Nottingham Trent
University

Quality Handbook

Part D: Course design, management and enhancement

Section 15: Assessment - Requirements

Section 15

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Section **15**

1. Aim of the policy

This policy aims to provide consistency of approach to assessment at Nottingham Trent University. This policy sets out clear principles and requirements that must be adhered to. The policy should be used alongside the relevant supporting Quality Handbook Sections and Supplements.

1.1 This policy is supported by a set of common assessment regulations (CAR) that determine the decisions about student performance and outcome (see NTU Quality Handbook sections 16-16F, links are provided in subsection 15 of this document). Guidance and resources on good practice are available via Learning, Teaching and Assessment on Thrive.

2. Purpose and Principles

The main purposes of assessment are to judge students' achievement of learning outcomes and to allow the University to ensure that threshold academic standards are being applied appropriately. Assessment also informs teaching, facilitates and shapes learning and engagement, and supports student outcomes.

2.1 There are nine principles used to guide practice in assessment. These are set out in this Section and designed to ensure that the University, its Schools, and course teams have processes of assessment in place which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes of the award. All courses must adhere to these principles in designing assessments and assessment processes.

Principles

2.2 **Principle 1: Assessment methods and criteria are aligned to learning outcomes and teaching activities.** Learning and teaching activities are tailored to help students achieve specific learning outcomes, with assessments aligned to the academic level. This alignment will allow students effectively demonstrate their learning.

2.3 **Principle 2: Assessment is valid, reliable, and fair** with a robust assessment process. All assessment activities have clearly articulated assessment criteria, weightings and level descriptors that are understood by all those involved in the assessment process.

2.4 **Principle 3: Assessment design is approached holistically across a course.** Assessment must be designed looking at course level aims, outcomes, employability and employer/PSRB considerations. A holistic approach will ensure that assessments are varied across the course and relevant to the graduate skills required. It will ensure that the development of skills in the assessment types are scaffolded and there is a connection between assessments in modules.

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2.5   **Principle 4: Assessment is inclusive and equitable**. Explicit consideration is given in assessment design and delivery to accessibility and inclusion for all students (Inclusivity of assessment is discussed further in subsection 5, below).

2.6   **Principle 5: Assessment is explicit and clearly communicated to students.** Students are informed of the purpose and requirements of each assessment task and criteria. Students are supported to understand and interpret assessment criteria (See subsection 11 of this document).

2.7   **Principle 6: Assessment feedback supports the learning process.** Feedback is action-focused, reflects attainment relevant to grading criteria for the assessment task and builds on dialogue for students to reflect on their learning (see subsection 11 of this document).

2.8   **Principle 7: Assessment is timely, efficient, and manageable**. Students are given sufficient time and support to engage in learning and teaching activities to build their capacity for assessment. Assessment requirements must be commensurate with the notional learning hours for any given unit of study. Assessment deadlines, numbers, and methods of assessments across the course must be considered carefully to avoid over-burdening students (see subsection 4 and 11 of this document).

2.9   **Principle 8: Students are supported and prepared for assessment**. Students are supported to enable them to develop assessment literacy, practical skills, knowledge, and competencies required to meet learning outcomes.

2.10   **Principle 9: Assessment encourages academic integrity.** Assessment is designed to uphold academic integrity and minimise opportunities for students to commit an academic integrity breach. NTU is committed to promoting positive student behaviours by supporting and developing students to engage in good academic practice and to act with academic integrity. (See full policy in Quality Handbook Section 17 C: Academic Integrity Policy).

3.   Overarching assessment requirements

NTU has a set of requirements for assessment designs and practices that support the development of courses, enabling students to achieve a successful outcome. Specific areas of these requirements are elaborated in subsections of this document. Key terms are in 'bold' and definitions can be found in the accompanying glossary.

3.1   All courses must have a coherent course assessment strategy. A course assessment strategy must articulate the underlying principles, purposes and rationale for the assessment approach and structure, defining the alignment of assessment with course aims, learning outcomes and teaching activities, to demonstrate the unique offering of the course (see subsection 4 of this document). The assessment strategy must be clearly articulated in CourseLoop.

3.2 Schools must maintain oversight of assessment schedules across all courses to enable them to monitor the student experience of assessment and ensure that staff workload can be managed.

3.3 Course teams must be mindful of the impact that assessment decisions have on the learning and teaching experience and how that might impact student behaviour. For example, assessment deadline bunching must be avoided as this can negatively impact student well-being and performance. Where this cannot be avoided, course teams must have a strong rationale and clearly communicate this to students, whilst supporting students to prepare effectively.

3.4 All courses must embed assessed work-like experience (AWLE) equivalent to 240 hours of learning for undergraduate courses (see QH Section 12: Course Requirements).

