

Assessment and Feedback Policy

Principles

1. Assessment and feedback are critical to student learning and engagement.
2. Assessment measures student learning according to professional academic judgement and within a quality assurance framework.
3. Feedback provides developmental support and constructive suggestions for how to improve performance, and for summative assessment explains the mark that has been given.
4. Feedback also engages students in a dialogue with staff in order to ensure a shared understanding of how academic judgements are made and enable students to take greater responsibility for their own learning.
5. The character of both assessment and feedback is
 - clarity,
 - consistency,
 - inclusivity,
 - fairness,
 - constructiveness and
 - timeliness
6. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Academic Regulations, with particular attention to the below sections:
 - General (assessment) Regulations
 - Coursework assessment
 - Marking, moderation and external scrutiny
 - Undergraduate and Postgraduate Frameworks
 - Academic Misconduct
 - Publication of results

University Policy

Course-level Assessment and Feedback.

1. Assessment and feedback takes place at course as well as at module level.
2. There is oversight at the course level of the assessment and feedback provided to students to ensure that it is clear and consistent and meets the overarching course learning outcomes.

3. Assessment at the course level is normally the classification awarded on completion of the course. Students are made aware early in their studies how their course is assessed and the process by which any classification of awards are made in accordance with the University Academic Regulations.
4. Students are provided with a timetable of assessments for each course at each level at the beginning of the academic year. The timetable ensures that the assessments are appropriately timed across the academic year, avoiding 'bunching' as far as possible, and that there is an appropriate diversity of assessment methods.
5. Summative assessment dates are planned in conjunction with feedback dates, so that feedback is appropriately timed in order that best use may be made of it by students and staff.
6. Consideration is given to the processes by which students receive holistic feedback on their academic progression through a course to enable them to achieve their full potential.
7. There is oversight at the course level of the amount of group work assessment undertaken by students.
8. Processes are identified by which students will develop their academic skills and acquire an understanding of plagiarism and academic misconduct in the subject context.

Formative Assessment and Feedback

9. Each module includes formative assessment and feedback. Formative assessment does not contribute directly to the final mark for the module.
10. Formative assessment and feedback provides students with developmental support in a timely manner so that they have a real opportunity to improve their performance.
11. Formative assessment and feedback is key to helping students take greater responsibility for their own learning. It helps students to engage with the assessment and feedback that they receive, to understand better what constitutes good performance, and to foster a shared understanding between staff and students over how academic judgements are made.
12. Formative assessment can take many diverse forms. Effective practice includes students themselves developing the skills of assessment such as through peer or self-assessment, in order to enable them to diagnose their own development needs and identify ways of addressing them.

Summative Assessment and Feedback

13. Assessment is designed with due consideration to inclusivity and student diversity.
14. Summative assessment and feedback involves an academic judgement made against specific assessment criteria, providing a description of what a student

has achieved in a given assessment task. It involves the award of a mark/grade and can provide developmental feedback.

15. All assessment elements have specific guidelines/instructions and assessment criteria associated with them that are made available at the start of the module.
16. The assessment is marked fairly in accordance with the assessment criteria and the structure of the feedback (through a feedback template) matches the published criteria.
17. Assessment is submitted electronically in text, audio or audio-visual form. Exceptions to this rule can be approved for assessments where this is not possible, such as examinations and artefacts. Exceptions are approved by the Associate Head of College (Education and Students) following guidelines approved by the University Teaching Committee. Students should not be asked to submit an additional hard copy unless also approved by the Associate Head of College (Education and Students) such circumstances are expected to be rare.
18. Student assessment is anonymised utilising the student ID number or other means. Exceptions to this rule are for assessments where this is not practical, such as presentations and artefacts. All exceptions must be approved by the Associate Head of College (Education and Students), following guidelines approved by the University Teaching Committee.
19. Anonymity is at the point of marking only¹.
20. Assessments are marked according to the University regulations on marking, moderation and external scrutiny.
21. Processes are in place for inducting staff new to a module into the marking standards and moderation practices.
22. The feedback provided to students takes account of the motivational and emotional impact of feedback on the reader and has three elements:
 - a. The mark
 - b. An explanation of how the mark relates to the assessment criteria, normally through the use of a feedback proforma
 - c. A summary which includes constructive feedforward advice on how to improve performance
23. Feedback should only be given following the internal moderation process in accordance with the University Academic Regulations. It is expected that the mark and the feedback are returned to the student within 15 working days² from the assessment due date (or specified performance date). Exceptions for more than 15 working days are approved by the Associate Head of College (Education and Students) before the module runs and accord with the guidelines set by the University Teaching Committee. All exceptions, and the rationale for these exceptions, will be reported to the University Teaching Committee. For a period prior to Assessment Boards the University will operate an embargo of results, during this period feedback for examinations will not normally be available within

¹ Where a marker suspects a case of academic misconduct, anonymity is to be lifted for an investigation to take place in accordance with Section 10 Academic Misconduct Regulations.

