

Assessment Policy – FE and Apprenticeships

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1 Scope and purpose

Assessment is the process of monitoring students' progress against the Awarding Organisation criteria in order to ensure that all students' work meets the national standards. It provides a continuous check on the quality of work produced by a student.

The College is committed:

- To ensuring that all students are fairly, accurately and regularly assessed in a consistent manner.
- To meeting and exceeding the requirements placed upon us by the awarding organisations.
- To ensuring that valid assessment decisions are reached for all our students and that external requirements are met fully.
- To ensuring internal quality monitoring supports academic staff in their assessment activities by affording them the opportunity to receive constructive feedback on the assessment decisions reached.

For the purpose of this policy, the term assessment encompasses all forms of activity that checks and validates the students' work, including external assessment. It may be implemented through the systems as required or laid down by examining or awarding organisations; or it may occur through observation of student activities, marking written work, assignments or any other form of evidence presented by a student.

Any task, activity, assignment or project that contributes to the students' final achievement in a qualification will fall within the scope of this policy.

This policy relates to Further Education (FE). A separate policy exists for higher education courses delivered at the College.

2 General principles

Every programme with work that is assessed and which contributes to the final assessment outcome of a student is subject to effective and valid assessment procedures. All assessment must be carried out by suitably qualified/experienced staff acceptable to the College and the Awarding Organisations.

All students must have their progress regularly reviewed by the tutor/assessor and appropriate verbal and written feedback given. Assessment must take into account, all types of evidence as laid down by the Awarding Organisation/scheme requirements.

Each programme must have identified members of staff who will assess or mark the students' work for that particular programme. Where trainee assessors or internal verifiers undertake assessments, all of their assessment decisions must be verified by a qualified assessor or internal verifier (IV) and countersigned.

Assessment must be carried out continuously throughout the year or as dictated by the Awarding Organisation guidance. In addition to this, each programme will identify appropriate periods of time when internal verification/moderation takes place. These times will be included in a course calendar, which should be kept in the course file.

Any evidence that is produced must meet the requirements of the Awarding Organisations and the College FE Quality Cycle. The evidence must be recorded on appropriate

documentation, which takes into account the requirements of Awarding Organisations and the College FE Quality Cycle.

Assessments must be Internally Verified before they are issued to students in addition to the Quality Assurance checks after the assignments have been marked. Internal verification/moderation must take place before assessment decisions are finalised and notified to students and certification claimed. When required, Assessors must attend standards meetings and engage in Continuous Professional Development as required by the College and Awarding Organisation.

Online Assessment

This policy also covers student completion and/or submission of work, in the context of online assessment, conducted through digital platforms such as Microsoft Teams and OneNote

- Online submission is defined as work that is completed or submitted electronically via digital platforms
- It is the responsibility of each respective Course Leader to define the type of file that they consider acceptable in the submission instructions presented to students. Any cause for doubt should be referred to the Head of Digital Learning
- Whilst most electronic file types can be accepted, it is the responsibility of the student to submit in the format specified in the submission instructions. This will ensure that the submission can be read and assessed
- If the submission consists of multiple documents, each upload attempt must contain the complete coursework submission. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all parts of the assessment are resubmitted
- Students are responsible for the quality of work submitted and it is their responsibility to check and resolve any corruption in transit or uploading
- If a student submits an electronic file for assessment that fails to comply with the published instructions, and the work cannot be assessed as a result, then it may be considered failure to submit or late submission

3 Inclusion

All students are entitled to open, fair and unbiased assessment opportunities which do not discriminate against any protected characteristics. Care will also be taken for students whose first language is not English.

An individual student's disability, medical needs, including relevant appointments and participation in religious festivals, will, where possible, be taken into consideration when agreeing assessment timescales and methods.

4 Reasonable Adjustment

A reasonable adjustment is an arrangement that can be put in place by the college based on the guidance of the awarding organisation prior to an assessment taking place. This is to help students with a long-term disability such as dyslexia, or who are temporarily impaired, such as a student who has broken their arm or pregnant, so they are not disadvantaged.

All reasonable adjustments will follow the guidance set out by the awarding organisations' policies and/or procedures. These must be followed to ensure that any arrangement made falls within the awarding organisations requirements.

All documents relating to reasonable adjustment must be saved and stored securely. The awarding organisation must be given access to any information or documents regarding reasonable adjustment and special considerations, when requested.

