

Policy: Student Assessment Policy

Date: September 2019

Approved by: Vice Principal,
Curriculum and Quality

Signature:

1. Scope

- 1.1 This policy applies to all students' work which is internally assessed and which contributes to a qualification validated at Gloucestershire College by a range of awarding bodies. This includes students who, due to the academic levels of their programme require reasonable adjustments to be made to ensure equality of opportunity. The relevant assessment policies and regulations of higher education institutions will apply to students' work which contributes to a qualification validated by partner universities. University provision follows university student assessment policies which meet the expectations for standards and quality and core practices S1, S2, S3, S4 and Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6 and Q9 of the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

2. Aims

- 2.1 To maintain academic standards.
- 2.2 To ensure access to fair, relevant and appropriate assessment, which is robust, valid, reliable and takes into account equality of opportunity and diversity. Through this the College aims to comply with guidelines issued by the Equality Act 2010 for making reasonable adjustments for students with prescribed differences.
- 2.3 To provide a transparent and equitable procedure for students to submit work for assessment, that takes account of individual student learning needs, and differing awarding body requirements.
- 2.4 To outline the procedures staff and students need to follow in order to apply this policy, and the consequences for not doing so.
- 2.5 To specify the different procedures staff and students need to apply to assessment submission, re-assessment, and marking of assessment according to awarding body and programme type.
- 2.6 Ensure programmes are delivered in a way that encourages learners to take an active role in the creative learning process and that assessment of learners reflects this approach.
(Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area ESG)

3. Definitions

- 3.1 AE Form - the form a student uses to request an extension to a published date (normally up to a maximum of 20 working days).

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 All staff members have a responsibility to give full and active support to the policy by ensuring it is known, understood and implemented. Failure to do so may be defined as malpractice and subject to consequences as defined in the Assessment Malpractice Policy.
- 4.2 Students have a responsibility to know, understand and implement this policy. Failure to do so may be defined as malpractice and subject to consequences as defined in the Assessment Malpractice Policy.
- 4.3 Heads of departments are responsible for ensuring their staff and students know and implement this policy and procedures, and for monitoring and reporting on their application. This includes:
 - 4.3.1 ensuring that all staff who are recruited to assess student work are competent and undertake this role effectively;
 - 4.3.2 ensuring initial assessment is undertaken in line with the approved policy so that students' support needs are identified and arranged as required;
 - 4.3.3 designating and publishing arrangements for the submission of student work. This may be through the virtual learning environment (VLE);
 - 4.3.4 monitoring regularly the speed of the return of marked work in line with policy timeframes;
 - 4.3.5 ensuring that awarding body requirements are followed;
 - 4.3.6 organising and chairing student progress and examination boards.
- 4.4 The Head of Learning Support is responsible for providing the Examinations Team with details of students who have agreed special arrangement/ reasonable adjustment needs.
- 4.5 It is the responsibility of the course team to follow the relevant awarding body guidelines for archiving student work.
- 4.6 The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality is responsible for this policy.

5. Monitoring

- 5.1 The application of this policy will be monitored through student progress and examination boards, audit of assessment, external verifier / examiner feedback, student feedback, reviews of appeals.

6. Policy statement

- 6.1 Assessment is at the heart of the learning experience for students and serves many purposes. These include:
- 6.1.1 providing a means for measuring student achievement;
 - 6.1.2 enabling students to progress;
 - 6.1.3 enabling students to obtain feedback on the quality of their learning;
 - 6.1.4 enabling students to know how to further improve the quality of their learning;
 - 6.1.5 giving teachers a means to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and consistency of practice;
 - 6.1.6 giving students the opportunity to self and peer assess work in order to enable understanding of assessment criteria and deepen learning.
- 6.2 Assessment methods and their application are integral to the delivery and planning of the curriculum and should reflect the intended learning outcomes at all stages of the programme. When planning assessment, teachers should ensure that intended learning outcomes are not over assessed. The assessment process should be efficient and manageable for teachers and students. Teachers should be aware of the impact that assessment has in shaping students' dispositions towards learning, their understanding of goals, and their motivation. In view of the value of the different types of assessment for the student learning process, it is essential that assessment methods and procedures are carefully planned to reflect intended learning outcomes. In particular, teachers need to determine why a particular assessment method is the best way of evaluating student performance in a chosen element or module, and to provide alternative methods of assessment to promote equality of opportunity.
- 6.3 Assessment principles should be transparent for all of the participants, from students to external verifiers / examiners. Assessment processes and regulations will be transparent, consistent and equitable across courses.