3.5 All courses must include a **synoptic assessment** in the final year.

3.6 All undergraduate courses must include a **capstone project** in the final year.

3.7 The complexity and depth of assessment must be commensurate with the level of study (for instance, differentiation of assessments at levels 6 and level 7).

3.8 All courses must have one or more course learning outcomes relating to sustainability with a clear narrative of the scaffolding of learning and assessment through the course and encompassing environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

3.9 All course learning outcomes must be met in at least two modules at specific levels of study (e.g. levels 5 and 6 for a standard three-year undergraduate course, levels 6 and 7 for integrated master's, level 5 for foundation degrees). They must be mapped appropriately across the course identifying which learning outcomes are assessed and/or taught in each module (see subsection 6 below).

3.10 Formative assessments must be incorporated into the student learning journey and communicated in the Assessment Schedule and Feedback Plan (See Subsection 11 below).

3.11 All master's courses must have a research project assessment or the equivalent of this which will be approved through the course approval process.

4. Course Assessment Strategy Purpose

The course assessment strategy is a systematic plan designed to evaluate student performance and learning outcomes throughout a course.

The assessment strategy should serve as a guiding framework, ensuring that assessments are purposeful, aligned with learning outcomes, and contribute positively towards overall student development and learning experience. A holistic course assessment design is an essential aspect of course planning, to

enable successful student outcomes and is outlined as the course assessment strategy (refer to Subsection 2.3 in this document).

4.1 Every course must have an explicit assessment strategy to define a clear direction for assessment, to enable all students to succeed given a diverse student cohort. This is established during the course design and articulated in CourseLoop.

4.2 The assessment strategy must reflect the assessment decisions that have been made by the course team so that the principles and purposes of assessment are addressed. The following requirements are reflected in the whole course assessment:

   a. assessment tasks are explicitly linked to module learning outcomes, bearing in mind that all course learning outcomes are assessed. The selected assessment methods must effectively enable students to demonstrate specific learning outcomes, whilst enhancing their learning (*alignment*);

   b. assessments from different modules must build on each other throughout the course at levels and years (both horizontal and vertical integration), creating a coherent student experience of the curriculum (*coherence*);

   c. there is a range of assessment types demonstrated at course level, ensuring opportunities for students to master required skills and gain understanding from feedback (*balance*);

   d. assessment load across the course is balanced and planned in advance to ensure staff and student workload can be managed. i.e., avoidance of deadlines bunching at particular times of the year and a balance of formative work and summative assessment;

   e. there is scaffolding of assessment throughout a course to allow progressively more challenge, supporting student development from novice to expert (*progression*).

4.3 The **course assessment strategy** must include reference to the following (see below for specific related subsections within this document):

   a. inclusive approaches (Subsection 5 of this document and QH Section 12);

   b. the language of assessment (Subsection 14);

   c. assessment tasks and their relationship to course learning outcomes (Subsections 6 and 7);

   d. anonymity in marking (Subsection 9);

   e. moderation procedures (Subsection 10);

   f. feedback that feeds into and results from assessment (or) feedback results from assessment that feed into future assessments and learning (Subsection 11).

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5. Inclusive assessment

Inclusive assessment recognises and accommodates the diverse needs, backgrounds, and abilities of all students. It involves creating assessment methods and environments that are accessible and fair to everyone, regardless of individual differences. Inclusive assessment seeks to minimise barriers, provide equitable opportunities for all, and ensure that the assessment process considers the diversity of students enabling Success for all. Consideration is given to both the type and range of assessments across the course to ensure that all students are equally able to demonstrate their learning.

5.1   Inclusive assessment design must be embedded at course level as part of the course assessment strategy. where there are constraints on inclusive assessment design, reasonable adjustments or alternatives must be considered (an adjustment or alternative may not be possible where there are PSRB requirements).

5.2   Certain provisions are in place for students with disabilities: a) modified assessment involves making an alternative version of an assessment available; b) reasonable adjustments allow students with disabilities to undertake the standard assessment in a different way. Reasonable adjustments allow more time for an examination, provided that such adjustments enable academic or other prescribed standards to be maintained.

5.3   It is the responsibility of the Course Leader in consultation with Module Leaders to:

    a. implement modes of assessment that provide all students with an appropriate opportunity to achieve the stated learning outcomes;

    b. agree new or modified methods of assessment which will enable all students to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes;

    c. refer as necessary to Student Support Services (Disability and Inclusive Services) and Academic Registry, for further information on adjustments to a specific assessment made for an individual student.

5.4   The Course Leader must ensure that the Board of Examiners are notified of any adjustments to the assessment methods. Due regard must be given to requests for confidentiality from students in relation to the specific nature of any disability.

6. The assessment of course learning outcomes

> **Assessment is used to judge the extent to which individual students have achieved learning outcomes as evidenced by specific assessment criteria, which are clearly communicated to students.**

6.1 Each course learning outcome must be assessed in at least two of the modules that comprise the course. If this cannot be fulfilled, a justification must be provided. For example, it might only be possible to assess it once in a dissertation.

