Assessment Policy

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Author	Head of Exams
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Linked policies:	Internal Verification Policy
	Complaints Policy
	Academic Appeals Policy
	Learning Teaching and Assessment Policy
	Student Handbook
	Data Privacy Notice and Consent Policy
	Academic Misconduct Policy
External reference :	UK Quality Code UKSCQA/02 [May 2018]

	Expectations for Quality Core Practice 5
	The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.
	Related QAA Advice and Guidance:
Audience:	Students, Tutors, Assessors, Module Leaders, Internal Verifiers and Programme Leaders.

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1 Introduction

The following provides all the details concerning assessment regulations. These are the rules and processes that students and academic staff need to follow in order to carry out assessments correctly and to the same standards across the College. This policy should be read together with the individual policies of the Pearson awarding body policy on assessments for BTEC HND in Business and with policies and procedures of the College's university partners, Bucks New University (BNU), the University of West London and Ravensbourne University (RUL) any other partner whose assessment policy and processes the College is required to comply with.

2 Precedence

The Assessment Policy and Procedures of awarding bodies (e.g., Pearson) and OBC's university or college partner(s), will take precedence over this policy and procedures where the following applies:

- The assessment relates to a student on a course leading to a qualification by a recognised awarding body (e.g., Pearson) or on that is being delivered by OBC in partnership with a university or college such as BNU, UWL or RUL or any other university of college that OBC is in partnership with.

- The relevant awarding body or partner university or college requires OBC to follow their Assessment policy rather than the OBC policy provided here.

2.1 Links

- BNU

  Please refer the University partner link: https://www.bucks.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/assessment-and-feedback-policy.pdf

- UWL

  Please refer the University partner link: https://www.uwl.ac.uk/about-us/academic-quality-and-standards

- RUL

Please refer the University partner link: https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/asset-bucket/prod/2021-11/Section%208%20-%20Examination%20and%20Assessment%20Policy%2021-22.pdf

3 Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy and procedures is to ensure students and academic staff understand how assessments are conducted at the College. The policy includes information on setting activities or tasks, meeting deadlines, what happens when deadlines are not met, marking and verification of assessments and giving feedback with grades to students. It also includes information on how overall grades are decided and what happens if a student is unable to pass.

4 Aims and Objectives

The College aims to ensure that assessment procedures carried out at the college:

- are clear for all students and academic staff to understand and follow

- meet the requirements and expectations of external bodies where relevant including Pearson and the College's university or college partners.

- meet the academic and employability needs of students doing the assessments

The key objectives of this policy and procedures are in line with the guiding principles of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education:

- Assessment criteria is based on the achievement of learning outcomes

- Teaching activities are directly linked to learning outcomes and assessment methods

- Assessments are reliable, which means their accuracy can be trusted

- Assessments are consistent, which means the same standards are applied in every case

- Assessments are fair, which means individual student circumstances in comparison to other students, including reasonable adjustments for disabled students or those with learning difficulties, are taken into consideration

- Assessments are valid, which means the assessment allows the student to demonstrate if they have or have

not met the learning outcomes.

- A holistic approach to assessments is taken so that the overall performance and understanding of students can be assessed

- Feedback is constructive and supports learning

- Feedback is provided at the right time (within three weeks of submission)

- Students have all the information and support they need for assessment

5   Definitions

An assessment is an activity or task completed by a student according to specific requirements provided in an assignment brief or examination paper, which is marked by an assessor in order to measure how well the student meets the standards of a course of study and/or a qualification.   Assessments can refer to both formative and summative activities or tasks. They can be oral, written or practical and can refer to coursework or examinations.

Formative Assessment

A formative assessment is when a student submits some coursework or takes a test before their final assessment takes place. The formative assessment is designed to help students understand how well they are doing on the course and to show them what they need to do to improve before their summative assessment. Formative assessment needs to be submitted by students in a timely manner so that they can receive feedback, with adequate time to take feedback on board before the student has to submit their summative assessment. Formative assessments are usually submitted at the middle of a term or semester (usually week 5, 6 or 7) and the feedback should be provided to the student in order to incorporate their feedback into their assessment(s).

