



Working Together

Assessment Policy and Procedural Guidelines

February 2010



**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**

Assessment Policy

1. Introduction

All formal assessment undertaken by the College will meet the requirements of the individual awarding body criteria.

The College is committed to assessing students in a fair, accurate and consistent manner.

To ensure that assessment decisions are valid and meet external requirements, the College operates an internal quality monitoring system.

2. Scope

The term formal assessment relates to any activity which contributes towards the students achievement of the qualification. This may include e.g. written work, observation of activity, verbal questioning or producing a final product.

3. Key Principles

- The method of assessments are valid, reliable accurate, accessible and well planned.
- Assessments may take place in the form of e-assessment.
- Students will receive feedback following formal assessment from the lecturer, either in written and/or verbal form.
- Assessment arrangements will be offered to those students with additional support needs.
- The College adheres to a rigorous quality assurance procedure.
- Students can appeal against internal assessment decisions and external assessment decisions.
- Assessment results must be recorded accurately and timely.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 All staff are responsible for ensuring the Assessment Policy is adhered to
- 4.2 All staff who assess students must retain the evidence in a secure location which can be accessed by authorised staff
- 4.3 All staff who assess students must adhere to assessment conditions and requirements laid down by the College and the awarding body
- 4.4 All Internal Verifiers must ensure that assessors meet the required assessment conditions, requirements and standards laid down by the College and the awarding body
- 4.5 The Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring quality assurance procedures are followed
- 4.6 The Quality Department are responsible for supporting and monitoring the quality assurance procedures within the College
- 4.7 All staff who assess students must record the results accurately within specified timelines

5. Related Documents

- Quality Enhancement handbook
- Your Guide to Being Assessed and How to Make an Academic Appeal
- Awarding Body Documentation (refer to Quality Enhancement Manager)
- Internal Verification Procedure

6. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Procedural Guidelines

1. Assessments

To measure and record a student's attainment a summative assessment is used. This can either be internal (conducted by the college) or external (conducted by an awarding body e.g. exam).

2. Feedback

All students receive feedback on a summative assessment in written format. Copies of the Student Feedback Form are available from the Publications Department.

3. Assessment Arrangements

Individual assessment arrangements can be put in place for students with additional support needs. Course Tutors/lecturers must liaise with the Programme Leader for Learning Support to provide this support.

4. Quality Assurance

4.1 Internal Assessment and Verification

4.1.1 Each Verification Group will be allocated to, and managed by, the most appropriate Head of Department.

4.1.2 Each Head of Department will ensure that at least one internal verifier is appointed to every Verification Group. Where the internal verifier is also an assessor, a second internal verifier must be appointed.

4.1.3 Internal assessment and verification should be undertaken as set out in the College Internal Verification Procedure.

4.1.4 Students should normally be given an assessment timetable for each unit or course. A minimum of 5 working days notice should be given in all cases.

4.1.5 When a student is given a date to submit an assessment, the student is expected to submit the assessment on or before that date.

If the student misses that deadline then this will count as a first attempt. Exceptional circumstances will be taken into consideration (see 4.1.7).

4.1.6 Where candidates have been unsuccessful in demonstrating their attainment of skills and knowledge or competence, they may be asked to either re-submit their evidence or be re-assessed at the assessor's discretion.

Re-submission should be offered where there is a minor shortfall in the evidence submitted. Clarification, extension, correction or additional evidence to cover a range statement may be required to meet the assessment criteria. There should normally be one or, in exceptional circumstances, two re-submission opportunities.

Re-assessment (where appropriate) should be undertaken where there is insufficient evidence to support achievement. An alternative assessment should be used. There should normally be one or, in exceptional circumstances, two re-assessment opportunities. The date for re-submission will be provided by the Lecturer.

4.1.7 Exceptional circumstances should fall into one of the following categories and must be authorised by the Head of Department:

- Department failure to follow the assessment policy/procedures
- student absence supported by letter or doctor's/self certificate
- mitigating circumstances e.g. personal issues, recognition of special assessment requirements
- lack of appropriate facilities or equipment

Any student wishing to claim exceptional circumstances appeal should do so through their course tutor, who makes a recommendation to the Head of Department.

4.1.8 Lecturers must use Internally Verified assessments only which have been stamped by the Internal Verifier.

4.1.9 Where the candidate evidence demonstrates knowledge and understanding, a holistic approach to assessment should be adopted.

Where the candidate evidence demonstrates skills competence, the existing individual performance criteria approach should be retained, unless arrangements documents indicate otherwise.

4.1.10 Evidence of plagiarism will lead to disciplinary procedures.

4.1.11 Where open book assessment is used, the following procedure should apply:

- the research can be undertaken within or outwith the College
- where the evidence may be used for appeals purposes, the final report should be written up under controlled conditions
- the assessor may clarify points raised by a student but may not give instruction on how to complete the assessment
- deadlines for completion should be adhered to and only amended by mutual agreement in advance of the deadline date

4.1.12 Higher National Qualifications –The Graded Unit will be internally marked and Externally Verified. The unit will be graded following an Exam Board meeting prior to the end of the Academic Year

4.1.13 All assessments must be undertaken in English.

4.1.14 Where summative e-assessment is used, candidates will be briefed in advance of the assessment. Briefings will include information on:

- the date and duration of the assessment authentication procedures and any ID required
- the work that will be included in the assessment
- the nature of the assessments (number and types of questions in the assessments)
- any permitted, non-permitted or provided data or aids, such as data sheets or calculators (physical or software)
- arrangements for carrying out practice assessments
- any provision made for candidates with special needs
- what to do in the event of technical problems

4.2 External Moderation

4.2.1 There are three types of external verification:

- visiting - where the candidate evidence is bulky or ephemeral (such as performance) used for all SVQs and HN
- central verification - where evidence is sent to the Awarding Body offices for verification. For SQA, where the finish date of an NQ unit is later than March, verification is retrospective
- postal verification - evidence will be sent from central offices to the verifier's home

4.2.2 All central and postal verification will be on completed candidate evidence.

4.2.3 Visiting verification takes place throughout the year with the College agreeing an appropriate time and date with the external verifier.