6.2 Assessment must be **criterion-referenced**, not norm-referenced.

6.3 Each course must maintain a **curriculum map**, highlighting where course learning outcomes are taught and assessed across the course. This document is required as part of the course approval process (see QH Supplement 5F).

6.4 Assessment of module learning outcomes must be aligned to the course learning outcomes in line with the curriculum map.

6.5 The course team must make a clear distinction between 'Taught' (T) and where learning outcomes are both taught and assessed (TA) on the curriculum map.

6.6 A 'Taught' module outcome needs to be assessed elsewhere in the course if it contributes to a course outcome. Module learning outcomes should align with the course learning outcomes, such that a module's assessed learning outcomes contribute to the course outcomes.

6.7 A module learning outcome (other than those that are simply 'Taught') should be assessed by (an) appropriate assessment method(s) using associated assessment criteria. Assessment methods and criteria must be explicit and communicated verbally to students and through course handbooks and/or module guides, and on the NTU Online Workspace (NOW).

6.8 The number of learning outcomes (see QH Section 12) and the assessment workload must be in proportion to the module's credit size and be consistent across the course.

6.9 If the decision is made to have more than one piece of summative assessment for a single module, a clear rationale must be articulated in the assessment strategy. Where this is the case, the relative weighting of these elements needs to be specified.

6.10 In cases where course teams have decided to break these elements down into sub-elements of assessment, a strong rationale must be articulated and care taken to avoid over-assessment. The relative contribution of a sub-element of assessment to an overall element grade must be agreed at course approval. Elements of assessment must be passed while sub-elements of assessment do not need to be passed (see QH Section 16: Common Assessment Regulations).

6.11 Specific arrangements relating to the elements of assessment for modules must be articulated within CourseLoop.

7. Design of assessment

The choice of assessment types and activities used to assess learning outcomes is made and governed at the course level. It must be communicated as part of the Course Assessment Strategy (see subsection 4 of this document).

7.1 Assessment tasks must address specific learning outcomes and consider the evidence that will be required to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes. An assessment task could be categorised as an **element** or **sub-element** of assessment.

7.2 The choice of assessment task will be determined in part by the learning outcomes to be assessed. Additional considerations might include, for example, accreditation requirements, or the type of tasks, skills and competencies that might be useful for students in their likely career paths.

7.3 All courses must integrate a synoptic assessment piece into an appropriate module, allowing students to combine learning in relation to their employability from a range of work like experiences and other activities. This should require a significant element of reflection regarding students' future employability aspirations.

7.4 All undergraduate courses must include a **capstone project** in the final year.

7.5 Assessment types involving a significant written element (other than timed written examinations) are subject to the requirements for the use of Turnitin (text-matching software, see QH Supplement 15G).

7.6 Viva voce examinations to enable judgements to be made about students considered to be on the borderline between two-degree classifications are *not* used.

7.7 Assessment tasks are moderated as stipulated in subsection 10, below.

8. Articulating assessment criteria

8.1 Assessment criteria must be developed for all assessment tasks.

8.2 Assessment criteria are a set of statements that enable the colleague grading an assessment to judge whether the learning outcomes have been achieved. Standards are articulated for each criterion. These should clearly indicate what the students need to do to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcome(s) and reached the standard required.

8.3 Assessment criteria must be aligned to the University's Grade Based Assessment descriptors (See QH Supplement 15A: The Grade Based Marking Descriptors). The descriptors represent a set of common characteristics expected of work at each of the different grade bands and should be contextualised to disciplines and tasks by Schools and/or Academic Teams.

8.4   Course Leaders are responsible for maintaining an oversight of grading matrices at each level to ensure consistency, clarity, and appropriate contextualisation to the task.

8.5   Course and module teams are required to publish and disseminate clear briefs and assessment criteria for all tasks. There should be consistency in the use of terminology and expression to ensure clarity and transparency. The main approach to providing this information to students is via an assessment grid or grading matrix.

9.   Anonymity in assessment

Anonymous marking is the assessment of a student's work without knowledge of the student's identity. It is used to limit the possibility of grades being inadvertently influenced by factors other than the qualities of the work under consideration.

9.1   Fairness in assessment must be one of the key considerations in choosing the summative assessment tasks for a module and course.

9.2   Anonymous marking is one way of achieving fairness in assessment and must be considered for all summative assessment tasks as part of the course assessment strategy. The course team is responsible for identifying and agreeing which of the assessed tasks will or will not be marked anonymously; anonymous marking must be used for all timed written examinations.

9.3   The course team must take into account other considerations when choosing the most effective assessment for a module or course and it may not be possible to mark the chosen assessment anonymously.

