Assessment Policy Statement

January, 2019



Edge Hill University

Assessment Policy Statement

Summary

Assessment practices at Edge Hill should be both for and of learning. Assessment should have a positive role in supporting the learning of students and in quality management and enhancement. Processes will be underpinned by transparency, supportiveness, respect and will value diversity.

Assessment will be linked to clear statements of intended learning outcomes and assessment criteria in all programmes, which will be available to staff and students. These statements will take in to account the academic level of students learning as informed by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2014.Assessment serves the following purposes among others:

- measuring achievement at appropriate academic levels
- motivating students by requiring them to demonstrate the
- knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies they have developed;
- providing a means of feedback to students;
- diagnosing student potential;
- evaluating student progress and identifying possible challenges they may be experiencing in their learning;
- providing staff with information about the effectiveness of their teaching and students' learning;
- contributing to quality assurance, by monitoring the extent to which students are achieving appropriate standards.

Most forms of assessment will serve several of the above purposes. The form of assessment will be fit for the purpose of allowing students to demonstrate their achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

Feedback will be provided to students within a maximum period of 4 weeks, this includes time for marking and any associated internal moderation. Dates of release of feedback will be made available to students before the submission date in module handbooks or via the VLE.

Transparency and **active** engagement of students in understanding the principles, purposes and responsibilities associated with assessment and feedback should positively influence performance. Involvement in assessment should develop students' confidence in self-assessment, evaluation of their own performance and impact upon their autonomy as learners.

All staff will receive induction into assessment practices and continuing professional development opportunities will be provided. Research, debate and good practice in the sector will be considered in monitoring and development of Edge Hill's approaches. Assessment will be a key in evaluation associated with quality management and enhancement.

Where computer aided assessment approaches are used, full cognisance will be given to British Standards code of practice for the use of IT in the delivery of assessments (BS7988).

The principles below will be addressed in the design, validation and implementation of all modules and programmes.

1. Assessment will be *of and for* learning.
2. Assessment will be designed so as to maximise opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do.
3. Assessment will be informed by Edge Hill's Equal Opportunities policy and will seek to be inclusive and not to disadvantage specific individuals or groups of students. Where appropriate, 'reasonable adjustments' will be made to a form of assessment in accord with the Academic Regulations for students with disabilities.

4. The rationale for a particular type of assessment and grading criteria will be clear to staff, students and the wider community as appropriate.
5. Assessment tasks will be derived from the learning outcomes and allow them to be measured with reliability and consistency. They should measure how well the student has achieved the learning outcomes and accommodate and encourage creativity and originality.
6. The form of assessment will be appropriate to the level of the module/programme being delivered and should be both stimulating and demanding.
7. The amount and timing of assessment should be realistic and manageable and relate to notional learning hours avoiding overload, which may impede learning.
8. All summative assessment will be subject to moderation and external examination as appropriate.
9. Assessment items will have clear grading criteria **specific to each assessment** and explicit weightings of components, shared by staff and students.
10. Assessment tasks must be feasible and practicable for students, staff and for any workbased assessors.
11. Students will receive induction into assessment practices as a function of the University's focus on '**Assessment for Learning and Assessment Literacy'.**
12. Opportunities for formative assessment will be provided, particularly in preparation for assessment tasks with which students are unfamiliar.
13. Students will receive constructive feedback on all summative assessment, **which identifies three key areas: What students have done well, where they have missed marks against criteria and how to improve in future.**
14. All assessment will be monitored and evaluated as part of module and programme quality management and enhancement.

Marking and Moderating Assessed Work

Setting a specific piece of assessment

When setting a specific piece of assessment and its related assessment guidance, the tutor should ensure that these have been checked with another internal examiner and, in the case of Levels 5 and 6 (Levels 4 and 5 for Foundation Degrees) with the external examiner. Departments/Areas should ensure that they have procedures in place for assuring that there is no unplanned overlap between coursework and examination questions.

Marking

Examinations are marked anonymously (i.e. the script does not have the name of the candidate on the front sheet). A programme or module marking team may determine whether to mark other forms of assessment, such as essays, anonymously **where it is deemed necessary to do so**. However,it is recognised that practice and practical forms of assessment, **including those with a focus chosen by students** often exclude the possibility of being marked anonymously.

All students (where practicable) will be given the opportunity to submit their work online.