7. Initial assessment

- 7.1 FE students will / HE student may undertake an initial assessment process to help them achieve their qualifications, career goals, and aspirations. Information relating to students can be collected by liaison with school, employer, previous learning experiences and qualifications, aptitude and potential, personal effectiveness, literacy and numeracy skills, learning styles, interests, specific and/or moderate learning differences or disability which may affect learning.
- 7.2 Following initial assessment and the start of a course, students and teachers may identify unknown or additional learning differences that may necessitate the provision of learning support and/or special arrangements/reasonable adjustments to enable learning and assessment. This should happen as soon as possible, and normally no later than within the first 6 weeks of a course.

8. Reasonable adjustments

- 8.1 Assessment principles will take account of Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act which states that discrimination against disabled applicants or students can take place by either treating them less favourably than others, or by failing to make a reasonable adjustment when they are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other students for a reason relating to their disability. A reasonable adjustment would involve taking action to alleviate a substantial disadvantage, which could mean changing standard institutional procedures. A number of reasonable adjustments for students with learning differences can be made, including the use of alternative assessment tasks, deadline extensions, the provision of additional technological and human support, and considerate marking. These recommendations will require action to be taken by all academic staff, as well as support staff.
- 8.2 It is not intended to deliver favourable treatment to students with learning differences, but rather assessment practices must offer a reasonable adjustment to standard assessment procedures to take account of the reality of a student's difference. Furthermore, it is not intended to enforce the lowering of academic standards within the College or programme.
- 8.3 The JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) provides clear guidelines for access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special considerations for students. Students are required to declare and provide evidence of existing learning differences that necessitate special arrangements to enable learning and assessment when they enrol on a course. Once enrolled on a course, if a student realises they have not declared a known learning difference, they are required to do so by telling their teacher or personal tutor. It is very important that students receive appropriate support or reasonable adjustments for conditions such as dyslexia throughout their course. Requests from students for special arrangements/reasonable adjustments only made prior to an assessment deadline or examination will not be considered if these have not been agreed earlier in the course.
- 8.4 Any assessment which contributes to a student's learning aim will be carried out according to the requirements of the relevant awarding body and will be subject to internal verification or moderation.
- 8.5 NVQ assessments will be carried out in the workplace or in a realistic work environment and in accordance with the Joint Awarding Body Guidance, and the NVQ Code of Practice.
- 8.6 All assessors and verifiers working on national vocational qualifications will have completed or be working towards the appropriate assessor / verifier awards and will be technically competent. All assessors and verifiers on other qualifications should be qualified to at least one level above the one being assessed.
- 8.7 Assessment processes and outcomes will be monitored and evaluated through the annual monitoring process.

9. Recognition of prior learning

- 9.1 Recognition of prior learning (RPL) will be possible where a student can demonstrate they have already successfully gained accreditation / achievement, through a valid assessment methodology, of learning outcomes that relate to outcomes to be assessed on the programme for which they are applying. (PROC 02-04).

10. Scheduling and delivering assessment

- 10.1 Students will be given clear and full information at the outset of their programme on the nature, timing and general criteria of assessment, intended learning outcomes, and the need to plan effectively and manage their own learning appropriately. The Heads of School lead on assessment planning in administration weeks to ensure appropriate assessment procedures are in place.
- 10.2 All students will be assessed according to a pre-published assessment schedule, and at least once per term. Course teams will issue students with an assessment schedule expected for each qualification during the year. Deadlines will enable sufficient time for remarking where this is appropriate. Action will be taken where a student does not meet the required assessment standards.
- 10.3 Assessment undertaken under controlled conditions, for example examination, will be conducted according to awarding body requirements, the College Examination Policy and Procedures for Controlled Assessment. (POL 36, PROC 02-07).
- 10.4 All students **MUST** accurately reference all source material including images in assignments.
- 10.5 Students must sign a statement of academic authenticity when submitting assessments or confirmation statement, prior to uploading their assessment work to the VLE. This states that the work is their own and that it has not been copied from any other source e.g. internet, book, another student or group of students.
- 10.6 Course teams will ensure that assessed work is the student's own. Any student submitting copied or plagiarised work will be subject to disciplinary procedures. Assessments which include evidence of gross plagiarism will be failed. Assessments may be scanned through our latest plagiarism software as part of this process.