9.4   Where it is considered impractical for the assessment method to be marked anonymously (for example, dissertations, presentations, performance / interaction, oral/aural elements, tasks, or where feedback is given on work-in-progress), the course team must ensure that there is a sufficient measure of independence in the marking or moderation practices to guard against 'perceptions of bias'.

9.5   The broader process within which anonymous marking sits – the setting of the assessment task, the establishment of the assessment and marking criteria, and the marking and moderation of the finished assessment – should all be designed with fairness in assessment as priority (whether or not anonymous marking is adopted for that particular task).

9.6   Transparency in a course team's marking and moderation processes is central to building students' trust and confidence in the assessment processes and challenging the potential for 'perceptions of bias'. Course teams are expected to communicate effectively to students their approach to anonymity in assessment, by making written assessment strategies and associated Assessment Schedule and Feedback plans available to students.

Section **15**

10. Managing grading and moderation

> **Course teams have processes for grading and moderation that are clearly stated, understood, and consistently operated by all members of the course team involved in the assessment process.**

10.1   Moderation of assessment starts at the initial stage of planning of assessment and extends through to the determination of grades and results. Moderation includes three key stages:

   a. Review of the assessment task and its articulation.

   b. Review of the grades awarded within a module.

   c. Review of the grades awarded across modules within a level of study.

10.2   Moderation has an internal and external dimension where standards and fairness of the assessment process are validated by the external examiner at key stages (see paragraph 10.19 below).

10.3   In implementing this policy, staff should ensure that documentary evidence is always kept enabling demonstration of the moderation processes that have been used.

Planning moderation

10.4   As part of its explicit assessment strategy, course teams are responsible for planning appropriate moderation and for ensuring clarity and explicitness of:

   a. the forms of moderation to be employed;

   b. the grading arrangements;

   c. the sample to be reviewed (size, range and threshold cases);

   d. the nature of the sample to be referred to the external examiner(s).

Stage 1: Moderation of assessment tasks

10.5   Course and module teams should ensure that appropriate peers are consulted to check the validity of the tasks being prepared.

10.6   Where the assessment contributes to the classification of the final award, the external examiner should be included as one of the academic peers. Decisions about moderation practice will be articulated in the course assessment strategy.

10.7   This peer moderation process should involve checking:

   a. the alignment of assessment with the relevant learning outcomes;

   b. the clarity of the task description;

   c. the clarity of any additional rubric or guidance notes accompanying the tasks;

   d. the criteria by which it is intended to mark the assessment;

   e. the available guidance for markers, e.g. model answers;

f. the academic challenge of the tasks in relationship to the level;

g. overlap and coverage with regard to all assessment tasks within a level;

h. the workload or time requirements of the assessment tasks.

10.8   An outcome of this stage of moderation may be the decision to amend the aspects of the assessment task and / or its articulation. The agreed assessment information should then be systematically communicated by staff to students at the appropriate time to support their learning and achievement.

Stage 2: Review of grading and results: within the module

10.9   The main effort in moderation of grading and results should be targeted at assessments that contribute to the final award.

10.10   Moderation of grading practices using 'grading exercises' undertaken by graders on relevant samples of student work before the main grading phase is strongly recommended.

10.11   Moderation of grading is generally undertaken by reviewing a sample of students' marked work. This involves the moderator in reviewing (rather than grading in the full sense) an agreed sample of work to establish whether the grading is at the appropriate standard, consistent and in line with the explicit assessment criteria.

10.12   The sampling process should concentrate on the boundaries of classifications and should normally involve between 10% and 25% of assessed student work, depending on student cohort numbers. As a guide, where there are more than 50 students, a 10% sample is appropriate. For smaller cohorts under 50, increase the sample to 25%. For cohorts over 100, carefully reduce the 10% guideline while ensuring robust moderation in sample selection.

10.13   Where assessments do not contribute to final award classifications, moderation should be focused on the pass/fail threshold, which is the crucial determinant for progression to the next stage of the course. In cases where there are no students at that threshold, then the assessed work of the five nearest students should be moderated. Course teams may wish to extend the range of moderation in these non-qualifying assessments in relationship to issues of interest or concern.

10.14   Moderation can be completed in specific instances through double or team grading of the sample. In this case, student work is independently marked by more than one marker. Double or team grading can be undertaken as blind grading, where each marker is unaware of the grades allocated by the other(s), or as second grading, where all markers are aware of the grades they have assigned.

10.15   Double or team grading of the sample should be used as the norm for the moderation process for dissertations and major projects or studio work at the final award level; in courses with small cohorts, it may be possible to double or team mark the work of the whole student cohort.

10.16   Outcomes and consequences of within-module moderation are as follows:

a. Agreement that the grading is consistent and at the right level: where grades are agreed they should be submitted to the Student Data and Systems Team as soon as possible.