5 Special Consideration

Special Consideration is a process which considers the student's circumstances, for example, a temporary illness or injury, or some other event outside of the student's control, at or shortly before the time of assessment, which has or is likely to have had an effect on the student's ability to take the assessment.

All special considerations will follow the guidance set out by the awarding organisations' policies and/or procedures. These must be followed to ensure that any arrangement made falls within the awarding organisations requirements.

All documents relating to special considerations must be saved and stored securely. The awarding organisation must be given access to any information or documents regarding reasonable adjustment and special considerations, when requested.

6 Assessment Malpractice

Malpractice consists of those acts, or attempted acts, which undermine the integrity and validity of assessment, the certification of qualifications and/or which damage the authority of those responsible for conducting the assessment and certification process. The College does not tolerate actions (or attempted actions) of malpractice by students or staff.

The College may impose penalties and/or sanctions on students or staff where incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice have been proven. Awarding Organisations reserve the right, in suspected cases of malpractice, to withhold the issuing of results/certificates while an investigation is in progress. Depending on the outcome of the investigation results/certificates may be released or withheld.

The College will be vigilant regarding assessment malpractice and where malpractice occurs it will be dealt with in an open and fair manner.

This policy aims to:

- Clarify and explain malpractice in the context of assessment and certification for all qualifications
- Identify potential instances of malpractice which may be committed by students and staff
- Describe best practice in avoidance of malpractice (Appendix 2)
- Describe how the college will deal with malpractice, or attempted acts of malpractice (appendix 3)
- Identify possible penalties, sanctions and appeals

6.1 Student malpractice

Attempting to or actually carrying out any malpractice activity is not permitted by the College. The following are examples of malpractice by students; this list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered at the discretion of the College.

- plagiarism by copying and passing off, as the student's own, the whole or part(s) of another person's work with or without the originator's permission and without appropriately acknowledging the source.
- collusion by working collaboratively with other students to produce work that is submitted as individual student work. Students should not be discouraged from group work, as this is an essential key skill for many sectors and subject areas, but the use of minutes, allocating tasks, agreeing outcomes, etc.. are an essential part of group work and this must be made clear to the students.
- impersonation by pretending to be someone else in order to produce the work for another.
- fabrication of results and/or evidence.
- failing to abide by the instructions or advice of an assessor, a supervisor, an invigilator, or Awarding Organisation conditions in relation to the assessment/examination/test rules, regulations and security.
- misuse of assessment/examination material.
- introduction and/or use of unauthorised material contra to the requirements of supervised assessment/examination/test conditions.
- obtaining, receiving, exchanging or passing on information which could be assessment/examination/test related (or the attempt to) by means of talking or written papers/notes during supervised assessment/examination/test conditions.
- behaving in such a way as to undermine the integrity of the assessment/examination/test.
- the alteration of any results document, including certificates.
- cheating to gain an unfair advantage.

6.2 College staff malpractice

The following are examples of malpractice by college staff. Any suggested malpractice by members of centre staff will be dealt with using relevant HR policies. The list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by the college or an Awarding Organisation:

- failing to keep an approved marking and/or assessment scheme secure
- alteration of any approved marking and/or assessment scheme
- alteration of approved assessment and grading criteria
- assisting students in the production of work for assessment, where the support has the potential to influence the outcomes of assessment, for example where the assistance involves centre staff producing work for the student
- producing falsified witness statements, for example for evidence the student has not generated

- allowing evidence, which is known by the staff member not to be the student's own, to be included in a student's assignment/task/portfolio/coursework
- facilitating and allowing impersonation
- misusing the conditions for special student requirements, for example where students are permitted support, such as an amanuensis, this is permissible up to the point where the support has the potential to influence the outcome of the assessment
- failing to keep student electronic files secure
- falsifying records/certificates, for example by alteration, substitution, or by fraud
- fraudulent certificate claims, i.e. claiming for a certificate prior to the student completing all the requirements of assessment
- failing to keep assessment/examination/test papers secure prior to the assessment/examination/test
- obtaining unauthorised access to assessment/examination/test material prior to an assessment/examination/test.

6.3 Dealing with Malpractice

The Deputy Principal (Curriculum and Quality) or appropriate nominee will supervise investigations resulting from allegations of malpractice. Investigations into alleged malpractice against the Deputy Principal will normally be conducted by the Principal, or an appointed nominee.