Visiting verifiers will verify both complete and incomplete candidate evidence.

4.3 Retention of Evidence

4.3.1 Where units are a component of an NQ Course, the evidence should be retained for possible use in support of an absentee or appeal submission, relating to the external assessment of the course. The disposal date is on completion of the appeals procedure.

4.3.2 All other NQ awards are externally verified after the completion date.

Please note that the completion date is the date given to the Student Records Department by Heads of Departments for the completion of a unit. This has not always corresponded to the date on which teaching finishes. Please check with Heads of Departments or Student Records for the actual completion date.

For all units with a completion date before the beginning of March:
The College will be informed if a unit is to be sampled for External Verification. Please hold all student evidence for three weeks after the completion date. All materials not chosen for External Verification can be disposed of after the three-week period.

For all NQ units with a completion date after the 1 March Retrospective Verification applies.

This occurs in September of the following Academic Year. Store all student evidence until the College has been informed of the sample for verification. The SQA Co-ordinator will inform Department by early July of what has been chosen in the sample. All other student assessment evidence can then be disposed of by returning it to the student or destroyed.

4.3.3 SVQs; External Verification will occur on one or two occasions during the delivery of the award. It is important to retain all student evidence until after the final verification event or until the date indicated by the awarding body.

4.3.4 HN units are subject to visiting verification prior to the completion date of the unit.

4.3.5 Written examinations or closed book assessment should be destroyed after the disposal date. Other assessment evidence such as projects, dissertations, case studies and SVQ portfolios may be returned to students if requested by individual students.

4.4 External Assessment

4.4.1 The assessment instruments most commonly used for external assessment are:

- written examinations or tests (question papers)
- projects or course-work (including investigations, assignments, reports and case studies)
- oral assessments or tests
- observation of performance or skill demonstrations

4.4.2 Written examinations will most commonly take place in May/June of each year.

4.4.3 Guidance on national standards is provided in the arrangements documents on the awarding body website.

4.4.4 The arrangements document for each subject area also clearly states the conditions for external assessment that must be adhered to.

4.4.5 Where external assessment evidence is generated within the College and sent to the awarding body, students are required to sign a statement that all assessment evidence produced is their own work.

4.4.6 Course estimates for each candidate undertaking National Courses, are required to be submitted to SQA. The actual date will be provided by the Student Records Department. The assessment instruments on which you base your estimates should be as similar as possible to the issued assessments guidelines for the Course.

4.4.7 Alternative Assessment Arrangements will be set up in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act.

SQA's policy on assessment arrangements for candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs allows for reasonable adjustments to be made to its published assessment arrangements for candidates when they are placed at a substantial disadvantage. The College must inform SQA if a candidate requires alternative assessment arrangements.

Arrangements are made on behalf of the candidate by the Student Records Department. The SQA document Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs Published September 2004 provides detailed information on the SQA policy and procedures for alternative assessment arrangements. Copies are available from the SQA website at:

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/Alt_Assessment_Arrangements_final.pdf

5. Internal and External Assessment Appeals

Internal Appeals

All students have the right to appeal an internal assessment using the College procedure detailed in the Student Handbook and Your Guide to Being Assessed and How to Make an Academic Appeal

External Appeals

If you expect a candidate to achieve an award and they do not, or if a candidate is awarded a qualification at a grade lower than you expected, you are free to appeal against the decision as per criteria.

Appeals can only be submitted by the centre and not the candidate.

Sufficient valid, authenticated, current evidence is required to support the claim. Evidence produced fairly recently under invigilated conditions, with good course coverage, will be more convincing than classwork.

Appeals can only be considered for assessment evidence submitted to SQA and not that of visiting assessors or oral assessments. Any concerns relating to visiting or oral assessments should be raised at the time.

Rapid Impact Assessment

What Impacts may there be from this Proposal on any Group's ability to use the College services?

Policy: Assessment

Positive Impacts (Groups affected)	Negative Impacts (Groups affected)
<p>The policy ensures there is a positive impact on those groups who require additional support. Individual assessment arrangements will be put in place for those students with additional support needs.</p> <p>The marked assessments are subject to internal verification and sampling is carried out to ensure that lecturers have marked fairly and without bias.</p>	<p>Students must undertake assessments in English, which may disadvantage those for whom English is not their first language.</p>
Actions taken to alleviate any negative Impacts: College will provide ELS support to those requiring additional ESOL support	
Recommendations:	

From the outcome of the Rapid Impact Assessment have negative impacts been identified for race or other equality groups?

Has a full Equalities Impact Assessment been recommended?

Yes

No

Reason for recommendation:

Manager's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Status:	Approved by JCC
Policy Dated:	February 2010
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Equality Impact Assessed:	February 2010