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b. Agreement that the grading is consistently too high or too low, across all work, or in one or more ranges of grades: marks should be adjusted where appropriate (see paragraph 10.21 below).

c. Agreement that the work has been inconsistently marked: the matter should be referred to the Course Leader who should arrange for the work to be re-marked and further moderated.

Stage 3: Moderation of grading and results: across modules

10.17 After completion of the within-module moderation process, the grades from all modules taken by the same student cohort in the same level should be considered. The minimum requirement is to consider frequency distributions for each module.

10.18 If there is evidence that the grades that have been awarded for a particular module are problematic and the reason(s) for this can be identified, then it may be that the grades for that module need to be adjusted (see paragraph 10.21 below).

External moderation

10.19 At levels that contribute to the final award, the external examiner should monitor the moderation process at appropriate stages. The course team should indicate in their assessment strategy precisely how the external examiner will be involved. Where a level contributes only a proportion to the final award, the involvement of the external examiner may include reviewing a sample of moderated student work but may be limited to receiving, for comment, the assessment tasks and checking the final results spreadsheets. The nature of the external examiner involvement in such cases is a matter for negotiation between the Course Leader and the external examiner.

10.20 A review of samples of assessed work undertaken by external examiners should take place on-site where possible (see QH Section 9: External Examining).

Adjustment of grades as an outcome of within - and across - module moderation

10.21 The need to adjust students' grades on an assessment task, sometimes known as scaling, might need to be made in order to ensure that the grades properly reflect the students' performance. Grades can only be adjusted if there are legitimate grounds. These are:

a. inappropriate grading standards (for example a marker has marked too harshly or too easily);

b. inter-marker discrepancy (where two or more markers are grading the same module);

c. inappropriate challenge of the assessment task (not identified at stage 1 of the moderation process);

d. a concern about the quality of teaching on the module;

e. a problematic issue with the articulation of the assessment task (for example, an error or ambiguity in a question not identified at stage 1);

    f. a problematic issue with the assessment context (for example, an interruption to an examination).

10.22 The extent of the adjustment of grades where legitimate grounds have been agreed is dependent on the nature of the issue identified. Typically, this will be one of the following:

    a. Systematic adjustment to a range of grades for a particular assessment task, or for a module (for example, where across-module moderation has identified that a module stands out because there are a disproportionate number of fails).

    b. Adjustment to all the grades awarded for a particular part of an assessment task for all those students who attempted that part (for example, where an issue has been identified with a particular question on an examination paper).

    c. Adjustment to all the grades for all students on an assessment task (for example where there has been disruption in the examination room).

10.23 Adjustments must be consistent with the sampling method employed in the moderation process. For example, if an assessment task has been moderated using consideration of a sample of student work, the individual grades of a sampled assignment must not be adjusted. If all the student work for a particular assessment has been moderated (for example, when double grading has taken place) then individual grades can be adjusted.

10.24 Adjustment of grades should not be undertaken in the following circumstances:

    a. To align student outcomes with sector benchmarks.

    b. To align student outcomes with competitor profiles.

    c. To achieve a particular set of desired attainment profiles.

10.25 The adjustment of grades should not be undertaken as routine practice. Where adjustment of grades has been required, the cause of the problem must be addressed in order to prevent a similar occurrence at a later date. This might have implications at the level of the module, or the course.

10.26 If it is determined that students' grades for an assessment task should be adjusted, a clear rationale and the intended method of grade adjustment must be presented by the Course Leader to the Chair of the Board of Examiners and the relevant external examiner(s) in cases where the assessment contributes to the classification of the final award.

10.27 The Course Leader should record, as a minimum, the following for scrutiny and approval at the Board of Examiners:

    a. The reason for adjusting students' grades on the assessment task.

    b. The evidence considered in arriving at the decision.

    c. The method of grade adjustment selected.

    d. The relationship between the original grades and the scaled grades.

    e. An explanation of the consequences of adjusting the grades (for example, the impact on students' end of year results or classifications of the final awards).

   f. An explanation of how the issue will be rectified in the future so that the adjustment of students' grades will not be necessary.

10.28 It is important that the approaches taken to adjust grades for an assessment task are robust and transparent. This should be discussed at the Board of Examiners and recorded in the minutes taken. The rationale for the adjustment of grades and the approach taken should be communicated to students.

10.29 Grades should be submitted to the Student Data and Systems Team as soon as possible after moderation.

11. Providing effective feedback

Course teams must ensure that feedback on assessment is timely, actionable, and aligned to learning outcomes. Actionable feedback and feedforward supports students in reflecting on their progress. Students should be able to use feedback to support their completion of future assessments.

11.1 Feedback helps students by giving them information on how they are doing in assignments and exams across their course. Feedback should be clear and supportive, helping students understand their strengths and where they can improve to reach their full academic potential.

11.2 The purpose of formative feedback is developmental; providing ongoing, timely feedback to students throughout their learning journey. Its goal is to help students learn more effectively by offering insights into their performance and guiding improvements or maintenance. This type of assessment encourages reflective practice, where students think about their learning process to enhance their understanding and skills.