The College's Staff Performance Management and Disciplinary policies will be used where malpractice is identified. During the investigation period, the college may:

- refuse student registrations/entries,
- withhold the release of results/certificate,
- withhold test/examination papers if the security of a test/examination is considered at risk pending the outcome of the investigation.

If malpractice is discovered, or has been reported directly by a third party, the college will conduct an investigation in a way commensurate with the nature of the malpractice allegation.

Any malpractice, or attempted acts of malpractice, which have influenced the assessment outcomes, will be reported by the centre to the relevant Awarding Organisation. The college will observe the procedures for reporting malpractice incidents as outlined by the relevant Awarding Organisation. Depending on the outcome of any investigation, certificates may be recalled and declared invalid.

The alleged incident will be reported to the relevant Awarding Organisation following due process. Where the college discovers or suspects anyone of malpractice, the individual will be made fully aware (preferably in writing) at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences; should malpractice be proven.

Where the college alleges that an individual may have been involved in act of malpractice, the individual will be given the opportunity to respond (preferably in writing) to the allegations made. The college will also inform such individuals of the avenues for appealing should a judgment be made against them.

Awarding Organisations reserve the right to access any documents held by the centre in relation to alleged malpractice. Also, the Awarding Organisation may report to the regulatory authorities certain cases (e.g. where members of staff are found to have committed malpractice) and include details of the action taken by the Head of Centre/Principal/CEO and/or the Governing Body. It may be necessary during this process to notify the funding authorities and for the Awarding Organisation to share information with other Awarding Organisations. In some cases of malpractice police may have to be informed.

6.4 Penalties, sanctions and appeals

An Awarding Organisation will take action to protect the integrity of its qualification in the future. This action may include:

- refusing to accept assessment/examination entries from a centre in cases where malpractice is established
- reserving the right to withdraw programme approval from centres where malpractice has been identified
- reserving the right to refuse to issue or to withdraw certificates.

The appeals process described in the College's Performance Management and Disciplinary policies will apply.

Awarding Organisations have established procedures for centres that are considering appeals against penalties and sanctions arising from malpractice. Appeals against a decision made by an Awarding Organisation will normally be accepted only from Principals/CEO (on behalf of students and/or members of staff) and from individual members of centre staff (in respect of a decision taken against them personally).

7 Maladministration

Maladministration consists of any activity, neglect, default or other practice that results in the non-compliance with awarding organisation requirements and regulations.

Maladministration events may also constitute malpractice, depending on the circumstances and evidence brought to bear during an investigation. For example, multiple occurrences of maladministration could constitute malpractice.

The following are examples of maladministration by college staff. Any suggested maladministration by a member of college staff will be dealt with using relevant HR policies. The list is not exhaustive and other instances of maladministration may be considered by the college or an awarding organisation.

- Failure to adhere to learner registration and certification procedures.
- Mistakes arising from inattention and/or inaccurate information.
- Claiming certification for incorrect units.
- Claiming certification for incorrect grades.
- Failure to maintain appropriate records.

- Poor communication.
- Inadvertently giving misleading or inadequate information.
- Unreasonable delays in responding to requests from awarding organisations.

8 Assessment Appeals

All students at Abingdon and Witney College enrolled to courses leading to a recognised award or qualification, and their parents, employers and sponsors, are entitled to assessment procedures which are open, fair, and non-discriminatory.

All complaints, including concerns, disagreements or misunderstanding relating to the assessment process will be treated seriously and professionally.

The college will facilitate access to relevant and necessary information and documents and will demonstrate due regard to matters of privacy, confidentiality and the reasonable interests of all concerned. Where disclosure is necessary to progress the complaint, the complainant will be informed in advance.

Every effort will be made to resolve such issues to the satisfaction and agreement of all parties.

The administration of assessment for a given award or qualification is the responsibility of the specified course leader/tutor. The course leader/tutor is responsible to a specified Curriculum Manager.

Appendix 3 provides further detail on the stages of the Appeal Process for classroom based students. Work Based Learning students follow a slightly amended procedure which is included in every learner portfolio.

9 Monitoring & Evaluation

Faculty managers are responsible for ensuring that faculty assessment processes meet the requirements of this policy and relevant Awarding Bodies. Where appropriate, External Verification Reports will provide evidence of monitoring and evaluation.

