

**Provider's name: Newham College of Further Education**

**Provider's UKPRN: 10004607**

**Assessment Guidance for Staff**

**Academic Year 2022/2024**



## 1. Introduction

1. The motivation behind this document is to support colleagues in greater understanding of assessment practices and consequently contribute to students' achievement of higher standards. It seeks to establish a coherent framework through which students can be assessed with due regard to the QAA advice and guidance. It is to be used in conjunction with the following policy and procedural frameworks:

- a. Academic Regulations;
- b. Appeals Process;
- c. Mitigating Circumstances;
- d. Academic Misconduct;
- e. Externality Processes;
- f. Assessment Board Terms of Reference and Membership;
- g. Student Transfer Plan;
- h. Course Development, Modification, Review and Closure Process;
- i. Student Attendance and Engagement Policy.

### 1.1. External reference points

- a. [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications \(FHEQ\)](#)
- b. [Subject Benchmark Statements](#)
- c. [UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Assessment](#)
- d. [UK Quality Code for Higher Education – External Expertise](#)
- e. [UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Learning and Teaching](#)
- f. [UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Course Design and Development](#)
- g. [Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#)

### 1.2. Scope of the guidance

2. The policy applies to all prescribed and non-prescribed HE courses at the College; it seeks to create an overall guidance to assessment practice with direct reference to awarding body guidance does not seek to replace or change the academic regulations of any awarding body.

### 1.3. The purpose of this strategy

3. The Assessment Strategy seeks to create a usable guide that uses the guiding principles of assessment practice described by the QAA – Assessment to set and maintain the assessment practices of the College.

4. Where the College has responsibility for writing assessment tasks the following guidance should be used. Assessment tasks form a central part of the course specification, this information is made available to students as part of the pre-contract information and as such students rely upon this information when deciding to apply for a course. This means that once they are presented at validation and are ratified they cannot be changed outside the Course Development, Modification Review and Closure Processes.

## 2. Designing Assessment

5. All assessments will take account of the Guiding Principles of the UK Quality Code – Assessment.

6. The Subject Benchmark Statements make an extremely useful reference point in the design of assessment tasks, and these will be considered together with, where appropriate, the Professional and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) requirements. This means that assessment will be designed holistically from the top downwards at the point of course internal validation.

This lends itself to a well-considered and purposeful range of assessment tasks being used for each course. These are likely, but not limited to, include; essays, reports, work-based projects, presentations, exhibitions, group presentations, academic posters, portfolio, controlled assignments or exams. All assessment will clearly and demonstrably align to the learning outcomes and teaching activities of the module/unit and the course as a whole. All students must complete the assignment task as set out by the module/unit handbook.

7. In-keeping with QAA guidance – External Expertise staff should consult the College Externality Process to ensure that when they are designing assessment tasks they involve at least one potential employer from the sector where students are likely to seek work on completion. An academic reviewer will also be engaged in order to provide feedback and make recommendations regarding the congruence of the assessment tasks to the appropriate level of the FHEQ and the programme as a whole.

8. Assessment tasks are to be marked to predetermined standards, to which students have access, and teachers should consistently apply these standards. The Course Leaders are responsible for monitoring the processes and maintaining standards of assessment across the course as a whole.

9. Course Leaders will evaluate the extent to which the instruments of assessment are effective in assessing the students' level of attainment as part of the annual module/unit review process. Students' feedback will be fundamental to this. Any recommendations for changes should be brought forward to the Annual Course Review (ACR).

10. If the module/unit learning outcomes are changed (through the course modification process) it is essential that assessment tools are carefully reviewed to ensure their continued observance of the Guiding Principles of the Quality Code. These changes need to be approved through the course modifications process, course modifications process.

11. The scheduling of assignments and the amount of assessed work required will provide a reliable and valid profile of achievement without overloading staff or students. The length and number of assessment tasks (and associated student workload) are linked to the credit rating of the module/unit as is laid out in the definitive record of the course. The awarding/validating Body approval procedures ensure that the overall assessment load for students on any course is manageable.

12. Course Leaders should take an overview of the assessment workload of a course to ensure that it is manageable and spread reasonably evenly through the academic year and they should ensure that the assessment burden for any individual member of staff is appropriately distributed and not excessive.

### **2.1. Briefing Sheets and Assignment Tasks**

13. Student feedback indicates that they feel more fully equipped to engage confidently with the requirements of assessment tasks where they are given access to an effective briefing sheet that is written in plain English and makes suggestions as to the way in which they may wish to approach the assessment task. Consequently, where awarding body agreements allow, briefing sheets can be used in order to facilitate the students' capacity to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills of the module/unit learning outcomes.

