

Build-a-Future

Main Road, West Ashby, Horncastle, Lincolnshire, LN9 5PT 01507 524015

Assessment Policy



Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for learner entitlement in relation to assessment for Education programmes. Assessment is at the heart of the learning experience of learners. Progression through a programme and the validation of success or failure is determined by assessment. Assessment provides public recognition of achievement and gives it its value and marketability.

Assessment can be:

- Diagnostic – identifying a skill or attribute that suggests an appropriate learning pathway and identifying learning difficulties that require support.
- Formative – enabling the learners to obtain feedback on progress and pointing out areas and strategies for improvement.
- Summative – provides a clear statement about performance in relation to stated objectives.
- Teaching teams will use one or more of these elements in most assessment methods. For example, much coursework is formative because it provides feedback on a level of attainment but also counts towards credit accumulation for a final statement of learning. A piece of coursework may also highlight learning support issues for the learner so acting as diagnostic assessment.

These principles will inform teaching and learning and assessment design to maximise learner achievement. Teaching and learning activities should mirror assessment requirements. For example, if learners are asked to give an oral presentation as part of an assessment task, they may need to learn how to do this first. Assessment activities will also be flexibly designed to accommodate those with disabilities that may affect the way they are able to work.

Learner Assessment Entitlement

- To know what his/ her success criteria/ learning objectives are at all stages of a course and to could develop self-assessment skills.
- To learn how to develop the skills involved in meeting these criteria.
- To have all tasks explained clearly.
- To receive regular constructive feedback.
- To receive guidance on how to improve.
- To know whether he/she is performing at a level which meets or exceeds expectations.
- To be assessed with objectivity and fairness using methods 'fit for purpose'.
- To be able to challenge assessment judgements against the agreed criteria.

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Assessment Processes

Teachers and/or teaching teams need to consider the following, within the constraints of the external examining or awarding bodies:

- Assessment.
- Planning.

Before the programme starts:

- Provide a clear statement of the assessment aims of the programme.
- Design a scheme of work that spans the whole course of study, so a reasonable, consistent workload can be planned.
- The schedule should be agreed by the teaching team and published as part of the course handbook.
- Write assessment criteria that are widely published to all staff and learners involved in the course/award.
- Design assessment tasks that challenge learners and demonstrate that they have fulfilled the learning outcomes for their course/award and achieved an acceptable standard and where necessary, reflect work-based activities or references to course.
- Promote learner work readiness.
- Include in the scheme of work activities that will encourage the learner to develop more independent learning skills and functional skills.
- Design assessment tasks that utilise a range of assessment methods to suit a variety of learning styles and accommodate those with particular needs such as disability, within the constraints of the external examining or awarding body.
- Ensure assessment tasks are written unambiguously in accessible language. where it is essential to include the awarding body criteria these should be explained in the tasks in a language accessible to the level of course.
- Agree written guidelines on giving feedback and marking to be adhered to by all teaching staff. Ensure that feedback enables the learner to progress and improve performance.
- Internally moderate assessment tasks before their use to ensure they meet the awarding body requirements and learner needs.

Initial Assessment at the beginning of the programme:

- Determine the study support needs of each learner using an appropriate diagnostic tool and use this in planning suitable learning opportunities.
- Determine individual learning styles using an appropriate tool and use this information in planning teaching and learning activities.
- Feedback the outcomes of this initial assessment to learners within 4 weeks.

In response to work submitted for assessment:

- Provide written feedback for at least one piece of work within the first 6 weeks of the course, with clearly stated identifications of ways to progress.

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- Feedback to learners orally and in writing within 10 working days or within 15 working days if internal moderation is required.
- Follow procedures agreed by the course team to give oral feedback that is consistent and written feedback which is sufficiently detailed and focused to recognise achievement, enable improvement and motivate further learning.
- Base assessment decisions consistently, on the grade descriptors issued to learners.
- Use common assessment documentation agreed by all members of the course team.

Monitoring/reporting on learners' progress throughout the programme:

- Keep systematic records of learners' achievements, progress and attendance.
- Review learners' progress with the course team in line ILP.
- Involve the learners in self-assessment and reflection upon their own progress.
- Feedback to learners on their progress and set specific targets for improvement.
- Organise internal verification/moderation.

Review of the Assessment Programme throughout the programme:

- Participate in regular review of the assessment process and outcomes informed by staff and learner feedback plus internal and external moderation reports. Promote improvements through the review.
- At the end of the course complete a course review to meet requirements. This should include learner feedback and evaluation.