Evidence that both assessment and IV/moderation had taken place must be available for monitoring by faculty managers/Lead Verifier upon request. Internal monitoring of assessment activity will be carried out via internal verifier/moderator/Lead Verifier and overseen by faculty managers. Key roles and responsibilities for Setting and Validating Assignments and Assessments are outlined in appendix 4.

10 Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1 - Application for Appeal Against Internal Assessment Decision

The completed form must be returned to:

Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality
Abingdon and Witney College
Abingdon Campus
Wootton Road
Abingdon
OX14 1GG

Write the course title here

Write the name of the person who is appealing here

Address

..... Postcode

Nature of appeal [complaint]

[Please attach to this form the grounds for your appeal]

In your own words, explain the reason for the appeal [use additional pages if necessary]

Course tutor/assessor

The Appeals Panel will meet within 3 weeks of the receipt of this form. You are entitled to bring with you a friend who will act as an observer.

Name of friend who you want to be with you at the hearing

Qualification

I am unable to come to an Appeals Hearing at the following time

Signature

Date of posting

Please keep a copy of this form

Revised and updated November 2020

10.2 Appendix 2 - Avoiding malpractice – Best practice

- Use of the induction period and the student handbook to inform students of the college's stance on malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice
- Showing students the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources including websites. Students will not be discouraged from conducting research - indeed evidence of relevant research often contributes to the achievement of higher grades. Submitted work must show evidence that the student has interpreted and synthesised appropriate information and has acknowledged any sources used.
- Requiring students to declare that their work, submitted for assessment, is their own. An appropriate declaration must be signed and dated by the student or submitted electronically through a digital platform. Assessors are responsible for checking the validity of the student's work.
- Using supervised sessions during which evidence for assignments/tasks/coursework is produced by the student
- Updating assessment assignment briefs on a regular basis
- Assessing work for a single assignment/task in a single session for the complete cohort of students
- Using oral questions with students to ascertain their understanding of the concepts, application, etc within their work
- Getting to know students and their individual styles and abilities, etc.
- Ensuring access controls are installed to prevent students from accessing and using other people's work when using networked computers.

Appendix 3 - Four Stages of the Appeal Process

Stage 1- Informal

Complaint referred to and resolved by the assessor.

Any issue relating to assessment should, in the first instance, be brought to the attention of the relevant assessor or course leader/tutor who will seek to resolve it to the satisfaction and agreement of all concerned, within three weeks of notification. The issue must be reported as soon as practicable and within three weeks of the issue arising. Where the complainant fails to invoke Stage 1 within time then access to subsequent stages is barred.

Stage 2 – Informal

Complaint referred to and resolved by the faculty management team.

If the issue cannot be resolved at Stage 1, or if the complainant feels that it is inappropriate to consult the assessor or course leader, an appropriate faculty manager may be invited to investigate the issue and resolve it. The faculty manager must be notified as soon as practicable and within three weeks of the issue arising. Where the faculty manager resolves the issue he/she will report, in writing, to all relevant parties within three weeks of notification. Where the complainant fails to invoke Stage 2 within time then access to subsequent stages is barred.

Stage 3 – Formal – internal

Complaint referred to and resolved by the College Appeals Panel.

If the issue cannot be resolved at Stage 1 or 2 then the College's formal appeals procedures [outlined below] may be invoked. This stage is only available where Stages 1 and/or 2 have failed to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of all concerned. The request for Stage 3 must be made as soon as practicable and within three weeks of the conclusion of Stage 1 or 2.

Stage 4 – Formal – external

Complaint referred to the relevant Awarding Organisation.

If the issue cannot be resolved at Stage 3 then the appeals procedure of the relevant Awarding Organisation will be invoked.

College Procedure for an Appeal against an Assessment Decision

Stage 3 may be invoked where an issue concerning assessment could not be resolved by any of Stages 1 or 2 above. The issue must relate to one, or more, of the following:

1. Relevant assessment criteria have been met but not acknowledged, or,
2. Assessment procedures, including examinations, were not conducted fairly, or,
3. The student's performance was adversely affected by legitimate factors where there is independent medical or other evidence to support the claim, or,

4. The student was unjustifiably excluded from an examination or an assessment opportunity.

To invoke Stage 3 the complainant must complete the form attached as Appendix 1.

An appeals panel will be formed, chaired by the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality, and include two faculty managers not concerned with this dispute.