11. Arrangements for the submission, re-submission, and re-take of student work

- 11.1 Where an awarding body specifies detailed rules relating to the submission of assessment, the number of re-assessment opportunities and conditions for re-submitted assessments; these need to be applied by College teams.
- 11.2 Learners studying distance learning qualifications delivered by the college or in partnership with another organisation will be allowed THREE re-assessment opportunities, (thus giving them a maximum of FOUR opportunities to submit summative assessment work).

12. Arrangements for extending assessment submission deadlines

- 12.1 All student assessments must be submitted by the deadlines specified on the published assessment schedule. Students can apply for an extension, using an Assignment Extension Form (AE form). Their work will be marked but no resubmission opportunity will be given.
- 12.2 Any student who fails to attend classes on a submission date must attempt to upload their work via the VLE, or email their work to the course teacher, or deliver their assignment to College on the submission date. Exceptions to this will be for students who have written proof that they have been absent on long term sickness, bereavement etc. A student who fails to submit their work to deadline and who does not have exceptional circumstances that are agreed by their Head of School will have their work marked but no resubmission opportunity will be given.
- 12.3 If a student realises they have exceptional circumstances that means they will be unable to meet a submission deadline, they must submit an AE Form by the deadline date and time to their subject lecturer. The Head of School will consider this request. If approved, a revised deadline will be issued which will normally be no longer than a maximum of 20 additional working days. No extension will be given because of corrupt electronic storage devices or lost work.
- 12.4 It is recommended that wherever possible teachers give consideration to requests for extensions for the submission of coursework from students with dyslexia:
 - 12.4.1 The length of the extension is at the teacher's discretion and should take account of the student's individual circumstances. As a guideline, an extension ranging from 7– 14 days is considered reasonable. This should only be confirmed following the submission an AE Form. In submitting an extension request a student may choose to attach a sticker to verify they have dyslexia. Wherever possible, however, the teacher should inform the student that this is the correct procedure.
 - 12.4.2 When a student with dyslexia requests an extension on a submission deadline, it is recommended that teachers consider granting the extension where the student has made reasonable efforts to meet the deadline and where there appears a genuine reason for non-submission. The general difficulties with time management and study skills that are characteristic of dyslexia may be considered a sufficient reason to grant an extension, if the student has demonstrated that he or she has made reasonable efforts towards completing

the assessment. Any supporting evidence from other individuals such as the student's dyslexia study skills tutor (if s/he has one) or the Dyslexia Plus tutor can be taken into account. However, a teacher can refuse to grant an extension if there does not appear to be a reasonable reason for missing the deadline.

- 12.5 Where a student is unable to submit an AE Form by the stated deadline due to serious illness or hospitalisation, such extenuating circumstances will be taken into consideration by the head of department. In such cases the student will be required to provide evidence of the circumstances.
- 12.6 All student assessments must be submitted to the place or person designated by the Head of School. This may be through the virtual learning environment (VLE). Details of hand in procedures will be published in the student / course handbook and on assignment briefs.