14. The briefing sheet's main function is to form a link between the assessment task(s) and the way in which the learning outcomes may be met. The briefing sheet is an enabling tool and is not designed in any way to replace the module/unit assessment requirements. Tutors must take care to inform the student carefully and clearly. Strategies recommended by tutors could involve breaking down assessment tasks into their individual components, providing case studies, or specific research. Throughout, the tutor will ensure that their

guidance is creating a vehicle for the full completion of the assignment tasks as well as facilitating students' capacity to perform beyond the threshold level.

### **3. Expectations of assessment practice**

#### **3.1. Ensuring student' success in assessment**

15. Students will receive, as part of their induction, a comprehensive introduction to matters related Academic Misconduct. This seeks to enable students to understand what is considered to be academic misconduct, the ways in which they can avoid this and how to develop fluent academic skills that do best justice to their knowledge and understanding.

16. Units/modules will be taught in a clear and professional way which covers both the skills and knowledge relating to the module/unit learning outcomes comprehensively. The College will evaluate the delivery of each module/unit and will endeavour to incorporate the feedback and advice of students and staff in future delivery plans. Where students are required to carry out tasks or reading each week these requirements will be described and specified in the module/unit handbook. It is essential that the students fulfil this requirement in order that they keep abreast of their studies. Where students experience difficulty with an aspect of the course, they should be referred to the module leader and the course leader in a timely way. Students are expected to attend for 100% of all classes, and to remain for the duration of the session, the Student Attendance and Engagement Policy is available on the HE Page of the College Website. These measures ensure that there is a good grounding to allow the student to access the module/unit assessment effectively.

17. Course learning outcomes are clearly described in both the course specification and in the course handbook, they are amplified in module handbooks. They underpin the learning requirements of each individual module. Consequently, the student must demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of each module/unit learning outcome at the designated level in order to achieve the module/unit. In so doing, they progress through their qualification. Tutors must ensure that the learning outcomes form the core of their teaching for the module, and students must be thoroughly familiar with them before attempting assessment tasks. Following the completion of each module/unit the tutor will, as part of the module/unit of the review, reflect on the extent to which the assessment instruments effectively measured the student engagement with the learning outcomes of the module. Central to this process the students will feedback on their perspectives of the module/unit assessment. This analysis will feed forward into the Annual Course Review (ACR) for further consideration.

#### **3.2. Tutorial support**

18. Student feedback indicates that they value individual tutorials and that they make a significant impact on their capacity to engage effectively with the learning outcomes of the course. Students indicate that in the best tutorials there is clear and explicit discussion in plain English and with due regard to their learning needs and level of attainment. Students should be encouraged to approach tutorials with clear ideas of the areas they wish to discuss and the advice that they seek. However, in some circumstances students may not have a clear idea of the help that they need and may be appropriate to allow the student openly to discuss, their thoughts regarding the assignment. Where students present work the tutor can only look at certain parts or aspects of it. It is inappropriate for a student to present all their work and seek feedback as to the likely mark. It is inappropriate for tutors to make such comments. Formative feedback from tutorials should be recorded on a tutorial form. This may include advice on:

- a. further reading and research that may be necessary
- b. coverage of the learning outcomes

- c. academic literacy
- d. academic standards and/or any other aspect of presentation
- e. additional work that may be necessary

19. It is essential that the student demonstrates both independence and ownership of their work and that it is based on their own knowledge and understanding of the module/unit. In the event of a student being referred, they will be given the opportunity to resubmit the assessment. In this case they will be entitled to 20 minutes extra tutorial time, the division of which will be made by mutual agreement. As with all tutorials, it will be recorded appropriately and stored in the student's file.

### **3.3. Assessment information**

20. Students will have access to an assessment schedule on the first day of study. Once these assessment arrangements are agreed there should be as little deviation from the published description as is possible. Where changes are necessary, these will be authorised by the Curriculum Director, noted in the Assessment Board records and the Course Board minutes, which is reported through the Annual Course Review to ADQ Committee. Critically this will be communicated, clearly and promptly, to students.

### **3.4. Student feedback/feed forward**

21. The College's over approach to feedback/feedforward is informed by student feedback, academic research, and the view that assessment practices contribute to student learning.

22. Student feedback indicates that they value assessment information that is timely, developmental, honest and unambiguously communicated. It is of significant benefit to the student to conduct early formative assessment which is fed back honestly and sensitively to the student. Opportunities for formative assessment will be embedded into the students' learning experiences during taught sessions; it should contribute to the students' capacity for self-assessment and consequently self-regulation of learning. This will give students the opportunity to improve their work and give a clear indication regarding the level that they are engaging with the module/unit learning outcomes and the course more widely. Feedback will include specific recommendations on the ways in which the student could improve their work. It will be written honestly, but sensitively recognising achievement, in plain English and feedback will avoid ambiguous terms and it should contribute to the students' understanding of how an assessment judgement is made. Feedback will be referenced explicitly to grading criteria and/or learning outcomes of the module together with wider relevant matters such as academic literacy which directly contribute to their mark. This too will seek to promote students' self-assessment and concomitantly self-regulation; students are therefore empowered to work with greater autonomy and agency thus contributing to their self-confidence as a learner in higher education. Equally, our feedback will direct the student to the appropriate support services where it becomes apparent that the student would benefit from additional support.