The complainant may be accompanied by a companion at the hearing who will solely act as an observer and will not participate.

The panel will seek to resolve the dispute by agreement with all relevant parties.

Where the panel fails to resolve the appeal, to the satisfaction of all concerned, it will be referred to the relevant Awarding Organisation.

When properly constituted the panel may

- Strike out complaints which the panel believes to be vexatious, frivolous or an abuse of process. Such decisions to be communicated to the parties in writing.
- Exercise discretion so as not to strike out complaints or appeals solely because of minor procedural deficiencies.
- Make such enquiries as are reasonable to resolve the issue. Confirm the original assessment judgement.
- Consult with competent examiners or vocational experts.
- Make recommendations to the Senior Management Team.

Appendix 4 - Roles and Responsibilities for Setting and Validating Assignments and Assessments

	The Assessor / Programme Team	IQA / Lead IV	Faculty management team
Planning Period	Plans the assessment schedule and assignments using approved awarding body paperwork and adhering strictly to guidelines. To include internal and external assessment.	Approves assessment schedule and ensures IV sample plan in place.	Oversees assessment planning process across faculty. Agrees assessment roles and responsibilities across all programme teams.
	Attend internal standardisation meetings	Lead internal standardisation meetings	Oversees internal standardisation process across faculty.
	Book onto relevant awarding body standardisation training and update meetings.		
	Participate in relevant IV training for your course and programmes and/or Lead IV accreditation.		Ensure appropriate and trained Lead IVs are in place for all courses and programmes across faculty.
	Registers students with exams department for onward registration with awarding bodies		Ensures all students registered with appropriate awarding bodies
External assessment	Ensures students are registered with Exams Department for appropriate external assessments in accordance with awarding body regulations. Exams to register students with awarding bodies.		Ensures that all students registered with awarding bodies for external assessments.
	Records external assessment grades when received on Markbook or Approved tracking system.		
Assignment Approval	Prepares assignment or tasks to meet required learning outcomes. Submits for IQA/Lead IV approval at least 10 days prior to distribution date.		

	Improvements made to assignment brief and passed to IV for approval	Approves assignment for distribution to students.	
	IVs/moderates assignment brief for other assessors using awarding body documentation. Assignment and copy of IV form with constructive comments and any actions for improvements returned to assessor – copy retained on file.	Coordinates internal verification of assignment briefs across assessors and other internal verifiers for the programme	Ensures turnaround times adhered to and that all assignment briefs have been IVd prior to distribution to students.
Formative Assessment	Routinely assesses work before the final assessment to provide constructive feedback to student on how work and processes can be improved.		Monitor that effective formative feedback is provided to students and samples to monitor and improve the quality.
Summative Assessment	Assesses work using awarding body or centre approved assessment and feedback sheets providing improvement actions for students.		
	Recommends extension of deadlines in exceptional circumstances and in accordance with awarding body regulations.	Approves any legitimate extension of deadlines.	Oversees process for extension of deadlines across all programmes where appropriate.
IV of assessment decisions	IVs other assessors' assessment decisions sampling an appropriate proportion of work covering a range of grades where possible. [Refer to specific awarding body requirements as these may differ]	Coordinates internal verification process across assessors and other internal verifiers for the programme	Leads internal standardisation process throughout faculty.
	Adjustments made to assessment decisions and signed off by IV.		
	Records grades in Markbook/approved tracking system		Oversees progress of students and grades achieved throughout programme of study.

	Assesses any resubmitted work within 10 working days and submits samples for IV as agreed with Lead IV. Records revised grades on Markbook/approved tracking system		
External quality assurance	Provide a sample of learner work, assessment feedback and supporting documents requested by the EQA	Respond to the EQA request. Ensure all documents in the sample are correct.	Oversee the EQA process, ensuring any actions or recommendations are implemented.
End of course grading submission	Identifies unit and course grades for each student		Oversees the end of course grading process for faculty
	Course leader records grades onto online or paper based Student Record Form (SRF) or other awarding body claim form.	Checks grades recorded on SRF and informs course leader of any discrepancies.	
	Errors corrected and signed off with Lead IV and course leader. Manager to check and counter sign SRF. Forms handed to Exams Office or Exams approve online and submit.		
Retaining assessment and IV records	Retain assessment and IV records in accordance with the specific awarding body regulations. All work should be available to the awarding body during the appeals process.		