Assessment Policy

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Contents

Policy Statement

The School recognises that regular assessment and effective feedback make a significant contribution to learning and enable students to realise their full potential:

- Both formative assessment and summative assessment are central to the School's teaching and learning;
- Assessment strategies should be embedded in schemes of work and course and unit guides and understood by students;
- Assessment should occur regularly, appropriately, fairly and accurately;
- Records of regular assessments should be maintained and shared with students through Moodle and other means;
- Assessment should be sensitive to students' individual needs and take account of disabilities and learning difficulties.

The purpose of Assessments

To identify, both formatively and summative, the positive achievements of each student and areas of the work needing to improve:

- Formative assessment aims to recognise the positive achievements of each student and identify the area of their work that needs to be improved;
- Summative assessment enables the tutor and student to know how the quality of their work relates to the standards of external awarding bodies;
- To understand, clarify and share learning intentions, eliciting evidence of students' learning and providing feedback that moves them forward;
- To further anticipate and identify each student's individual learning and additional support needs, appropriate help and guidance can be provided;
- To identify the level of challenge from which each individual student would benefit;
- To encourage students to act as learning resources for one another through methods such as peer assessment and peer tutoring, and mentoring;
- To encourage students, individually and collectively, to take greater responsibility for their own learning through self-assessment methods;
- To inform the process by which each student set targets for attainment with their tutor;
- To enable tutors to evaluate students' understanding and progress and determine revisions to the way courses are taught and managed.

Policy Objectives

- To help students understand how they will be assessed and how their overall progress is monitored;
- To encourage students to reflect and evaluate their own performance and set targets for improvement;
- To encourage students to be resourceful and to take responsibility for their own work;
- To support a culture of reciprocal relationships where students collaborate appropriately with others;
- Maintaining an ethos that encourages resilience in facing challenges emphasises the importance of fulfilling commitments and meeting deadlines. To ensure that the student tracking system records the standard to which each student is working in each course, enabling this to be compared to an aspirational target grade based on prior achievement;

- To ensure that assessment, internal verification and moderation procedures and practices follow regulatory body requirements;
- To deter plagiarism and encourage good practice in the use of sources;
- To ensure that those with a legitimate interest, including parents and carers, are informed clearly and regularly of students' progress;
- To support tutors and teams by encouraging sharing good practice within and between groups and making available appropriate staff development and resources;
- To ensure that teams work following the School's Equality Policy;
- To obtain feedback from students to monitor how the policy works through the quality assurance system and Student Voice.

Responsibilities

a) The School Management Team are responsible for:

- The quality of provision and services offered to learners;
- Ensuring a commitment to continuous improvement;
- Supporting developments to improve the quality of assessment;
- Promoting staff development and the sharing of best practice in assessment;
- Reviewing this policy annually.

b) The Head of Curriculum is responsible for:

- Overseeing the Learning and Development Team, which encourages the development of good practice through "research lessons" and sharing best way within and between clusters, including around the theme of "Assessment for Learning";
- Acting as a point of consultation and advice about assessment issues and procedures;
- Overseeing the calendar of coursework deadlines;
- Chairing panels called to hear appeals against internal grading of coursework or over the late submission of coursework.

c) Curriculum for Student Progress is responsible for:

- Overseeing the core studies programme and individual progress reviews within;
- Controlling the annual reporting cycle;
- Overseeing the development and use of the Student Tracking System (STS);
- Chairing panels called to hear appeals against internal grading of coursework or over late submission of coursework.

d) The Quality Manager is responsible for:

- Being the Quality nominee for the ATHE programmes;
- Monitoring of the internal verification of the courses;
- Facilitating networking and training of teachers, including in assessment;
- Coordinate the processes for obtaining students feedback, including questionnaires and focus groups.

e) The Exams Officer is responsible for:

- Disseminating information to the awarding body;
- Entering and registering students for the appropriate examinations and re-sits promptly, processing the results and disseminating certificates Advising School managers of the awarding body's procedures for dealing with plagiarism and misconduct in examinations. Advising School managers on the awarding body's appeals procedure if there is justified dissatisfaction with the decisions of an external verifier.

g) Principal supported by Programme Leaders.

