



Higher Education Assessment Policy

Date approved:	13 December 2016
Approved by:	HE Academic Board
Review date:	December 2019
Responsible Manager:	Director of Higher Education
Group Executive Lead:	Group Director of Quality and Standards
Accessible to Clients/Students:	Yes

1. Consultation

Consultation undertaken with:-

Newcastle College	Yes
West Lancashire College	Yes
InTraining	No
Group Services	Yes
Kidderminster College	Yes
Newcastle Sixth Form College	No
Rathbone	No

2. Applicability of Policy to Organisation

This policy applies to:-

Newcastle College	Yes
West Lancashire College	Yes
InTraining	No
Group Services	Yes
Kidderminster College	Yes
Newcastle Sixth Form College	No
Rathbone	No

3. Scope and Purpose of Policy

- 3.1 This policy applies to all staff teaching on higher education programmes/awards and students undertaking a higher education programme/award with NCG, the institution.
- 3.2 Its purpose is to ensure that the HE assessment policy and procedures are implemented consistently across the institution and that the requirements of awarding bodies are met. In addition, the HE assessment policy and procedures are fully informed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code (B6).

- 3.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with the HE Assessment Framework which details the processes and systems which are used in conjunction with the HE Assessment Policy to provide a structure to assure the quality and standards of HE assessment design and standards as well as feedback to students.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 Academic Standards

The institution is responsible for the academic standards and quality of the programmes it designs and delivers and is therefore accountable for:

- 4.1.1 Designing, approving, supervising and reviewing the assessment strategies for programmes and awards
- 4.1.2 The consistent implementation of rigorous assessment practices, which ensure that the academic/professional standard for each award element is set and maintained at the appropriate level and that student performance, is properly judged against this.

4.2 Principles

The principles, procedures and processes of assessment should be explicit. The key principles that underpin this assessment policy are:

- 4.2.1 **Validity** - ensures the assessment measures what it claims to measure
- 4.2.2 **Reliability/Consistency** - refers to the accuracy with which an assessment measures the skill or attainment it is designed to measure. A reliable assessment consistently gives the same results under similar conditions.
- 4.2.3 **Fairness** - a fair and timely assessment, in addition to being valid and reliable, provides equity of opportunity for students in line with current equality legislation.
- 4.2.4 **Transparency** - a transparent assessment policy and guidelines will ensure clarity and understanding by all relevant stakeholders.
- 4.2.5 **Quality** - a key principle in ensuring the credibility and status of awards. Quality will be assured through adherence to the regulations and requirements of awarding

and professional bodies and the institution policy and guidelines, national award standards, programme approval and validation and monitoring and evaluation.

4.2.6 **Engagement** - refers to the process of engaging staff and students in an understanding both of the purpose of assessment and the institutional contexts in which assessment takes place. The development of such is essential to everyone involved in assessment practice insofar as learning is most effective when students and staff share an understanding of academic and professional standards and the regulatory environment which frames those standards. An active engagement with assessment practice and its relationship to the learning process should be integral to module and programme design and approval. Students are better able to achieve complex and sophisticated outcomes from their learning experiences when they have the opportunity to understand, shape, and internalise expected standards of assessment. Engagement with assessment helps foster autonomous and reflective student learning and enables staff to review and enhance their own practice as professional educators.

4.2.7 **Setting of Assessment** - all assessment should be designed and planned to ensure:

- a. The module descriptor (module specification and delivery detail) is aligned to the principles of assessment and is used appropriately in linking the student learning outcomes with assessment criteria for the programme/award
- b. The number of assessments and relevant weightings are consistent and comparable across elements contributing to a programme/award and are validated either at the programme validation event or amended through the Annual Planning process
- c. Students are made aware at the start of their programme of the number and frequency of assessments, with planned dates of submission at the beginning of the academic year via a programme assessment schedule which clearly indicates assessment deadlines and resit opportunities/dates
- d. The assessment briefs are prepared carefully in line with the approved documentation
- e. All assessment briefs have an associated rubric (referred to as contextualised grading criteria)