Summative Assessment

A summative assessment is the final coursework a student must submit or exam the student needs to take for any unit they have studied. Students will usually submit coursework or take exams at the end of a term or semester for each unit they have completed during the term or semester. The student must submit their summative assessment by a deadline that is provided at the beginning of the term or semester when they receive the assignment brief explaining what they need to do.

6 Scope

This policy covers all types of assessment for all courses delivered at the College's campuses. These currently include the following courses.

Oxford Business College (OBC) courses

- Pearson BTEC Higher National Diploma (HND) in Business

- International Foundation Programme in Business, Law and Engineering

Bucks New University (BNU) courses:

- BA (Hons) in Business Management with integrated Foundation Year

- BA (Hons) in Business Management

- BA (Hons) in Business Management (Top-up)

Ravensbourne University (RUL)

- BSc (Hons) in Business Management with integrated Foundation Year

Unified Seevic and Palmer's (USP) course

- Pearson BTEC Higher National Diploma (HND) in Business

University of West London (UWL) course:

BA (Hons) In Business Studies with Foundation Year

7 Assessment Regulations

Assessments for all courses apart from those delivered in partnership with BNU, USP, RUL UWL are based upon the information provided in Student Handbooks and the following regulations apply:

7.1 Deadlines

Students must submit their assignments and take examinations according to strict deadlines. Student are informed about the deadlines at the start of their course in module booklets and assignment briefs. Deadlines are explained at

induction and provided to students on the respective partner institutions Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Deadlines may sometimes be changed in consultation and prior approval of respective partner institutions. Students will be notified in advance if an assessment date is changed for any reason.

7.2 Mitigating Circumstances

If students know that they cannot meet a deadline, they must request mitigating circumstances before the deadline. They may do this in writing or by email to the Programme or Module Leader and Head of Academics. They must explain the reason why they cannot submit their work and the reason needs to be valid. Examples of valid reasons includes:

- The student is suffering from a physical or mental illness. In this case the College may ask for evidence from a doctor. The College may refer the student to the College Counsellor for help and support.

- There has been a bereavement in the student's immediate family

- The student is struggling with a disability or learning difficulty that deserves special consideration and reasonable adjustments

- The student has technical difficulties preventing them from submitting work online.

- The student is a victim of a crime

- The student has unexpectedly been left alone to care for a relative.

Examples of reasons that are not normally considered valid include:

- The student has too many works commitments

- The student does not understand what they have to do but they have not attended any of the additional support classes or academic clinics provided by the College

- The student wants to travel for holiday or work reasons

- The student simply wants more time to improve their work

7.3 Feedback on Submissions

The College aims to provide students with written feedback for all formative and summative assessments that have been submitted by the deadline within three weeks. The College will to provide feedback to students in the same timeframe if work is submitted late or at an extended deadline but there may be delays if Tutors/Assessors are not available at that time.

7.4 Second Marking and Internal Verification

Second marking refers to a second assessor marking work that has been assessed by another assessor. Internal verification refers to feedback given to another assessor on the feedback they have given to a student. After the submissions have been assessed, the College carries out sampling of assessments for second marking and internal verification purposes. Each Assessor has an Internal Verifier (IV) or moderator who will check a sample of their assessment decisions to make sure they agree with them. There should be second marking and verification for 20% of every module assessed. Where there is more than one assessor for any module, a relatively equal number of submissions should be second marked and verified for every assessor. For example, where there are two assessors for a module, 105 of samples should be second marked and verified for each assessor.

If the second marker disagrees with assessment decisions to the extent that it affects the overall grade of the student, the first marker can adjust their grade and feedback. I they disagree, they can pass the submission to the Lead Internal Verifier for a final decision. Where the original assessment decision is changed, the IV or Lead IV will need to check all the assessments carried out by the same lecturer for the same module, in order to ensure they are graded accurately and consistently. For more details see the Internal Verification Policy.