Areas responsible for:

- Leading and developing assessment practice and procedures within their School;
- Monitoring assessment practice and procedures within their School and ensuring that assessment processes and criteria are reviewed annually by Programme teams;
- Disseminating best practice within School;
- Ensuring that an appropriate volume of work is set for students by Programme teams and tutors;
- Ensuring that all programme teams adhere to assessment, progress review, target setting and reporting and recording procedures and deadlines;
- Acting as required in appeals and misconduct/plagiarism cases;
- Assessing the impact of assessment practices on students with disabilities and learning difficulties and ensuring Programme teams have access to appropriate advice and guidance;
- Implementing processes for obtaining feedback from students on assessment practice within the School.

h) Programme Leaders, supported by Tutors, are responsible for:

- Explaining their assessment and marking policy to students; specifying details on the setting, keeping, returning, and recording student work and adherence to deadlines;
- Weekly, setting all students independent study tasks – either whole assignments or particular tasks as parts of longer-term assignments or projects. Monitoring the completion of tasks and meeting deadlines by individual students;
- Providing regular feedback, including STS, aims to improve student performance (such feedback will take various forms, partly depending on the nature of each course, but it should include written feedback on an assignment at least once each half term);
- Ensuring consistency of assessment standards and procedures within Programme teams;
- Publishing course materials providing guidance on internal and external assessment arrangements, including deadlines; word limits; details of how much help and guidance tutors are allowed to give, e.g. looking at drafts etc.; rules on plagiarism; and moderation procedures;
- Keeping up-to-date team and individual records of work that has been assessed and, where appropriate, the mark or grade given;
- The assessment of the work of their students against national standards; if they are responsible for internal verification, they should provide the internal and external verifier with all the information they require and ensure and guarantee the authenticity of each student's work;
- Providing realistic grade of assessment practices upon students with disabilities and learning difficulties and, where possible and following awarding bodies' regulations, make appropriate modifications;

- Taking account of student feedback when planning the development of assessment methods for each scheme of work;
- Considering assessment methods, practices and procedures within the Programme;
- Developing assessment practice through the Teaching and Learning Development Programme, including through research lessons and projects.

Procedures

a) Initial Assessment

- Pre-enrolment interviews for students with learning difficulties, disabilities or particular medical circumstances are carried out by the Additional Support team;
- Additional support requirements are discussed with the student based on previous School and reports from external agencies;
- Profiles of individual students' learning needs will be available from the start of the course.

b) Coursework/Portfolio work Issues: Deadlines and Central collection

Clarity on when coursework deadlines fall in the year and the importance of meeting them benefits all members of the school community and is essential in preparing students for expectations of Higher Education and employment. For the purpose of this policy, coursework is defined as any piece of work which contributes to the final mark or grade of a course undertaken at the School.

- All students should meet published coursework deadlines;
- A calendar of coursework deadlines for the term will be posted at the beginning of the term. After these, changes should be very rare and require the Principal's authorisation for any changes;
- Coursework should be handed in to a central point and a receipt issued;
- Students may apply for an extension to the coursework deadline for legitimate reasons;
- Teachers should ensure that students know that their work may not be marked if they fail to meet a coursework deadline;
- Students may appeal to the Principal for Student Progress when work has been produced after the deadline;
- It is unacceptable for students to miss lessons to meet coursework deadlines;
- For long projects and individual studies, frequent interim deadlines should be built to help students structure their work and provide necessary guidance, supervision, and feedback. Failure to meet these interim deadlines should be treated seriously and trigger action via the student disciplinary process.