- f. Moderation of assessment briefs takes place prior to publication to students
- g. Assessment materials are internally, and for Levels 5, 6 & 7 externally verified, before publication
- h. It conforms to the rubric within the awarding body Academic Regulations for setting examination papers and the conduct of examinations
- i. Appropriate guidance is available for the organisation of group assessments;
- j. Assessment design is regularly reviewed to ensure that the amount and timing of assessment enables effective and appropriate measurement of students' achievement of intended learning outcomes;
- k. Formative assessment provides students with tasks and the opportunity to try out a particular assessment. It is used to provide students with developmental feedback to improve future summative assessments. The work does not count towards the student's achievement on their programme.
- l. Summative Assessment measures achievement of the learning outcomes linked to the required level and standard of the programme. The work is graded and recorded
- m. Assessment design will consider the concept of Student As Producer to enable effective engagement with students to provide an opportunity to share and develop students own knowledge in an academic environment.
- n. Assessment design should encourage collaboration between staff, students and others.
- o. Any changes to the assessment schedule must be notified to students at least 7 calendar days in advance of the original assessment deadline date
- p. Academic assessment practices ensure that students with declared disabilities or a specific learning need are given the opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes and competence standards

through their Alternative Assessment Agreement (AAA).

- q. Academic support and guidance are accessible and appropriate for students with declared disabilities or a specific learning need.

4.3 Conduct of assessment

All assessment will be conducted with rigour and fairness with due regard for security. Assessment will be conducted through:

- 4.3.1 Ensuring that the schedule and amount of assessment will be consistent across the institution
- 4.3.2 Ensuring that processes are developed and in place so that assessment for a programme/award provides effective and appropriate measurement of the achievement of students of the intended learning outcomes and that they effectively support learning
- 4.3.3 Assessments that allow students to achieve at an appropriate level and provide opportunities for the more able students to stretch themselves
- 4.3.4 Assignment briefs and other assessment materials that clearly identify learning outcomes being assessed and the criteria that will be used to measure achievement
- 4.3.5 Written assignment briefs (within module guides) are fully discussed with the student group well in advance and before assessment takes place
- 4.3.6 The provision of information and guidance about plagiarism (see internal policy) and other related regulatory requirements.

4.4 Submission of assessment

All submission of assessment will take place in line with the institution internal procedure. The procedure covers:

- 4.4.1 Students must identify their work as their own at the point of submission
- 4.4.2 The submission of all written work for summative assessment must be via Turnitin.
- 4.4.3 Arrangements for other assessments such as video submission, presentation and practical work must conform to the Marking and Internal Moderation requirements and are managed by the school and meet the requirements of the awarding body and the PSRB (if applicable)
- 4.4.4 Evidence of all submissions are collected and stored by the school for 3 years as stated in the 'Retention of Student

Work ' document (see Quality Reference Manual, document HE31).

- 4.4.5 Students must be provided with a receipt for each electronic or hard copy assessment
- 4.4.6 The appropriate awarding body regulations cover the following:
 - a. Late submission arrangements and regulations
 - b. The process and procedures for claiming extenuating circumstances.

4.5 Marking and Grading

The institution requires that for all programmes/awards:

- 4.5.1 There are clear criteria for the marking and grading of assessments which are made known to the student at publication of the assessment brief
- 4.5.2 Robust mechanisms are in place for marking and for the moderation of marks
- 4.5.3 There are clear criteria for the aggregation of marks and grades in line with the requirements of the awarding body
- 4.5.4 Awarding body regulations are implemented fairly and consistently in relation to reassessment, progression, final awards and classifications
- 4.5.5 All marks/grades are formally recorded on MRS prior to being released to the student
- 4.5.6 Summative marks/grades/competences are only confirmed to the student after the full internal and external verification and assessment board processes have taken place;
- 4.5.7 The process for appeal against assessment decisions lies with the awarding body as outlined in the appropriate regulations. Students are made aware of this in the student handbook.