11.3 The purpose of summative feedback is to measure the degree of a learner's success in meeting specific assessment criteria, providing an overall evaluation of whether the intended learning outcomes for a module or course have been achieved. Marks awarded in summative assessment usually contribute to the final mark of the course, module, or award.

11.4 High quality feedback:

   a. Clearly communicates what good performance is. This can be achieved by explaining the learning goals of the assessment task and providing clear criteria and standards of performance to students, prior to the task.

   b. Facilitates the development of self-assessment and reflection. If students can be helped to recognise the strengths and weaknesses in their performance and see their next steps in terms of grading criteria to address these.

   c. Encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning.

   d. Is provided in good time and revisited in a timely manner to 'feedforward' into revisions or future work.

e. Encourages self-belief and positive motivation to support reaching their potential.

11.5 Feedback opportunities must be planned at the course level to ensure effectiveness in terms of frequency, timeliness, and the development of student understanding.

11.6 The feedback offered to students must be directly related to learning outcomes and assessment criteria; feedback on summative assessments should be consistent with the grade awarded and aligned explicitly to the grading matrix.

11.7 Feedback must be produced in a variety of ways, for example: through a tutor, peer, self-reflection, etc. Feedback on assessment may take a variety of forms and can come from a variety of sources, including tutors, peers, external agencies or students themselves. Feedback can also be individual or given to the cohort as a whole (generic).

11.8 The feedback should inform students of their progress, be actionable and specifically help them to improve their future performance.

The Assessment Schedule and Feedback Plan

11.9 The Course Leader, with the support of the course team, should engage in annual assessment planning to create the **Assessment Schedule and Feedback Plan (ASFP)**. The ASFP will include clear information about the:

a. Course Assessment Strategy;

b. The value and purpose of feedback;

c. assessment tasks;

d. assessment submission dates;

e. when and how (developmentally or summatively) Turnitin is used in the assessment tasks;

f. dates of key formative tasks which support summative assessments;

g. feedback schedule with information on feedback types and format accompanied by the pedagogic rationale.

h. return dates for student work and feedback.

11.10 The ASFP is communicated verbally and provided to students in NOW, and in associated module information.

11.11 Course teams must monitor feedback for all assessments regularly at key points in the year, including the nature of feedback, timeliness and outline plans to enhance its effectiveness.

11.12 School Academic Standards and Quality Committees (SASQCs) must review procedures for effective feedback to students on assessments.

The nature and timeliness of assessment feedback

11.13 The University is committed to providing students with effective and timely feedback on all assessments.

11.14 ASFPs should be used to manage submission deadlines so that the extended period of closure at Christmas does not negatively impact the overall student experience of feedback on the course.

11.15 Schools must be mindful of managing staff leave and illness when implementing these requirements.

11.16 The University has made specific commitments about the nature and timeliness of feedback on assessments that contribute to an overall module grade (defined here as summative assessment).

   a. The following commitments apply to the **format of feedback**:

      i. *Coursework*. Students will receive individual feedback (written or recorded), including an individual grade, on all assessed coursework.

      ii. *Examinations*. Feedback will be provided for all examinations, where a balance of individual and cohort feedback may be used. In deciding this balance, the course team must consider the students' experience of assessment across the level and course. Students must receive individual feedback for targeted examinations, to enable them to perform better in later examinations. The course team must specify those examinations for individual written feedback and those for which they will receive cohort feedback.

   b. The following commitments apply to the **timeliness of feedback**:

   c. *Coursework*. Students will receive feedback on all assessed coursework within three weeks of the submission date unless iv (below) applies. Large pieces of work (e.g. a portfolio, final year project or dissertation) are exempt from this timeframe. In recognition that such work requires considerably longer to mark than other coursework, the feedback (and grade) may be provided outside the standard three-week period. This exemption may only be used where formative feedback has been provided on work-in-progress.

   d. *Examinations.* For end-of-year and final year examinations, the individual feedback and grades should be provided after the Examination Board, even if this is outside the standard three-week period. Course teams may provide generic cohort feedback on examinations (but not individual feedback or grades) in advance of the Examination Board in order to support students in preparing for other, upcoming assessments. For examinations earlier in the year, the individual feedback timeframe should follow that for coursework unless iv (below) applies.

   e. The three-week period for feedback excludes University closure days.

   f. For all coursework and examinations for which the three-week feedback period falls within either (a) the end-of-year examination period (which includes the degree show period) or (b) an end of first-half-year examination period and when students undertake further examinations within this period: the grades and individual feedback associated with these assessments will not be released to students until (a) after the Board of Examiners or (b) after the final assessment has been undertaken, respectively.

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Encouraging students to use feedback

11.17 Students should be supported to participate in evaluating their learning and furthering their academic development via meaningful engagement with feedback.