The tutor commentary should include feedback/feedforward on:

- a. the positive aspects of the work which have contributed to the mark **as well as** make recommendations to the student on the ways in which they may seek to improve in the future in plain English;
- b. the extent to which the student has communicated their knowledge of the learning outcomes of the learning outcomes;

- c. the academic standards demonstrated as described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ);
- d. the extent to which the students has exceed the threshold standard;
- e. the student's work will be annotated to augment summary feedback;
- f. matters of academic literacy including referencing and the use of critical material;
- g. even at the highest marks the tutor will endeavour to enable the student to improve their marks.

### **3.5. Assessment criteria and its use**

23. Summative assessment will contribute to the overall grading of the course. The use of the assessment criteria is mandatory. All work to be assessed will use assessment criteria to which students have access before attempting the assessment, this will have formed part of the course specification. This gives clear guidance regarding the allocation of marks and should enable the candidates to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. Where there are group tasks the boundaries between the individual and group contributions will be made clear in advance and any matters relating to the contribution of group members will be addressed promptly. A single overall mark that is in keeping with the requirements of the course specification will be allocated for the assessment task.

## **4. Conducting assessment marking and moderation**

24. Assessed work must be submitted in accordance with the College's and awarding body's academic regulations. These are available on the College and awarding body websites. The word limit for each assignment is printed in the module/unit handbook. Where appropriate, each assignment should be submitted on A4 paper, word processed. It should be submitted using font 12, printed in black and 1.5 spaced. Students should include their name, centre name, module/unit number code and qualification as footer throughout their work. Assessment will be submitted through Turnitin, only where it is not practicably possible can students submit in other formats.

The work will be assessed in the following route:

- a. 1<sup>st</sup> marker, normally the module/unit Tutor who will feedback to the student using both the feedback sheet **and** annotations throughout the script;
- b. 2<sup>nd</sup> marker(s), at this point students may have a provisional mark, and receive feedback, students must understand that marks are subject to final ratification at Assessment Boards;
- c. the 2<sup>nd</sup> Markers will complete and return the appropriate documentation to the Course leader;
- d. External Examination;
- e. Course Assessment Board.

25. 1<sup>st</sup> Marking; this is the process whereby the student's work is matched against an agreed set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria. The module/unit tutor will provide feedback and interim marks for assessed within the timeframe stipulated, but not before 2<sup>nd</sup> marking. In the event of a student not meeting pass criteria level, a Referred grade is awarded. In the latter case, the marker provides reasons for referral. When presenting work for second marking all associated assessment material should be included this will include; 1<sup>st</sup>

marking feedback to students, briefing sheets where they are used, and a full list of module/unit marks whether these are presented electronically. Due regard must be given for the security and confidentiality of marks and student work.

26. The work will be selected by stratified random sample, the second marker should include the highest mark, all referrals, borderline marks and a middle mark. A moderation meeting will then be held in order to finalise the allocation of marks. Records will be kept of those students who have been second marked. New tutors are offered support through induction, observation and supported marking. Students must be aware that the final grading of modules is subject to the decision of the Course Assessment Board and ratification by the Awards and Progression Board and that awarding body is the sole arbiter as to whether or not someone has achieved an award.

27. Further to this and to ensure that the academic standards continue to be congruent with the threshold academic standards described in the FHEQ and that they are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers the College will undertake cross-college standardisation events annually. These will be informed by the summative findings of the external examiners' reports as well as the ACRs. This event will be compulsory for all academic staff and its findings and outcomes will feed forward into on-going staff development and course action plans.

## **5. Collaboration, plagiarism and academic dishonesty**

28. The College seeks to avoid situations where students commit academic offences. However, the Awarding Bodies and College have a policy with regard to cheating and plagiarism and considers that any form of academic dishonesty is a serious offence. The student induction should include comprehensive guidance with regard to the consequences of plagiarism. In general, the College would want to encourage collaborative work with other students and wide reference to other people's work, both published and unpublished, throughout the course. Student feedback indicates that this is an effective and enjoyable way to learn. It is important to distinguish these activities from cheating and plagiarism. There are various forms of academic dishonesty but in the student's context, it means cheating in assessments, or presenting work for assessment, which is not the student's own. The Academic Misconduct Policy is available on the HE Page of the College Website.