7.5 External Verification/Examination

In addition to internal verification there is an external verification process carried out by awarding organisations. For RUL, USP BNU and UWL programmes External Verification is conducted by the respective university partners. For HND programmes the external verification is carried out annually by a Pearson External Examiner who checks that the assessment decisions and the internal verification decisions are correct and meet the expected standards.

7.6 The process of marking and giving feedback

1. **Submissions**

The student submits their work by the deadline

2. **Within two weeks:**

The Tutor/Assessor writes feedback and gives the student a grade within two weeks. The feedback and grade follow the grading criteria provided in the Student Handbook, Programme Specification and/or Assignment Brief

3. **By the end of the third week:**

The College carries out sampling and internal verification of assessment work and assessors adjust feedback and grades if necessary, to ensure all assessment decisions are reliable, fair, consistent and valid.

4. **By the end of the third week**

The student receives their feedback and grade. The student may appeal against the feedback and grade. See the Appeals Policy and Procedures for details.

7.7 Marking of Assessments

The underlying assessment principles of fairness, consistency and confirmation of Academic Standards will be applied in the marking of all assessment components. All marking will be conducted with the aim of confirming the academic levels of achievement reached by each individual student irrespective of his/her individual background, age, gender, race, or other physical or social characteristics or origins.

These principles will be ensured through:

- The use of assessment criteria and marking weighting in marking

- The use of anonymous marking (where appropriate), double marking and moderation procedures

- The confirmation of fairness, consistency and the achievement and confirmation of academic standards by External Examiners

- The confirmation of the academic performance of each individual student at the relevant assessment-examinations board.

All Assessment Components that are awarded marks will use a scale from 0% to 100% (except where not permitted by a Partner University). Assessment Components that do not contribute to the Overall Final Mark may be given a Pass/Fail mark, for example interim reports for a Major Project.

- Marking of Referral, Repeat and Final Attempts

The mark of all assessment components involving a re-attempt will be capped at a mark of 40% unless the assessment-examinations board for the programme has determined that the re-attempt will be "as if for the first time" or the assessment-examinations board has exercised its right to compensate the student in a module, or there are Mitigating Extenuating Circumstances, or extreme circumstances which have been taken into account by the board.

In taught programmes, the mark of all assessment components submitted, attended or completed after any *Required Deadline* (including *Required Deadlines* revised after any granting of an Extension) will be capped at a mark of 40%. The capped mark will only be considered by the assessment-examinations board in determining the progression of the student or the eligibility of the student for progression to the final University degree award stage of their programme.

7.8 Marking of non-submissions

The mark of all examinations, coursework (e.g., assignments) and any other timed modes of assessment (e.g. presentations) that are not attended or submitted will be given a mark of 0% (zero), except in cases of accepted Mitigating Extenuating Circumstances, approved deferrals, or extensions

The mark of all assessment components that have not been submitted attended or completed before any *final submission date* (except those with agreed *Mitigating Extenuating Circumstances* and/or agreed *Extensions* beyond that date) and for which there is no explanation for the non-submission will be given a mark of 0% (zero).

7.9 Resubmissions

If a student is unable to pass their summative assessment, they may resubmit it by the resubmission deadline which is usually two weeks after they receive their feedback. Students will have the opportunity to read the feedback and to resubmit their work, correcting or adding to their submissions as necessary in order to pass. Students who resubmit without mitigating circumstance can only achieve a Pass and will not be able to get a higher grade.

7.10 Grade resolution

- In all cases of moderation and blind double marking first and second assessors should meet to confirm all elements of the assessment have been duly marked and to discuss the marks awarded.

- In cases of moderation, due care should be taken to ensure no students are either advantaged or disadvantaged through their work being included or not included in the moderation sample. In, where as a result of moderation the mark allocated to a piece of work is altered, all other student work should be checked to ensure, where appropriate, any adjustment(s) is/are applied in a consistent manner.

- If the first and second assessors agree on mark allocation (initially or after discussion), a moderation record form should be completed making explicit which work was included in the moderation sample and recording any discussions undertaken in reaching agreement, and this form should be lodged with the Course Leader.

