



Policy on

Assessment

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Approved by

SLT

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New College Durham is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, as well as vulnerable adults, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

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We review our policies regularly to update them and to ensure that they are accessible and fair to all. All policies are subject to equality impact assessments which are carried out to determine whether the policy has, or is likely to have, a different impact on those with protected characteristics. We are always keen to hear from anyone who wants to contribute to these impact assessments, and we welcome suggestions for improving the accessibility of fairness of this and all College policies.

Equality Impact Assessed: September 2022
 Accessibility Impact Assessed: October 2022

To make suggestions or to see further information please contact:

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1. Rationale

The reason for the development of this policy is derived from the quality agendas and requirements presented by the Education Inspection Framework (Ofsted) and the UK Quality Code (QAA). It is designed to emphasise an inclusive approach to assessment which is at the centre of the learning process.

2. Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the assessment of students¹ is valid, inclusive, fair and reliable and is conducted in an open manner which encourages active participation and innovation.

In order to fulfil the stated aim of the policy, the College has established the following objectives which are to:

- a. determine if a potential student is ready to start a particular course of learning, either accredited or non-accredited (initial assessment).
- b. provide guidance on how well students are progressing on a particular course of programme (formative assessment).
- c. grade students as failing or passing a qualification (summative assessment).

3. Student Entitlements

Under the terms of this policy all students at the College are entitled to:

- a. assessment which satisfies prescribed standards laid down by national awarding bodies or professional bodies notwithstanding reasonable adjustments for students where applicable.
- b. initial assessments on entry in order to determine whether the course of their choice is appropriate i.e. whether individual students are likely to be able to meet the demands of the course with or without additional student support. For those students whose initial assessment indicates that the course of their choice is not appropriate, suitable, and available alternative provision should be offered.

¹ The terms students and teaching staff are used throughout the College policy statement. For all Apprenticeship provision, the term 'students' should be substituted with 'apprentices', and the term 'teaching staff' should be substituted with 'apprenticeship skills co-ordinators'.

- c. information, support, and guidance on all aspects of assessment leading to a clear understanding of exactly what is expected of them in order to achieve the qualification.
- d. detailed and constructive feedback on their progress throughout the course given in a timely manner.
- e. fair treatment in accordance with the assessment regulations applying to the course including differentiated procedures to minimise barriers to students who declare a protected characteristic.
- f. information and guidance on the academic appeals policy against the assessment process.

4. Student Responsibilities

This policy requires students to fully acknowledge and actively engage in fulfilling their responsibilities by:

- a. making a positive commitment and contribution to their own development and individual learning targets/goals.
- b. paying careful attention to the advice and feedback from the teaching staff on their progress.
- c. working hard and making best use of their time inside and outside the College in achieving their chosen study programme.
- d. completing and submitting all assessments on time.
- e. preparing thoroughly and being present for all tests and examinations.
- f. complying with the relevant awarding body assessment regulations for the course/programme, including the application for extenuating circumstances (mitigation procedure) and/or an application for an extension to an assessment deadline.

5. Teaching Staff Responsibilities

The policy requires teaching and support staff to ensure that:

- a. students are provided with appropriate introduction and guidance to the associated academic regulations, policy and procedures relating to assessment relevant to their award/qualification.

- b. students have appropriate opportunities to show they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the award of a qualification or credit.
- c. assessment of students is robust, valid and reliable and that the award of qualifications or credits are based on the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.
- d. assessment is an integral part of the learning process which is undertaken both during delivery as well as through independent study, such as set work, directed reading, etc. Wherever possible, assessment should be made stimulating, challenging and a positive experience for students.
- e. when assessing students who declare a protected characteristic, they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage, or given an unnecessary advantage compared to other students, for a reason relating to their protected characteristics.
- f. previous student assessment is used to inform the teaching and learning strategy including the associated methods of assessing students on programme.
- g. diagnostic testing methods are used, where relevant, to identify specific student learning needs and appropriate support made available on an individual student need.
- h. formative and summative assessments employ a range of methods which measure appropriately the learning outcomes defining a particular level of award.
- i. where possible, formative assessment is suitably differentiated to reflect the individual needs of students.
- j. course/programme teams are responsible for ensuring they meet the requirements of the College policy for internal quality assurance (assessment, moderation, and verification).
- k. course/programme teams are responsible for ensuring demands on students are challenging but not excessive and determining the schedule of assignments which should be published to students in a timely manner.

- l. feedback to students on their assessed work is constructive and is provided within two weeks of an assessment submission deadline². Such feedback should:
 - contain reference to the criteria for the marking and grading of work.
 - include correction of inaccuracies such as spelling and grammatical errors using the College SPaG Policy.
 - be directly related to the learning outcome being assessed.
 - identify how far students have met these criteria, and what they need to do in future to improve.
- m. any challenge or appeal by students against the assessment process are dealt with in an open and professional manner consistent with the Academic Appeals Policy and supporting procedure and abide with the governing assessment regulations for the course.

6. College Management Responsibilities

College Management should ensure that:

- a. all teaching staff/assessors are fully conversant with this policy and the demands it places on them.
- b. all staff are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities.
- c. all staff actively promote the principles of equality and diversity and are aware of who to approach, for specific modifications to assessment materials and procedures for students who declare a protected characteristic.
- d. all newly appointed staff, including Agency staff have, as part of their induction, training opportunities to meet the basic requirements of this policy.
- e. all other teaching staff/assessors, including Agency staff, receive training which promotes and shares best practice in assessment.
- f. the Examinations Office will publish information on Awarding Body/Joint Council Qualifications controlled assessments, as appropriate, for both programme work and examinations. Curriculum staff must comply with the controlled assessment task details from the awarding body and ensure that all learners know the relevant information for their programme or subject.

² The turnaround timing for feedback to students on assessed work may differ for an external validating/awarding body.

7. Standards by which the Success of this Policy can be Evaluated

The following standards/measures will be considered when evaluating the success of this policy:

- a. student feedback, including questionnaire responses, showing overwhelming evidence that students know what is expected of them and that they have received timely and constructive feedback on their progress.
- b. positive reports from external Verifiers/Examiners on the design and conduct of assessment.
- c. content of feedback from the observation and assessment of teaching and learning including attainment.
- d. staff feedback on the quality of support provided by the College to enhance competence and skill in assessment.

8. Responsibility for Implementing this Policy

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy resides at all levels of the College specifically:

- a. the Principal and Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- b. the Vice Principals (Curriculum and Quality) and Heads of School are responsible for overseeing the implementation of Sections 4 and 6.
- c. Curriculum Managers and Course/Programme Leaders are responsible for ensuring that Course Teams collaboratively address the requirements of this policy.
- d. teaching staff/assessors are responsible for meeting students' expectations as described in Section 4.
- e. the Vice Principals are responsible for producing and presenting to the principal a detailed staff training programme each year to meet the requirements of this policy statement.

9. Non-accredited provision

Must be appropriately assessed to meet the requirements of 'Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement' (RARPA).

- a. The assessment of learners' work must meet course and individual learning objectives.
- b. Internally assessed work, handed in on time, must be assessed and returned to learners with appropriate feedback, within a maximum of 10 working days. This period may be extended for work requiring internal verification and in other exceptional circumstances. If this return schedule is not met by the lecturer learners must be told why and a new date set.
- c. Assessment briefs/schedules must meet the deadlines set by the curriculum team.

10. Review of this Policy

All policies will be subject to a review either as a consequence of the changing landscape, against which the policy was originally drafted, or in keeping with good governance.

The timings of review will, if not as a result of that changing landscape, be no longer than five years within which the periodic review of the policy will be initiated.