

# Assessment Policy

## [QP1.05]

Policy Number:	QP1.05
Revision Number:	0
Date of issue:	November 2005
Status:	Approved
Date of approval:	March 2006
Responsibility for policy:	Director of Quality
Responsibility for implementation:	All teaching members of staff, Quality Unit
Responsibility for review:	Director of Quality
Date of last review:	November 2008
Date of last revision:	—
Date of next review:	October 2010

# 1.0 Policy

## 1.1 Introduction

Assessment is a vital part of the learning and teaching process. In addition to providing a measure of the students' achievement on qualification-based courses, it also provides diagnostic information that assists both staff and students in the ongoing improvement of the learning and teaching process. To contribute usefully to both of these functions, it is essential that assessment:

- ▶ is fair and ensures parity of treatment and comparable assessment demands in subjects of equal level and credit;
- ▶ is reliable, ensuring that assessment decisions are made consistently throughout the College;
- ▶ is valid, by ensuring that each assessment relates to the intended outcomes of the subject(s) studied;
- ▶ is transparent, in that it is clear to students, staff and external auditors the criteria and methods by which students' work is being judged.
- ▶ recognises and respects equality and diversity.

## 1.2 Scope

The policy applies to all programmes offered by the College where all or part of the programme is formally assessed.

## 1.3 Principles of fair assessment

1.3.1 All assessment must be conducted rigorously and accurately and in accordance with the awarding body's published criteria and standards.

1.3.2 Assessments/coursework developed and delivered by College staff must be conducted by reference to open and defined standards described in marking/assessment schemes, covering the required skills, knowledge and understanding.

1.3.3 The chosen format and method of assessment must be appropriate to the qualification and any conditions specified by the awarding body.

1.3.4 Assessment materials must be presented in clear and unambiguous language and must differentiate only on the basis of a student's knowledge, skills and understanding. Such materials must be free from any overt or covert discrimination against an individual, either in wording or content.

- 1.3.5 The College will designate assessment staff whose knowledge, skills and understanding are appropriate for the units they assess. Staff will maintain their competence by regular staff development organised internally or externally.

#### **1.4 Initial Assessment**

- 1.4.1 As part of the induction process all new full-time, non-advanced students will undertake an initial assessment of literacy and numeracy skills. This will be used to assess Core Skill levels and to inform decisions about any additional learning support which students should be offered.
- 1.4.2 Initial assessment will be available to part-time non-advanced, full-time and part-time advanced students on request. Students should apply via Learner Services or through their Curriculum Head.

#### **1.5 Credit Transfer and APL/APEL <sup>1</sup>**

- 1.5.1 The College positively encourages students to claim credit in their current course of studies for any relevant qualifications and/or experience gained previously.
- 1.5.2 A claim for Accreditation of Prior Learning, Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning or Credit Transfer should initially be made to the subject lecturer who, if satisfied of the validity of the claim, will forward it to the appropriate Internal Moderator for endorsement.

#### **1.6 Internal Assessment**

- 1.6.1 Internal assessment must be conducted in line with the principles outlined in section 1.3.
- 1.6.2 Assessment will be internally verified or moderated according to the College's Internal Verification/ Moderation Procedure. <sup>2</sup>
- 1.6.3 Written and oral feedback must be given to students as soon as possible after assessment. In the case of written or other product work submitted the feedback must be given within 3 working weeks of the official submission date. Feedback should be as helpful as possible to the student, i.e. confirming what has

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<sup>1</sup> See QP2.8: Credit Transfer and APL/APEL Procedure.

<sup>2</sup> See QP2.5: Internal Moderation Procedure.

gone well and giving clear guidance on what the student needs to do in order to improve on their performance.

- 1.6.4 Students will be permitted an initial attempt and one further summative attempt. A third summative attempt may only be offered where there are appropriate mitigating circumstances.

## **1.7 External Assessment**

- 1.7.1 External assessment will be administered strictly in accordance with instructions issued by the relevant awarding bodies.
- 1.7.2 Internal management of external examinations is delegated to the College's Quality Team. In the case of queries, the Academic Services Team Leader or the Quality Manager should be consulted.
- 1.7.3 For coursework assessment (whether internally or externally assessed) the Quality Manager will liaise with all awarding bodies.

## **1.8 Arrangements for Students with Special Assessment Requirements**

- 1.8.1 Assessment must be available to all those who have the potential to achieve the standards required for a particular qualification. However, some students may need access to alternative means of providing evidence and/or additional support. Care must be taken that any proposed assessment methods are of equal quality and rigour to those for mainstream students and demonstrate that the student has achieved the national standard.
- 1.8.2 Students may be identified as having particular assessment requirements in relation to, for example, learning difficulties, a visual or hearing impairment, a mental illness, or English as an additional language. This means that they will need appropriate support in their development to help them meet the required standards such as:
- ▶ help with communication and number skills;
  - ▶ adapted equipment and physical environment;
  - ▶ special information technology;
  - ▶ confidence-building.
- 1.8.3 Awarding body guidance in relation to special assessment requirements must be strictly adhered to.

1.8.4 For external examinations the College's Quality Team must be notified in order to ensure that appropriate arrangements are approved by the relevant awarding body.

1.8.5 For internally assessed work, which is subject to external verification/moderation, queries should be directed to the Director of Learner Services or the Quality Manager.<sup>3</sup>

## **1.9 Assessment Appeals<sup>4</sup>**

1.9.1 All students must be informed of the College's Academic Appeals Procedure at the start of their course.

1.9.2 The Academic Appeals Procedure must be followed in all cases where a student disagrees with the outcome of an assessment.

1.9.3 Rights of appeal against a decision involving academic judgement are limited. Academic appeals will be considered only on matters of procedure, competency and/or prejudice.

1.9.4 A student may be able to appeal the result of an external examination depending on the regulations of individual awarding bodies. Where an appeal is allowed, it may be originated either by the student or the College, again depending on the awarding body. Students should seek advice from the College's Quality Team, who, if appropriate will appeal on their behalf.

## **1.10 Academic Deceit<sup>5</sup>**

1.10.1 The College takes academic integrity very seriously. Each student has an obligation to act with honesty and integrity, and to respect the rights of others in carrying out all assessments, by means of coursework or examination.

1.10.2 Any student found to have violated this obligation and to have engaged in academic dishonesty will be penalised.

## **2.0 Justification**

This Policy addresses how the College will comply with the assessment requirements of partner awarding bodies and aims to ensure the College's academic integrity and standards.

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<sup>3</sup> See QP2.06: External Moderation Procedure.

<sup>4</sup> See QP2.13: Academic Appeals Procedure.

<sup>5</sup> See QP2.07: Academic Deceit Procedure.

### **3.0 Link to Strategic Plan**

Strategic Aim 2: Develop further as an enterprising and successful organisation continuing to aspire to excellence and relevance based on self-critical review.

### **4.0 Exemptions**

None.

### **5.0 Related Procedures**

- ▶ QP2.05: Moderation/Verification Handbook
- ▶ QP2.06: External Verification Procedure
- ▶ QP2.07: Academic Deceit Procedure
- ▶ QP2.08 Credit Transfer and APL/APEL Procedure
- ▶ QP2.13 Academic Appeals Procedure