Written Feedback Policy:

We use written feedback to show learners what they do well, the standards they have attained and enable them to understand what they must do to improve and to make progress. The process of providing written feedback will also guide us as teachers in the process of planning and differentiating work for groups of learners and individual learners.

Focus the Feedback on the Learning Objective and Related Success Criteria:

- Make learners aware of what constitutes a good piece of work by being explicit about the success criteria, sharing these criteria, modelling answers/solutions and providing exemplar material.
- Ensure that all objectives, outcomes and success criteria are in 'learner-speak'.
- Learners should understand the success criteria for the work they are doing. They should know what a level or grade means and what they have to do to progress on to the next level or grade.
- The success criteria may be also negotiated through a discussion with the class, thus helping to give them ownership and clearer understanding of what constitutes quality.

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Aim to Close the Gap:

- Learners should know what they are trying to achieve, how they currently compare with this target and know how to achieve this standard.
- Feedback to any pupil should be about the particular qualities of his or her work, with advice on what he or she can do to improve and should avoid comparisons with other learners. Any suggestions on how to improve should, therefore, be focused on how best to close the gap between current performance and the desired target performance.
- Feedback has shown to improve learning where it gives each pupil specific guidance on strengths and weaknesses.

Provide the Learner with Specific Improvement Suggestions:

- Feedback only leads to gains in learning when it includes guidance on how to improve, preferably without any overall marks. Periodic use of levels/grades can be helpful if a summative judgement is required e.g. on a specific piece of work once or twice a term.
- Focus feedback on the qualities of the work and what the learner has achieved and provide the learner specific ways in which the work could be improved. Therefore, focus more on improvement than correction.
- Marking of errors should be restricted to what is relevant or necessary e.g. factual errors, topic-specific spelling errors, and common punctuation or grammar errors. The following codes should be used selectively, depending on the focus of the marking.

✓	this is correct
x	this is incorrect
?	means that what has been written does not make sense
^	means something has been left out
*	means that comments are written at the end of the work
//	start a new paragraph here
sp	this indicates a spelling mistake.
C	capital letter mistake
P	Punctuation

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- To close the gap between where a pupil is and where you want them to be in their learning, there are three types of prompts that promote improvement. They also help you differentiate your support. These are reminder prompts (“Say more about ...”); scaffold prompts (“Can you describe how...”) and example prompts (“Choose one of these or one of your own”).
- Focus on a ‘success and improvement’ strategy. Teachers may decide to use the ‘Two stars and a wish’ approach – two positive comments and an area for improvement or WWW (what went well) and EBI (even better if) or something similar.

Provide an Opportunity for the Learner to Make the Suggested Improvement:

- To avoid the same comment appearing over and over again on learner’s work, either provide them with an opportunity to carry out the improvement on that piece of work, according to the specific improvement suggestion or revisit that skill in another context as soon as possible.
- Feedback information requires action and therefore has to be used in order to make progress. It is about finding out ‘how you are doing’ as opposed to finding out ‘how you have done’.

Let them into the Secret:

- Involve the learners in the assessment process by modelling effective marking. Learners should develop the ability to reflect on their own learning and each other’s learning when they are provided with appropriate guidance and structure.
- We need to provide structured opportunities for learners to work in pairs or groups in order for them to become more effective in using each other as resources for one another and as owners of their own learning.
- Learners will need practice in applying criteria to their peer’s work to help them to internalise the success criteria before reflecting on their own learning. Try involving learners in marking exemplar work against success criteria.

Frequency of Written Feedback:

Learners’ work should be provided with written feedback regularly. Frequency of feedback is crucial because it increases learner motivation and reflection on their learning.

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Distinguish between day to day 'marking' which may be a quick tick, small correction and more in depth 'marking' which merits a written comment with a target and an opportunity for the learner to respond to improvement advice. Not all learning can or should be marked in detail and teachers are not expected, therefore, to put a detailed comment and a level or grade on every piece of work.

The frequency of written feedback on learners' work will vary from subject to subject, but for most subjects it should ideally be done once every 5/6 lessons as far as this is reasonably practical.

We should identify 'learning milestones' - one piece of work which merits more in depth, detailed formative assessment with appropriate grades or levels which is undertaken at least each half term. The frequency with which any levels/grades are awarded will vary according to subject requirements. These regular assessments will provide learners with an idea of their attainment.

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