## **6. Re-sits and mark reduction**

29. All students' marks will be subject to the requirements of the academic regulations of the College and the awarding body, this may include reduced or capped marks, all students are made aware of this through the course handbook.

## **7. Coursework deadlines, mitigating circumstances and late submission**

30. Assessments must be submitted on turn-it-in by midnight or where it is hard copy **before 23.59** on the due date. The student is **strongly** advised to keep an additional copy of their work. Any work submitted outside the stated timeframe will be subject to the academic regulations and processes as are relevant to the specific course. Where students have genuine reason they should consult the mitigating circumstances policy available on the HE Page of the College Website.

### **7.1. Word lengths**

31. The requirements of the awarding body will be adhered to these will be made available to the students and implicit course and will be articulated through the course handbook.



## **8. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)/Transfer of Credit**

32. Applicants who meet or exceed the criteria for entry to a course may be eligible for recognition of their prior learning and this will exempt them from some of the requirements for their award. The decision to admit a student onto a course is separate from the decision to recognise prior learning. The decision to recognise prior learning is taken after the decision to admit has been made. This is taken in reasonable time so the applicant can determine whether they wish to accept the offer of a place. The authority to recognise prior learning is delegated to each of the individual departments within the confines of the policy. It will also be conducted within the parameters of the Student Transfer Policy which is available on the HE Page of the College Website.

33. Accreditation of prior learning will be allowed within the academic regulations of the awarding body. For credit to be transferred, the learning must be relevant to the course for which the claim is being made. The learning must also have been at a comparable academic level and must have been summatively assessed and accredited through a recognised awarding body. Any credit transferred from another provider must be equal to, or more than, the amount of credit awarded by the College. The transferred credit can be reduced if the learning is not relevant to the course or is out of date. The amount of credit transferred can only exceed 50% of the credit required for an award in certain circumstance. If this is the case, the processes followed to award the transfer of credit must be thoroughly and independently scrutinised and regulated to ensure the standards of the awarding body are maintained. When the transfer of credit in excess of 50% is granted, the award may need to be accumulated within the specified maximum period of registration for that award. This will be described within the course specification. Requests for the transfer of credit are managed by the individual departments who follow the College processes.

### **8.1. Re-grading of credit**

34. The upgrading of credit is the transfer of credit awarded at one level to a higher academic level. This is not permissible. Students will not receive more than one allocation of credit on the basis of a single learning activity.

### 8.1.1. Annex 1 - Definitions

#### **Script**

The document containing the answers produced by a student from a formal examination.

#### **Mark**

The process by which an internal marker matches the student's work against an agreed set of learning outcomes, and associated assessment criteria and/or a marking scheme, and as a result allocates a mark (normally a percentage).

#### **Second Mark**

The process by which a second internal marker matches the student's work against an agreed set of learning outcomes, and associated assessment criteria and / or a marking scheme, and as a result allocates a mark (normally a percentage). The second marker has access to the mark allocated by the first marker.

#### **Double Mark**

The process by which a second internal marker matches the student's work against an agreed set of learning outcomes, and associated assessment criteria and / or a marking scheme, and as a result allocates a mark (normally a percentage). The second marker does not have access to the mark allocated by the first marker. This is also known as double anonymous marking.

#### **Team Marking**

The process by which more than one marker jointly assesses a piece of work. The markers will agree a single mark as a result of this process. Examples of this may include a musical recital and dance or dramatic performance.

#### **Moderate**

The process by which a second internal marker checks the self-consistency of the first marker. The moderation process is a verification process and not re-marking.

#### **Function of Second Marking**

1. the function of second marking is to: Verify the reliability of both the mark allocated and the marking band, into which the mark falls.
2. whether or not there is a match between the written feedback comments and the allocation of marks within the assessment criteria.
3. check the quality of tutor feedback, its reliability and the capacity of this feedback to facilitate the student's progression.
4. check the consistency in mark allocation.
5. check marking is consistent with the requirements of Level 4, 5, or 6 as described in the FHEQ
6. make any further comments regarding the student's work which may be relevant.

Below are some suggestions that would be considered to be good practice in feedback commentary:

*Comprehensive feedback that clearly indicated where the student has achieved marks.....Comments are relevant and at the expected level.....it is clear that the markers have given constructive feedback.....feedback given is developmental and relevant.....grading is clearly at the Level of level 4, 5, .....had the student addressed learning outcome 2 more comprehensively it would have placed him more securely in the band allocated.....whilst the band has been agreed, had the student made a more coherent argument the upper end of the band could have been more securely allocated.....whilst the tutor's comments indicate that the work is 'Good', the Assessment criteria allocation indicates grades significantly below this level.....because the student addressed all learning outcomes comprehensively and has analysed in depth grading would be more accurately allocated in a higher band.....there is a clear match between the written feedback and the assessment criteria band allocation..*