c) Standards Moderation

- When there is more than one tutor assessing work, internal standardisation should take place involving all involved with that unit:
  a) The work of all assessors across the mark range should be sampled;
  b) Teams must exchange work and discuss standards during the marking process and at the end both to support assessors and aid consistency.
- When there is only one tutor assessing work, Programme Leaders should ensure they are familiar with the standards required and that exam board procedures are followed;
- Teachers will only provide, or at least give an indication of, internally moderated coursework grades to students (otherwise students are not sure how well they have performed or whether it is worth doing

another assignment where that option exists with the proviso that all marks are subject to external moderation;

- Where work has not yet been internally moderated, teachers should be very careful about relaying their opinion about the standard of the work. Any indication of the likely eventual mark should be accompanied the caveat that the work has not yet been internally moderated and will be subject to external moderation.

d) Internal Verification of Programmes

- The course's internal verifier will normally support assessors by regularly offering guidance and advice and facilitating ongoing staff development and training.
- Programme teams should meet at least once each term to standardise marking.
- The Programme Leader should include the deadline dates for submission, assessment, and internal verification in the work and course and unit guides scheme.
- Internal verifiers should:
  a) Have led IV status and training for their course.
  b) Establish procedures to develop a common interpretation of standards between assessors.
  c) Sample each term's evidence of assessment decisions made by all assessors to monitor and ensure consistency in the interpretation and application of standards within the team.
  d) Establish record-keeping systems and documentation used for assessment and internal verification.
  e) Co-ordinate, review and agree assessment decisions with the assessors and external verifier.
- If an assessor is also the internal verifier, their work must be internally verified by a different staff member.

e) Academic misconduct and plagiarism

Course tutors must explain what constitutes plagiarism in their courses and the seriousness of the issue. Information on this issue should be in the student handbook and coursework assignment briefs for each course. Tutors must be vigilant for plagiarism and to guard against it. Students need to know that this is the case.

Core studies tutors will communicate and reinforce School and awarding body expectations and standards concerning avoidance of plagiarism.

Course tutors and core tutors will encourage students to develop the habit of acknowledging sources and copyright through footnotes and bibliographies, lists of sources and acknowledgement of assistance these are skills which should be introduced via the core studies programme and reinforced in each course.

Schemes of work should include formative tasks to help students develop good referencing and feedback and include comments on referencing.

Awarding bodies regulations on academic misconduct and plagiarism will be followed. All coursework must be authenticated as original by the student and the tutor. The School cannot authenticate work it does not believe to be original.

If a tutor suspects plagiarism or academic misconduct has taken place, it must be acted upon. The Heads of School and Programme Leader should be informed before the student is raised.

A student has been found to have plagiarised external coursework in one subject, their work for other subjects should also be scrutinised.

If plagiarism or academic misconduct is discovered before the date for final submission, the Programme Leader should resolve the matter, in consultation with the Principal of School. Whether or not to submit work for that unit should be made.

Work leans too heavily on a particular source but stops short of plagiarism this should be reflected in the mark awarded and the comments made on the work.

If plagiarism is detected early enough it may be possible to submit a replacement assignment, but none of the work contributing to the misconduct should be submitted.

If plagiarism is discovered at a late stage and a student's work cannot be authenticated, no mark should be given for that work, and no work will be submitted for that unit or part of a unit.

A meeting with the student should occur, and the student will be informed of the appeals procedure. A letter will go to the student and their parents with a copy placed in their file.

f) Certification and Re-sitting Units

The School will pay for a student's first attempt at any examination, and the student will pay for any re-sits.

g) Reasonable Adjustments

The general principles which are applied to decisions about special considerations reasonable adjustments for assessment are as follows:

- The nature of the reasonable adjustment will be determined according to the individual learner's assessment needs.
- A learner requiring reasonable adjustments should not be given an unfair advantage.
- Arrangements must be such that they do not mislead future users of the
- certificate about the learner's achievement and competence.
- Arrangements should not reduce the validity and reliability
- of the assessment and must not compromise the integrity of the assessment;
- The account should be taken of the learner's usual method of working.

h) Appeals Procedure

If students or staff wishes to appeal against the external awarding bodies decision, the procedures of those bodies need to be followed, and the Exams Officer informed.