² Working days are all those except Saturdays, Sundays, public holidays and periods when the University is closed

15 working days.

- 24 Students are made aware of the return date and mode of feedback before and at the time of submission of assessment. Where there is a delay in the return of the mark and feedback, students must be made fully aware of this, the causes for this delay, and be provided with the revised return date.
- 25 The mark and feedback are returned at the same time to all students on a module (see point 28 for work submitted after the due date). The mark and the feedback, which can be written or in audio or audio-visual form, are accessible to students via the Blackboard Grade Centre.
- 26 The processes through which group work assessments are implemented and through which individual grades are derived are set out clearly and with due consideration to the fairness of the assessment outcomes.
- 27 Feedback is provided on examinations in one of two forms determined by the module leader:
- Generic group feedback that highlights what made for good and poor performance for each of the questions in the examination. This feedback is made available on Blackboard for all the students on the module
- OR
- Individual feedback for each script/student
- 28 It is recognised that students may submit after the assessment due date. Students who submit within 24 hours can normally expect to receive their feedback within 20 days of the original due date. It is further recognised that students may submit up to 5 days late if they have mitigating circumstances that have been accepted. In addition students with Learning Support Entitlements (LSEs) may have extensions of up to 5 additional working days. In all such cases the feedback will normally be given within 25 days of the original due date.

Appendix of indicative exceptions

The Assessment and Feedback policy recognises that some assessments cannot practically or reasonably conform to all aspects of the policy for example Anonymous Marking.

The below is not an exhaustive list, but is an indication of the types of assessment that may be exempt from particular aspects of the policy. Additional exceptions are approved by the University Teaching Committee.

On-line submissions

It is recognised that not all forms of assessment are appropriate for online submission. Examples of assessment that may be exempt include:

- In-class tests³
- Examinations
- Oral examinations
- The production of a piece of physical work/artefact/portfolio
- Presentations and other observed assessment such as lab work, fieldwork, contribution/debating/discussions, vivas.

Anonymous marking

The University accepts that there will be instances where the nature of the assessment process means that anonymous marking will not be practicable. The following have been identified as **exempt** from anonymous marking; it is acknowledged further instances may be required, if such cases these will be reported to the University Teaching Committee.

- Formative feedback
- Research, dissertations and theses (this assumes one of the markers will have considered the dissertation title/draft for approval).
- Observed assessments such as presentations (individual and group)
- Labwork/fieldwork. Except where a written outcome is required from any of these activities that was not directly connected to an in-class practical demonstration then that could be anonymous.
- Practical work; the production of a practical output such as a piece of design can be assessed anonymously if it was not created as part of an in-class assessment where the article was clearly associated with an individual. Some practical work may also require input or formative feedback before submission.
- Group work where the performance of others contributes to the final mark.
- Reports associated with presentations where the markers are assessing the presentation as well as the report/project.
- Seminar discussions
- Contribution/debating
- Blogs
- Some methods of assessment for blended learning courses for example on-line forum activity
- Oral examinations
- Viva Voces
- Preliminary work which is used as for a later linked piece of assessment e.g. dissertation pre-reports.

³ It is acknowledged some in-class tests are online

- Linked pieces of assessment, such as some types of synoptic assessment where earlier marks or feedback contribute to the marking process for a later piece of work.
- Placement activity and placement reports. It is acknowledged that markers will know the placement and thus anonymising reports is not always possible.
- International activity and reports (as above)
- Voluntary work assessment (as above)
- Work submitted late after the mark release of date
- Students with Learning, Support Entitlements: The purpose of additional considerations in the marking of assignments for students with specific arrangements is to take in to consideration any restriction imposed by the student's impairment, without affecting the validity of the assessment process. Therefore by flagging a student with LSE, the student may inadvertently impact anonymous marking particularly where they are the only student with such an arrangement on the module.
- Alternative assessment for study abroad students can be assumed to be anonymously marked, however it is acknowledged where there are a small number of students doing the alternative assessment anonymous marking may in reality be impacted.
- Courses validated and/or run off campus by collaborative partners. Partners are encouraged to follow the same principles; however it is acknowledged that some aspects rely on the type of Virtual Learning Environment available.

Exemptions for feedback being returned within 15 working days of the deadline.

The policy outlines the expectations including when the university is closed, students who submit after the deadline, students with mitigating circumstances and students with learning support agreements. Any other exemptions must be articulated in the faculty implementation plan for approval by the Teaching Committee. It is however recognised that unexpected circumstances occur for staff as well as students e.g. staff illness. Where this is the case efforts to provide feedback as soon as possible must be practical and reasonable. Collaborative partners are also expected to provide prompt and meaningful feedback to student's; however the means by which they can is subject to local approval. This recognises differences in VLEs and other systems.