11.18 Opportunities to engage with feedback from formative tasks and summative assessments should be designed into the curriculum.

11.19 It is strongly recommended that course teams consider the following practices to support students to understand and engage meaningfully with feedback:

   a. Engaging students in activities such as reflection on received feedback during seminars or tutorials;

   b. A planned series of tasks where students apply feedback from previous assessments to complete the next;

   c. Structured peer feedback activities;

   d. Guided opportunities to engage with feedback particularly within the first year of study.

11.20 Student engagement with feedback is encouraged by clear communication about the purpose, value, and characteristics of feedback.

11.21 The ASFP plays a key role in students' understanding of and engagement with feedback.

11.22 In clearly communicating feedback, or facilitating peer feedback, tutors should be mindful of the diversity of students on the course and work to ensure fairness in feedback provision.

11.23 Course teams must help students identify feedback by highlighting its various forms, including informal, verbal, and peer feedback, and emphasise the link between formative and specific summative assessments to encourage active participation.

11.24 Feedback can also include encouraging students through signposting to support outside of the course e.g. study skills support, disability support, student mentors, pastoral support, stress management courses etc.

12. Ensuring quality and standards

A range of quality management mechanisms ensures that the threshold standard for each award is set and maintained at the appropriate level, and that student performance is equitably judged against this standard.

Externality

12.1 External examiners play a key role in the moderation of assessment tasks and judgements of student work (see section 10.19, above).

12.2 In line with the terms of reference for Boards of Examiners, an opportunity should be provided at their meetings to discuss aspects of assessment design, tasks and

coherence and provide advice to Course Leaders, committees and teams on assessment issues that have arisen through the grading and moderation processes. The consideration of this item and the advice offered should be recorded in the minutes of the Board.

12.3 The full membership, terms of reference and key duties of members are provided in QH Supplement 15B: Boards of Examiners requirements.

The Board of Examiners (BoE)

12.4 BoEs have delegated powers from the Academic Board for the determination of academic awards to students, and for decisions about the progression of students. Membership, procedures, powers and accountability of BoEs are clearly specified, and this information is available to all members.

12.5 Each award-bearing course must have a BoE to:

 a. ensure there are consistent and fair arrangements for assessment;

 b. make academic judgements on the progress of students;

 c. make academic judgements on the conferment of awards;

 d. consider any case of student performance that is giving cause for concern.

12.6 A Board should operate with due regard to:

 a. the definitive course information in CourseLoop;

 b. any Academic Board agreements with other validating, accrediting or professional bodies (or a collaborating centre) as appropriate;

 c. principles and policies on assessment as set out in the Quality Handbook.

12.7 A Board may appoint a Subsidiary Examination Board if this is necessary, normally in the context of collaborative arrangements.

12.8 A Board may be responsible for more than one course provided this is approved by the SASQC.

12.9 A Board may operate a two-tier, Award Board / Subject Board, structure.

12.10 Threshold standards are also set and maintained by consideration of:

 a. relevant subject benchmark statements;

 b. any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements.

Documentation

12.11 Information about a course's assessment is contained in the following documents:

 a. the curriculum map;

 b. the course assessment strategy;

 c. the Assessment Schedule and Feedback Plan (ASFP).

12.12 The curriculum map and course assessment strategy are approved as part of the course approval process and their currency is maintained by the course committee.

12.13 The curriculum map is used by BOEs to ensure that all course module outcomes have been met when considering offering a compensated pass on specific modules.

12.14 The ASFP is agreed year-on-year and provides details about the schedule of assessment tasks and feedback. It is made available to students in the course handbook, or equivalent in NOW, and in module information.

Common Assessment Regulations

12.15 The University applies clear regulations for progression within a course and the attainment of an award.

12.16 All courses of study will adopt the appropriate Common Assessment Regulations (CAR), see full university requirements in QH Section 16-16F (See Subsection 15 of this document).

12.17 Where there is a need for deviation from the CAR, e.g. due to PSRB requirements, course teams should articulate these in course conventions which will be referred to at the BoEs.

Proofreading

12.18 The University does not offer a proofreading service to students, nor does the University recommend the use of any particular proofreading services.

12.19 The use of others, whether paid or not, to write or rewrite any part of an assignment for a student, is specifically forbidden and may be penalised under the Academic Integrity Policy, even if the person providing such a service describes it as 'proof-reading'.

12.20 Students must complete a submission form containing the declaration "In submitting this work I confirm that I am aware of, and am abiding by, the University's expectations for proofreading". When a proofreader is used students must keep a copy of the following:

   a. the text before it being submitted to the proofreader;

   b. the text returned by the proofreading (with all comments visible);

   c. the final version of the work following corrections (i.e. that submitted for assessment). Further University guidance is available in QH Supplement 15F Proofreading guidance.