When marking any assessed piece of work the course team/programme leader will ensure that a ‘marking scheme’ has been prepared. This would be an articulation of indications of the types of features within the assessment submission that students may include in order to demonstrate all of the module learning outcomes. As such it is a guide to markers and moderators. The marking scheme would not normally be a list of ‘answers’ but relate to the indicative scope of answers, other than when closed responses are required. This is conducive to the complex nature of higher education study and allows for contestation and creativity.

The marking scheme will link to the assessment criteria which will have been notified to students and will be shared and agreed by all those involved in marking a specific piece of work. It should also be available to any internal moderator and to external examiners if the assessment is at Level 5 or above (Level 4 and 5 in the case of Foundation degrees).

Since assessment criteria and marking schemes are available, and all assessed work will be moderated (see below) there is no reason for unsighted second marking to be the norm. (The assessment of Postgraduate Research is subject to separate guidance). It is important that the reasons for awarding a particular grade are made explicit in the feedback for a piece assessment or on an examination script. Samples of work will be moderated in line with the guidance in the following paragraph. Course teams may decide to use unsighted second marking as part of their own moderating process, for the staff development of members of their course team who are less experienced assessors, and/or for the first run through of any new or innovative form of assessment.

Feedback

All feedback will be made available in 'type' on departmental coversheets **or online through the appropriate mechanisms in the VLE** and should make specific reference to learning outcomes and **assessment criteria for each component.** Feedback should be timely, and some form made available for all students for all items of graded assessment.

All examinations will be followed by feedback to students. As a minimum, this will be in the form of a general presentation to students indicating common strengths and weaknesses exhibited in papers, advising upon how performance could be improved.

Staff should agree and publish dates by which they will return assessed work with relevant grades and detailed written feedback to students. The time period may vary depending on the nature of the piece of assessed work (e.g. a short essay compared with a lengthy dissertation) and on the number of pieces of work to be assessed, but Institutional policy requires a maximum **period for feedback to students of 4 weeks**.

Moderation

All assessed work will be internally moderated via sampling. Subjects should ensure that all work is checked for any incorrect addition and should moderate a sample of both coursework and examination scripts for each module. An appropriate sample here is taken to be the square root of n, rounded up to the nearest integer, where n = the number of students undertaking the piece of assessment. For example for 100 students, the sample size would be 10. Any such sample should include **examples of** firsts and fails and may, on occasions deviate from this formula, by exceeding the formula sample size. For assessment with less than 25 students the sample will be at least 5 students and fails and 1sts should be similarly included in the sample, and the range of performances across classes should also be represented, thus the sample size will be, on occasions, greater than the indicative sample size. Consideration of representation of such a range should also be made for cohorts smaller than this. **All being said, sampling across the full range of marks is the key consideration for internal and external moderation/examining.**

The moderator should review the 'scripts' with the sight of the marker's comments and grade; but should focus on establishing the appropriateness of the grade/class of each script rather than being excessively concerned with a precise numerical score. Individual marks should not be changed Markers and moderators should agree final marks for the scripts. Where the variance is greater than a class, it may be appropriate to engage a second moderator. Discussion between marker and moderator should also review the appropriateness of the marking scheme (see above). Where the moderator identifies a consistent variance (over or under) across the majority of the sample, they should request an additional sample. Moderators will consider the involvement of the External Examiner in if such process does not lead to mutual agreement. In extreme cases, where there is large and consistent deviation, marks may be scaled. This will be undertaken in close communication with the External Examiner, where appropriate.

Evidence of moderation should **be clearly recorded for presentation to the External Examiner.** Moderated work should clearly show the names of the tutors involved. A record of outcomes of the moderation process should be kept and used to inform evaluation of the module, and where appropriate, modifications to the assessment guidance/marking scheme. A record of the moderation process should be available for internal and external examiners.

Following internal moderation, a sample of work will be sent to the external examiner for Levels 5 and 6 (and Levels 4 and 5 for Foundation Degrees). The precise nature and number of the sample will be negotiated with the external examiner concerned, following the general institutional guidance on the size of the sample (see above).

Where new staff have joined a course team; where staff inexperienced in marking assessed work join a subject; or where part-time members of staff are involved in assessment; the module/programme leader will have a responsibility to ensure that the member of staff is fully aware of the assessment criteria and marking scheme for the course. Staff development opportunities will be offered centrally to support such staff; and course teams are required to initially moderate all or a high proportion of that member of staff's assessments.

Title	**Assessment Policy Statement**
Policy Owner	Professor Mark Schofield
Approved by	
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