- Where first and second assessor's marks are 10% apart and agreement cannot be reached after discussion; sampling or blind double marking (as appropriate) of all other work in the disputed band should be undertaken and the first and second assessors should then meet again to compare and discuss the marks.

- Where after discussion agreement cannot be reached by the first and second assessor, a third assessor will be appointed by the Assessment Board Chair to blind double mark the disputed work. The first, second and third assessors should then meet to agree the grade, with the third assessor having the final say if agreement cannot be reached.

- When the process outlined in 19 and/or 20 is complete, the procedures in 17 and 18 should be followed.

- The only marking indicated on feedback to students should be the agreed mark for the work following the completion of the moderation or blind double marking processes set out above. In the case of moderation (where appropriate) the second assessor may provide additional written feedback to the student. In the case of blind double marking the second assessor should provide independent written feedback to the student. In both cases this feedback may be included on the feedback sheet.

- In all cases the external examiner will be sent or shown the same sample of assessed work and shall have access to other assessments from the set. In the case of the Dissertation or research project or other instances where the blind double marking process has occurred, the sample will be selected by the Module Leader as appropriate, following the principles outlined in 13. The external examiner will also be sent the moderation record form and may make any comments regarding the marking process on it.

- In all cases (moderation or blind double marking) the moderation record form should be lodged in the module file by the Module/Course Leader as appropriate.

- Activities following the completion of moderation and blind double marking processes.

- Where possible, work granted extensions as agreed through the Extenuating Circumstances Policy should be marked alongside the work submitted in accordance with the original deadline. However, this will often not be possible without detrimentally delaying the marking and reporting process. Where work is marked following the completion of a moderation process, all work submitted according to an agreed extension should be moderated. Where work is marked following the completion of a blind double marking process, all work submitted according to an agreed extension should also be blind double marked.

- All resubmitted referred work will be blind double marked and will follow the procedures outlined in 18 - 26 above.

- When, in accordance with the Academic Appeals process, student work is remarked, where possible this shall be done by the same second assessor as was involved in the original moderation process. If, as a result of the remarking process, the mark proposed for the work involved was increased, effort should be taken to ensure that a similar adjustment is proposed for other students' work where the same grounds are applicable. However, if as a result the mark is revised downwards, proposals to revise other students' work should not be put forward.

7.11 Retakes

Students who fail on their resubmission will have to retake the unit and submit work for a new assignment brief or take another exam at a new deadline. Retakes will also be capped at a Pass. In order to do a retake, a student will need to attend classes, and these will need to be scheduled, which may incur additional tuition fees for the student. It also means the student may need to extend the date at which they finish their course. Students should avoid having to do retakes if they can.

7.12 HND Programme

Students who continuously fail to submit or pass units in time may not be able to progress to the next level e.g., a HND student would not attain their interim HNC or full HND award if they fail to submit or pass units in time. Such students will still be able to submit work to attain unit certificates but not the full award. The final decision will be taken by the relevant Progression, Assessment or Examination Board.

7.13 BNU Programme

The University is responsible for ensuring that the academic standard of each award and/or award element is set at the appropriate level and that student performance is properly judged against this, in line with subject benchmark statements and the national qualifications framework as appropriate.

7.14 Submission dates

Submission dates should be set within the recognised term time, excluding Bank Holidays. It is considered good practise to ensure submission dates correspond to normal patterns of attendance particularly for programmes that are part-time, or work based.

7.15 Deadlines

The University submission deadline is that all coursework must be received before 14:00 on the due date.

E-submissions: work must be received by the server before 14:00 (last received time is 13:59:59) UK time whether GMT or BST on the due date.

Hard copy submissions: must be received before 14:00 either by registered delivery or to the agreed submission point/space.

Late submission

Assessment received up to 10 working days beyond the original submission date will be accepted as a late submission. This does not apply to pass/fail assessments, or to referral work.

Marking of assessments

All assessment will be marked against the agreed Marking Guidance and Assessment Criteria.

