity in the conduct of the assessment
- d. The candidate's performance was adversely affected by illness or other factors which for valid reasons were not divulged when the work was submitted
- e. The assessment does not reflect the stated assessment criteria

7. Retaking Assessments (where applicable)

The College may, at its discretion and in line with the awarding organisation's regulations, allow students to retake an exam to improve their original mark following a successful attempt. However, this opportunity is not always available and depends on the specific assessment and awarding organisation.

Important: The College will pay the exam registration fee on behalf of the student for one agreed retake opportunity only. Fee amounts vary depending on the awarding organisation and the nature of the assessment. **Failure to attend a re-take exam opportunity will result in the student being liable for the fee unless they can provide documented evidence of extenuating circumstances.**

Extenuating circumstances are unexpected and unavoidable events that significantly impact a student's ability to attend the exam. Examples of extenuating circumstances might include (but not limited to):

- a. Sudden illness or injury (supported by a doctor's note)
- b. Bereavement of a close family member
- c. Disruptions caused by fire, flood, or other natural disasters

Students who believe they have extenuating circumstances that prevented them from attending a re-scheduled exam must submit documented evidence to the College as soon as possible. The College will then assess the evidence and determine if the student is eligible for a fee waiver.

Note: For Apprenticeship End Point Assessments (EPA) please refer to the Apprenticeship Agreement.

8. Special Considerations and Exam Access Arrangements

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Organisations to make reasonable adjustments where students with disabilities, learning difficulties, or temporary conditions would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment.

The College sets out the procedure for access arrangements in relation to assessment in **Access Arrangements Policy**.

A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.

How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the student. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

There is no duty on the Awarding Organisations to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.

The Additional Learning Support team are responsible for managing the Exam Access Arrangements process for internally or externally set examinations. Where a reasonable adjustment is required for a summative assessment for example project, portfolio, assignment or report, the Quality Team will be the first contact and will liaise with the Awarding Organisation to seek advice and approval to amend assessments.

9. Academic Integrity

The College expects all staff and students to maintain high standards of academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, malpractice, maladministration, or any form of dishonest behaviour will be dealt with seriously according to the College's Positive Attendance, Behaviour and Commitment to Study (ABC) Policy, Student Code of Conduct, Malpractice/Maladministration Policy.

For the purpose of this document 'malpractice' is defined as:

a. Any act, or failure to act, that threatens or compromises the integrity of the assessment process or the validity of a qualification and its certification. These are outlined in detail in the Malpractice & Maladministration Policy but include:

- i. maladministration and the failure to maintain appropriate records or systems;
- ii. the deliberate falsification of records or documents for any reason connected to the award of a qualification;
- iii. acts of plagiarism or other academic misconduct; and/or
- iv. actions that compromise the reputation or authority of the College and/or its employees

The College treats all cases of suspected malpractice seriously and will investigate all suspected and reported incidents of possible malpractice. The College ensures that they are handled in accordance with JCQ or appropriate Awarding Organisation or HEI policy.

Responsibilities associated with Malpractice and Maladministration:

- a. All staff and students must report suspected malpractice immediately to their line manager who in turn must report this to the Head of Quality Assurance
- b. Investigations into student malpractice will be handled in accordance with JCQ or appropriate Awarding Organisation or HEI policy and investigated by a named manager
- c. Findings of investigations will be considered in line with the relevant Staff or Student Codes of Conduct
- d. Investigations into staff malpractice will be undertaken by a manager in either the Exams Team or the Quality Team
- e. The College will report all relevant cases of suspected malpractice to the relevant Awarding Organisation or HEI, accepting that in certain circumstances the Awarding Organisation or HEI may act on its own, including imposing sanctions.

10. Linked Policies

- Positive ABC Policy and Student Code of Conduct
- IQA Policy
- Access Arrangements Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Compliments, Complaints & Feedback Policy & Procedure
- Staff Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Appeals Against Assessment Decisions Policy

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