13. Marking student work

- 13.1 All student work submitted by the due date will be internally assessed with appropriate assessor feedback for students, internally verified, returned to the student and recorded on ProMonitor within the following timeframes:

Entry level, Level 1 (inc. NVQ)	2 working weeks
Levels 2, 3 (inc. NVQ)	3 working weeks
Levels 4, 5, 6, 7 (inc. NVQ)	4 working weeks
NVQ complete portfolios	3 working weeks

- 13.2 Written, verbal or other appropriate feedback will be provided to students in order to promote learning and tell the student what they need to do to improve. Where an assessment is based on group work, each student will receive a grade and individual feedback.
- 13.3 Assessment decisions will be recorded accurately, systematically and will be accessible by the course team members and personal tutors. Grades will be recorded on ProMonitor.
- 13.4 Alternative arrangements must be made to internally assess and feedback on students' work, if a teacher is related to a student or has a personal relationship with them. A conflict of interest must be declared to the Head of School.
- 13.5 Alternative arrangements must be made to internally verify students' work, if a teacher is related to a student or has a personal relationship with them. A conflict of interest must be declared to the Head of School.
- 13.6 Late work maybe marked at the Head of School's discretion. If the first submission **is** marked a penalty will be applied, usually no opportunity to resubmit. If the first resubmission (submitted late) **is** marked, then **all relevant assessment criteria** must be marked such as Pass, Merit and Distinction; then a penalty applied of NO resubmission. For example, for Pearson RQF HNs and BTEC level 3s: mark late work against ALL grading criteria (Pass, Merit, Distinction) and apply the penalty: no opportunity for a resubmission.
- 13.7 Pearson HNC students may still be awarded an HNC if they have not

achieved a Pass on one of the 15 credit units completed, but have completed and passed the remaining units. These students will be allowed to progress to an HND.

- 13.8 Pearson HND students may still be awarded an HND if they have attempted but not achieved a Pass in one of the 15 credit units at L4 and similarly if they have attempted but not achieved one of the 15 credit units at L5. They must complete and pass the remaining units for an HNC or HND as per the unit rules of combination of the required qualification.

14. Reasons for failure

- 14.1 Students will fail assessments if:

- 14.1.1 they fail to submit
- 14.1.2 they fail to meet the pass criteria
- 14.1.3 they fail to meet the pass criteria after TWO resubmission attempts at entry level, level 1, BTEC Workskills, BTEC specialist programmes
- 14.1.4 they fail to meet the pass criteria after THREE resubmission attempts at entry level/level1/level2/level 3 distance learning qualifications
- 14.1.5 they fail to meet the pass criteria after 1 resubmission attempt at levels 2, 3, 4, 5 (including new BTEC RQF HNs)
- 14.1.6 they fail to submit by a re-take deadline - BTEC L3 QCF only
- 14.1.7 after investigation, the Head of School has identified that the assignment shows evidence of gross plagiarism.

15. Monitoring students' assessment progress and progression

- 15.1 Interim student progress boards will be held at appropriate times throughout a programme; normally at the end of each term or first semester. The purpose of these boards is to monitor student progress against assessment schedules and target grades, and to implement timely intervention for students if appropriate. For courses where internal assessment / course work contributes to student's final grades the Board will also review students' achievement in relation to their attendance rates in order to assure themselves that students have attended College sufficiently during the assessment period in order for them to have been able to complete and achieve assessments.
- 15.2 The overall grades for students studying programmes assessed wholly by internal assessment will be confirmed by the programme examination board held at the end of the academic year. Board decisions can be subject to appeal.
- 15.3 The opportunity for students to progress from one academic year / qualification to the next is dependent on the successful achievement of all assessment criteria or credits from the previous year or qualification.

16. Appeals

- 16.1 Students have the right to appeal against any assessment decision except where the awarding body does not permit this. This will be undertaken in accordance with the Academic Appeals and Extenuating Circumstances Procedure (PROC-09-01).

17. Archive of student work

- 17.1 For quality purposes, each course should maintain an archive of marked work that is representative of the range of assessment tasks and grades awarded. These can then be used for staff induction and the development of benchmark standards. The sample should be periodically updated, at least every three years. Assessed coursework that has not been collected by the student will be retained by the College for a specified period, after which time it may be disposed of. These time periods will be specified to students.

Related Policies and Procedures

Ref. No.	Related Policies and Procedures
POL-35	Assessment Malpractice Policy
PROC-09-01	Academic Appeals and Extenuating Circumstances Procedure
PROC-02-04	Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure
	Assessment Appeals Procedure – A Guide for Students

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