Feedback to Students

1. Students will receive written feedback on all summative assessment. Where oral feedback is given, for example following a presentation, this should be considered supplemental.

2. Feedback should:

1. Support the judgement of the marker and the mark awarded,

2. Enable the student to identify deficiencies in the work and specific areas for improvement,

3. Highlight strengths in the assessment,

4. Be digital rather than handwritten.

Moderation of assessments

Each module will be internally moderated. External moderation will apply to modules contributing to the classification of an award.

BNU Link: Please refer the University partner link: https://www.bucks.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/assessment-and-feedback-policy.pdf

UWL Programme

The aim of the assessment process is to ensure that the University meets the obligations and expectations of its staff, students and regulators by:

Using processes to ensure that qualifications are awarded only to those students who meet specified learning outcomes that are consistent with the relevant national qualifications descriptors, and that standards remain consistent over time.

Purposes of Assessment

Assessment is a fundamental aspect of the student learning experience. Engagement in assessment activities and interaction with staff and peers enables learning, both as part of the task and through review of their performance. It is a vehicle for obtaining feedback. Ultimately it determines whether each student has achieved their course's learning outcomes and allows the awarding body to ensure that appropriate standards are being applied rigorously.

Purposes of Feedback

Feedback (sometimes described as feedforward) is an essential element of assessment. It gives students information about their attainment relative to module and course learning outcomes, thereby enabling them to reflect on their learning, identify areas for improvement and understand how to progress and develop.

Types of Assessment

Assessment is typically understood to be diagnostic, formative, or summative. These definitions may overlap. For example, a summative assessment is often also formative in that it, and the feedback received on it, helps prepare students for future assessments.

Pass-Fail Assessments

Where a course or module team wishes to incorporate a pass-fail assessment, care must be taken to ensure that use of the pass-fail will not skew the assessment results and unfairly advantage or disadvantage students

Submission

All written coursework must be submitted online, through blackboard Turnitin. The submission should be set up to allow students to submit in advance as a formative process prior to making the final, formal submission

Late submission

Assessment received up to 10 calendar days beyond the original submission date will be accepted as a late submission. This does not apply to pass/fail assessments, or to referral work.

Marking

Marking must be done against learning outcomes and assessment criteria derived from learning outcomes, and with reference to grade descriptors (as described in Part 3 above). It is good practice to develop indicative answers or model answers and provide these to all markers.

Internal Moderation

The process of ensuring that assessment criteria have been applied consistently and fairly, normally involving scrutiny of a representative sample.

External Moderation

The External Examiner is an impartial and independent expert responsible for ensuring the standards of UWL awards and the reliability of student achievement in relation to those standards.

UWL Link: Please refer the University partner link: https://www.uwl.ac.uk/about-us/academic-quality-and-standards

RUL Programme

Marking and Moderation

Marking and moderation will be carried out according to the Assessment and Feedback Policy. All assessed student work is marked in grades. Each grade is related to a percentage value for the calculation of overall unit grades where there are more than one assessment item and for use in the classification algorithm.

Retrieval following failure of a unit or stage.

Students who have been awarded a failing grade for a unit may be offered the opportunity to retrieve that failure at a time to be determined by the Assessment Board.

Classification

An Assessment Board may not determine an award where less than 120 credits at the highest level required for the award have been assessed by Ravensbourne.

Extenuating circumstances

Any student whose assessment is significantly affected by unforeseen circumstances beyond their control, may make an application under the Extenuating Circumstances Policy. The outcome of an application for Extenuating Circumstances will be ratified at an Assessment Board.

Submission

All written coursework must be submitted online, through OBC moodle Turnitin. The submission should be set up to allow students to submit in advance as a formative process prior to making the final, summative submission.

Late submission

Assessment received up to 5 working days beyond the original submission date will be accepted as a late submission. This does not apply to pass/fail assessments, or to referral work.

RUL link: https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/asset-bucket/prod/2020-10/ravensbourne-assessment-regulations%202021%20final%20approved.pdf