

## **ASSESSMENT POLICY**

### **Scope**

The policy applies to all courses leading to qualifications which contain elements of internally assessed work.

### **The Policy - An introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework of generic procedures which reflect the requirements of all awarding bodies; it emphasises quality assurance procedures relating to assessment and includes an appeals procedure. If there is a conflict between any guidelines and regulations issued by awarding bodies and these generic procedures, the awarding body and subject-specific instructions shall prevail.

### **Course Information**

Course teachers (assessors) should give students, as early as possible in the course, detailed information concerning assessment on the course (e.g. external and internal exams, internally assessed coursework) and, in particular, subject specific information on the completion of coursework (e.g. internal and external deadlines, the number of redrafts and revisions allowed). This information may be contained in a course handbook, a scheme of work, or subject-specific information from the awarding body.

Students also need to be made aware of regulations governing plagiarism and malpractice in the completion of coursework.

### **Written Assignments**

Where learning is assessed through written work in the form of a set assignment, the assignment will have:

- A title.
- Tasks which are clearly defined and relate to the marking/grading criteria.
- Marking or grading criteria which are specific and refer to the unit, module or other element of the qualification being assessed.
- Contextualised grading criteria, where this is a requirement of the awarding body.
- A handing-in date

### **Assessment**

Staff assessing student work should be competent in the particular vocational/skill/academic area being assessed, and possess or be studying for assessor qualifications, if these are required by the awarding body.

Awarding body regulations should be followed with respect to special circumstances, for instance: requests for a deadline extension, the provision of extra assistance, late or missing coursework.

Teachers assessing work should remain alert to the possibility of plagiarism and other forms of malpractice. The appeals procedure in appendix 1 covers appeals against decisions to reject a candidate's coursework on the grounds of plagiarism or malpractice.

Different qualifications have different requirements for giving feedback to students after internal assessments, and these should be explained to students and followed in a consistent fashion. For instance:

- Courses other than GCE/GCSE require that students should be given written feedback, for instance in the form of annotations on the completed work, explaining the grade awarded and the basis for the decision. If the student disagrees with an assessment decision, s/he is expected to explain verbally the basis of the disagreement to the assessor at the time of the feedback session. The Appeals Procedure covers appeals against assessment decisions on such courses.
- GCE/GCSE qualifications do not require students to be given feedback on marks awarded. After internal standardization course teams can decide whether or not to inform candidates of the marks which have been submitted to the awarding body, but in doing so must make it clear that these marks are subject to change through the external moderation process. No internal appeal can be made against marks awarded for GCE/GCSE coursework, since marks are awarded by the awarding body.

### **Internal Verification and Standardisation**

Internal verification and internal standardisation are methods for assuring the quality of assessment. Sometimes the term internal moderation will be used.

All internal assessments are moderated externally by awarding bodies, although the methods used in external moderation vary. The purpose of moderation is to bring the marking of internally-assessed components in line with the agreed standards across all centres.

All internal verification and standardization procedures will be carried out in accordance with the College's Internal Verification policy.

### **Special Arrangements**

Alternative arrangements may be made to internally assess students' coursework where there are special circumstances. These alternative arrangements might include for instance, a viva, a tape recording, or a video recording. Any special arrangements for assessment must be agreed in advance, in writing, either with the external moderator for the qualification, or with the awarding body, via the exams office. Awarding bodies provide further information about the ways in which these alternative assessments should be recorded and marked.

### **Student Appeals**

Any student who wishes to appeal against the internal assessment procedures on any course, or against internal assessment decisions, where this is allowed by the awarding body's regulations, will follow the appeals procedure attached to this policy as appendix 1. Records of any appeals must be maintained by the course coordinator and reported to the external verifier/ moderator at his/her request.

### **Higher Education Courses**

Qualifications or courses validated by HE institutions will follow the specific assessment regulations of the University concerned. Such regulations normally include the convening of an assessment board attended by specific university staff and an external examiner.

**Institutional Moderation**

Some awarding bodies require moderation across the College for all qualifications which they validate. Procedures for such institutional moderation will follow awarding body requirements and be clearly documented.

**Professional Development**

The College will support all staff who act as assessors and/or internal verifiers in attending appropriate internal and external training events connected with their role. Where there is a requirement for staff to achieve assessor and/or verifier awards the College will aim to actively support the achievement of these awards by staff over an agreed, fixed period of time.