Academic Integrity

12.21 Academic integrity is defined as the commitment to, and demonstration of fundamental values and behaviours including honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility.

12.22 Fair and effective arrangements better allow for poor academic integrity to be detected and penalised are implemented by the University.

12.23 The responsibility for ensuring that all work submitted for assessment meets the University's criteria, in terms of content, conventions and originality of authorship, rests with the student.

12.24 In all cases work submitted by a student must be their work and any use of a third-party proofreader or editing service must not compromise the authorship of the work submitted.

12.25 The University retains the right to independently check that the student has satisfied these criteria and, if not, apply the University's Academic Integrity procedures.

12.26 The University takes seriously all forms of poor academic integrity in its various forms. Course teams must ensure that students are fully aware of the University's requirements.

12.27 The University's full requirements can be found in QH Section 17C Academic Integrity Policy. In QH Supplement 15G Requirements for the use of Turnitin.

The role of the Academic Standards and Quality Committee

12.28 The Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) assures itself of the sound implementation of its procedures through:

   a. its course development and approval process;

   b. policy and practice debates at ASQC and its sub-committees;

   c. effective annual reporting at course, School, and institutional levels;

   d. the analysis of student data;

   e. comprehensive arrangements for student voice to be heard;

   f. staff development and practice sharing activities.

Retention of student work

12.29 Schools may operate local policies to enable students to view examination scripts. The University's retention policy provides details about the requirements for the retention of students' assessed work.

13. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The University may recognise prior learning to admit a student onto a course or to admit a student with advanced standing beyond the beginning of the course. The University's full requirements for RPL are contained in QH Supplement 15C: Requirements for recognition of prior Learning (RPL) and Credit transfer.

14. Language of assessment

The language in which assessment is conducted is normally that used in the associated teaching. Where this is not the case, the University will assure itself that academic standards are not compromised.

14.1   The language of assessment and teaching will usually be English. If this is not the case, the course team should ensure that academic standards are not at risk. The course team will be expected to demonstrate at course approval:

   a. how individuals with the necessary expertise in the appropriate language(s), subject knowledge and assessment methods will be identified and employed;

   b. how suitable external examiners fluent in the relevant language(s) will be identified, appointed and involved with the assessment process;

14.2   if translation is used, how the reliability and validity of the assessment judgements arising from the grading of translated assessments will be assured.

14.3   Course moderation procedures must reflect the approved arrangements. Further information on the University's requirements in respect of collaborative provision is available in QH Section 10.

15. Supporting Resources

15.1   This policy must be used alongside the supporting QH Sections and supplements listed below.

15.2   Resources:

QH 12 Course Design Requirements

QHS 15A Grade based marking descriptors

QHS 15B Boards of Examiners requirements

QHS 15C Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and credit transfer

QHS 15D Course assessment and feedback plan – exemplar

QHS 15E Board of Examiners Guidance

QHS 15F Proof-reading guidance

QHS 15G Requirements for the use of Turnitin

QH 16 Taught Course Awards and Registration Periods

QH 16 A Common Assessment Regulations for Bachelor's and Integrated Master's Degrees

QH 16 B Common Assessment Regulations for Foundation Degrees

QH 16 C Common Assessment Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Degrees

QH 16 D Principles for Drafting Non-Degree Course Regulations

Section **15**

QH 16 E Common Assessment Regulations for Online Postgraduate Degrees (Wiley)

QH 16F Common Assessment Regulations for Higher National Awards

September 2024

Section 15

Policy owner
CADQ

Change history			
Version:	Approval date:	Implementation date:	Nature of significant revisions:
Sept 2016	30.09.16	01.10.16	Removal of reference to graduate attributes Inclusion of reference to sub-elements of assessment Expansion of principles relating to anonymous marking
Sept 2017	12.09.17	01.11.17	Inclusion of reference to synoptic assessment 8.3.
Sept 2018	12.09.18	01.10.18	Included option for course teams to provide generic cohort feedback on examinations in advance of the Examination Board New policy on release of grades included 12.11 iv
Sept 2019	11.09.19	01.10.19	Included cross-references to the requirements for the use of Turnitin
Sept 2020	16.09.20	01.10.20	None
Sept 2021	07.09.21	01.10.21	None
Sept 2022	22.09.22	01.10.22	None
Sept 2023	14.09.23	01.10.23	Updates to reflect 17 C academic integrity policy 13.21.
May 2024	21.05.24	01.09.24	Inclusion of the policy aims assessment principles and overarching assessment requirements. Rearticulation of the policy language throughout to ensure clarity of policy, including links to supporting guidance, including sections and supplements to be used alongside Section 15. Item 6.9 reverted to the original wording to ensure fair interpretation.
Sept 2024	19.09.24	01.10.24	None

Equality Impact Analysis		
Version:	EA date:	Completed by:
Sept 2015	04.11.2015	CADQ