4.6 Internal Moderation

- 4.6.1 Internal moderation will be conducted according to internal procedures and will demonstrate robustness across the institution

4.7 Feedback to Students on Performance

- 4.7.1 Clear, specific and timely feedback is provided to students on all assessed work in order to promote learning and facilitate improvement (within 20 working days).
- 4.7.2 Formative feedback will be provided to the student to indicate strengths and weaknesses and provide clear information about what the student needs to do to improve their performance. No mark will be provided for formative feedback.
- 4.7.3 Summative feedback will be produced and stored electronically. For written work submitted through Turnitin it will be distributed electronically. The feedback produced for assessments which are submitted outside of the Turnitin process must also be produced, distributed and stored electronically. More detailed information regarding good practice in relation to feedback is provided within the HE Assessment Framework and implementation document
- 4.7.4 Students will be informed about the position regarding the reading of draft work for a module prior to submission. No mark/grade will be given for draft work, it is expected formative feedback will be provided

4.8 Recording documentation and publication of assessment results

- 4.8.1 The institution requires that all assessment decisions are recorded and documented accurately and systematically. The decisions of relevant examination boards and committees will be published as quickly as possible, consistent with rigour of assessment and accuracy.
- 4.8.2 Awarding body documentation will be completed in a timely fashion (normally within 5 working days of assessment board decisions) and returned to the appropriate examination section for forwarding to awarding bodies.

4.9 Monitoring and review of assessment

- 4.9.1 All assessment strategies and their implementation will be reviewed annually. The institutional policy is that all approved programmes/awards contain the full range of assessment for the programme/award and specify how the marks obtained shall be used to calculate an overall aggregate (expressed as a percentage) to be used in assessing the award of the qualification or decisions on progression.

- 4.9.2 The range of assessment methods should be appropriate to the subject area. All assessment is intended to demonstrate that the learning outcomes for a module on a programme/award have been achieved and should be applied with rigour. Information is collected by institutions on disclosure of impairments and is used appropriately to monitor the applications, admissions and academic progress of students with declared disabilities or a specific learning need.

4.10 Staff development and training

- 4.10.1 The institution requires that all staff involved in the assessment of students are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities. Assessors will be appropriately qualified and meet the requirements of the awarding body and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code.

4.11 Regulatory requirements of awarding and professional bodies

- 4.11.1 The institution requires that all staff are aware of and operate under the specific regulatory requirements of its awarding bodies and, where appropriate, professional bodies. The institution has developed appropriate internal policies and procedures that cover major requirements and in particular to:
- a. Modifications to processes and procedures as a result of regulatory changes
 - b. Principles
 - c. Setting, conduct and submission of all modes of assessment
 - d. Marking and grading of assessment
 - e. Internal and external moderation
 - f. Feedback to students
 - g. Module reassessment and appeals
 - h. External examiners
- 4.11.2 The institution will ensure that all programme/awards respond proactively to external examiner reports and that issues are included within the annual monitoring and review processes:
- a. Progression and award classifications
 - b. Assessment boards
 - c. Documentation, recording of outcomes and publication of results
 - d. Monitoring and review of assessment

5. Linked Policies

None

6. Linked Procedures

- a. Higher Education Assessment Framework
- b. Guide to Good Practice in Assessment
- c. For appeals, refer to the regulations of the relevant awarding body.

7. Equal Opportunities Statement

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed (November 2016) by the Head of HE Quality and Standards

7.2 This policy will be implemented in accordance with the institution's Policy on Valuing Diversity and with consideration of assessment guidelines set out by awarding bodies and where appropriate, the QAA UK Quality Code B6.

7.3 The institution is committed to actively promoting entitlement for students with declared disabilities or a specific learning need. This will be achieved by:

7.3.1 Ensuring appropriate consideration for specialist examination and assessment facilities for students with disabilities

7.3.2 Providing clear and timely information for students on examination regulations in relation to candidates with declared disabilities and candidates who require special consideration

7.3.4 Ensuring assessments are set that provide equal opportunity for all candidates to demonstrate their achievement of the required learning outcomes

7.3.5 Development of a structured procedure, process and standardised documentation to ensure that the above aims are met.

7.4 Where the Academic Appeals Procedure applies to any student with a declared disability or a specific learning need the institution will make particular reference to any reasonable adjustment that has been made or should be made for that individual.

7.5 Academic appeals will also be monitored in relation to race, gender and disability.

8. Location and Access to the Policy

8.1 The Higher Education Assessment Policy is located on NCG HE Registry site on SharePopint: Policies and Procedures r

9. Person Responsible for the Policy

Director of Higher Education

10. Variations to the Policy

There are no variations to this policy.

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