## **APPENDIX 1: APPEALS PROCEDURE: INTERNALLY ASSESSED STUDENTS' WORK**

### **APPEALS AGAINST ACCUSATIONS OF PLAGIARISM AND MALPRACTICE**

The appeals procedure covers appeals against decisions to reject a candidate's coursework on the grounds of plagiarism or malpractice.

#### **Stage 1**

- A student who feels that their work has been unfairly rejected must first raise the matter with the teacher (assessor) who assessed the work, normally within five working days.
- The teacher (assessor) must provide within five working days an explanation of why the work was rejected.
- If at Stage 1 the student feels that the teacher has not responded to his/her concerns the matter should be referred to the Head of Department to activate Stage 2.

#### **Stage 2**

- If after receiving an explanation of the rejection the student is still not able to accept the outcome s/he should put in writing the reasons for the dissatisfaction and give this to the Head of Department so that the matter can be reconsidered.
- The Head of Department will conduct a review of the student's work. Once this process is complete the student will be notified in writing of the outcome. This will normally take place within ten working days.

#### **Stage 3**

- If the student feels that this procedure has not been followed appropriately then s/he may complain in writing using the college complaints procedure.
- Examiners who visit the College usually ask for full details of any student appeals and may ask to see records, work and other documentation and so all staff involved should keep appropriate documentation.

#### **NB:**

- i) Please note that if the appeal is against the decision of a manager (assessor) in the first place, the second and third stage above will be conducted by the relevant line managers.
- ii) If the appeal is taken to Stage 2, the relevant Faculty Director must be kept informed of progress.

## **APPEALS AGAINST INTERNAL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES**

Every effort will be made to reassure students that their work will be assessed fairly and that internal and external moderation will be carried out in compliance with the published requirements of the relevant awarding body. The appeals procedure provides a mechanism to appeal against the assessment practices and internal standardization/ verification procedures followed on courses.

### **Stage 1**

- A student who has any concerns about the procedures used in assessing their internally marked work should initially discuss this with their teacher, or the member of staff responsible for internal verification/standardisation of coursework on their course.
- If at Stage 1 the student feels that the teacher has not responded to his/her concerns the matter should be referred to the Head of Department

### **Stage 2**

- If after receiving an explanation of the internal assessment procedures, the student still does not feel that their work will be fairly assessed s/he should put in writing the reasons for his/ her dissatisfaction and give this to the Head of Department so the matter can be reconsidered.
- The Head of Department will normally instigate a review into the assessment and internal moderation procedures used on the course. Once the process is complete the student will be notified in writing of the final grade for the work. This will normally take place within ten working days.

### **Stage 3**

- If the student feels that the internal moderation of internally assessed marks has not been followed in accordance with the awarding body regulations s/he may complain in writing using the college complaints procedure.

### **NB:**

- i) Please note that if the appeal is against the decision of a manager (assessor) in the first place, the second and third stage above will be conducted by the relevant line managers.
- ii) If the appeal is taken to Stage 2, the relevant Faculty Director must be kept informed of progress.

## **APPEALS AGAINST INTERNAL ASSESSMENT DECISIONS**

Appeals against marks awarded for GCE/GCSE coursework can only be made externally to the awarding body, and are not covered by this policy.

### **Stage 1**

- A student who feels that their work has been unfairly assessed must first raise the matter with the teacher (assessor) who assessed the work, normally within five working days.
- The teacher (assessor) must provide within five working days an explanation of how the grade was determined by referring to the assessment criteria and subject specification.
- If at Stage 1 the student feels that the teacher has not responded to his/her concerns the matter should be referred to the Head of Department to activate Stage 2.

### **Stage 2**

- If after receiving an explanation of the assessment, the student is still not able to accept the grade s/he should put in writing the reasons for the dissatisfaction and give this to the Head of Department so that the matter can be reconsidered.
- The Head of Department will normally instigate a review of the assessment of the student's work and arrange for internal verification to be carried out if this has not already taken place. Once the process is complete the student will be notified in writing of the final grade for the work. This will normally take place within ten working days.

### **Stage 3**

- If the student feels that this procedure has not been followed appropriately then s/he may complain in writing using the college complaints procedure.

### **NB:**

- i) Please note that if the appeal is against the decision of a manager (assessor) in the first place, the second and third stage above will be conducted by the relevant line managers.
- ii) If the appeal is taken to Stage 2, the relevant Faculty Director must be kept informed of progress.