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Policy: **Assessment Policy**

Owned by: **Director of Quality of Education**

  

Approved by: **Q & C Committee**

  

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This Policy has the following underpinning procedures which should be read in conjunction with the Policy:

- Conflict of Interest Procedure
- Examinations Procedure
- Internal Quality Assurance Handbook
- Recognition of Prior Learning (FE) Procedure
- Recognition of Prior Learning (HE) Procedure
- Non-Examination Assessment Procedure
- Reasonable Adjustments Procedure

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Able to Learn (Support framework for Students)
- HE Academic Appeals Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

## **Statement on Assessment**

### **1. SCOPE**

This policy aligns with the College's strategic aims to:

- To deliver high quality education and training expecting excellence in all that we do
- To facilitate the best possible student experience, developing students inside and outside the classroom

York College will provide an assessment framework to enable all students to reach their full potential by the most appropriate and direct route.

The College's Assessment Policy is based on the concepts of equity, clarity, consistency and openness and is responsive to the current demands and expectations of all interested parties including students, staff, parents and carers, Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institutions and partners. This includes supporting student progress and attainment on their programmes of study and to maintain and develop individual students' progress with the skills needed (e.g. Maths, English, ICT skills and Employability) to support and sustain their progress into work or further or higher education.

The Assessment Policy is not an exhaustive and definitive document and should be used in conjunction with Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institution and course/subject specific policies. Although the policy aims to ensure quality standards across all courses it appreciates that some courses require more detailed policies.

This policy applies to all courses in the College, including Higher Education. Specific policies relating to Higher Education programmes, where required, are detailed within separate documents.

## 2. PURPOSES OF THE POLICY

The main purpose of the policy is to provide clear guidance on assessment procedures and provide a point of reference for all Quality Assurance requirements for curriculum teams and external college partners.

- The Assessment Policy seeks to ensure that assessment practices and procedures meet national Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institution requirements
- Can be evidenced for internal and external Quality Assurance and audit requirements
- Are applied consistently and fairly across all subject/course teams
- Take account of the diversity of students.

Key objectives of the Assessment Policy are to ensure that:

- Staff assess student progress and performance, through both formative and summative assessment.
- Assessments and reviews are timely, frequent, fair, informative and reliable
- The assessment process facilitates the enhancement of learning both inside and outside of scheduled teaching sessions
- There is a series of common procedures and practices which provide consistency in the approach to assessment within course teams
- Curriculum planning takes account of assessment practices, tools and methods
- Barriers to assessment are reduced or removed for all students
- Assessment takes into account students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural differences when and where appropriate
- Assessment methods and tools are appropriate for individual students' needs in teaching or training sessions and provide effective support, including making reasonable adjustment for disabled students or those with special educational needs

## 3. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- An assessment schedule will be provided and made known to students at the start of their programme of study or training. The student will be provided with an assessment schedule that includes all qualifications that they are working towards.
- Changes to assessment schedules must be notified to students immediately.
- All students will be provided with timely and ongoing constructive feedback regarding assessment decisions to plan and improve their skills, knowledge, behaviours and understanding to achieve their full potential.
- Constructive feedback must be given to all students through assessment and progress reviews and/or during progress tutorials so that they know what they have to do to improve their skills, knowledge, behaviours and understanding to achieve their full potential
- All summative assessments at Level 3 or higher will be submitted through anti-plagiarism software where this is practicable.
- Tutors/Assessors will mark and return student assignments **within three weeks**. In some cases, such as larger projects and assessment, which are marked by more than one tutor, the turnaround time may be longer, but students must be informed of this in the assessment schedule.

- The assessment of students' work will be based on either Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institution and/or college-based assessment criteria.
- Students will be provided with appropriate assessment tools and assessment methods and enabling/facilitating support where they qualify for this.
- Tutors/Assessors will ensure that student work/portfolios have gone through a rigorous and appropriate internal quality assurance process prior to being presented for external quality assurance.
- Students will receive regular progress updates through progress tutorials
- The Examinations Office will provide an individual timetable for all students taking external exams.

Staff on courses which are assessed entirely by examinations or externally marked assessments (A-Levels/T Levels) are expected to plan for, and produce information for students, to ensure they fully understand the requirements of the external assessments they will undertake. Formative assessment should be planned into schemes of learning and students should be provided with an overview of the types of formative assessments they will undertake to ensure they are fully prepared for external assessments. Students should be clear on frequency and expectations relating to formative assessments to help them plan and manage their time and workload.

## **ASSESSMENT STAGES**

Students will normally be expected to go through 3 distinct phases of assessment processes.

### **STAGE 1 – ENTRY TO COURSE AND INITIAL ASSESSMENT**

Curriculum Areas will ensure that recruitment and selection criteria is accurate, clear, unambiguous, timely and reflect equality of opportunity. Clear and accessible information is available to all students of course assessment requirements including:

- The structure of the course and how and when assessment takes place
- Associated fees and costs
- Special arrangements for assessed coursework, exams or tests

College initial assessment and guidance procedures are implemented as appropriate in order to:

- Identify the students starting point to plan learning
- Establish the students' level of attainment and confidence in English, mathematics and ICT and to make appropriate recommendations about the programme of study or training.
- Ensure that programmes of study or training are designed to enable students to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills that prepare them for progression to further/higher education and/or sustained employment
- Identify students' support and additional learning needs quickly and accurately to ensure the provision of high quality and effective support to help each student to

achieve and succeed as well as they can.

Care will be taken to identify specific and special requirements needed to support students on programme. If the student has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) the contents of the plan will inform planning for assessment.

Planning for assessment will include all aspects of formative and summative assessment. Where identified, appropriate referrals will be made at this point to ensure each student has the specialist support or consideration needed to support them throughout their programme of study or training.

Specialist or alternative ways of assessing/examining students with specific needs including learning difficulties and/or disabilities will be identified, and appropriate support arrangements will be negotiated and put in place.

Advice is given as to whether or not previous achievement or experience could count towards the proposed qualification. Student qualifications will be reviewed at the point of enrolment collected and recorded electronically in line with ILR requirements. Where the previous qualifications or experience may allow the student to claim all, or part, of the qualification they are applying for, Recognition of Prior Learning shall take place as laid out in the relevant procedure for FE or HE students. Appeals against RPL decisions are processed through the Appeals procedure in this document for FE students, and through the HE Appeals Policy and Procedure for HE students.

Where proxy qualifications or previously attained grades or marks have been achieved by students the teaching teams should inform the Examinations Office who will claim and record the relevant proxies. These procedures will apply for students applying for entry to courses at whatever time of the year. Where a student does not meet the entry requirements of a particular programme further guidance as to suitable alternatives will be discussed.

A clear explanation of student-college learning agreement will be given to each student during the induction programme.

## **STAGE 2 - DURING THE COURSE**

The course assessment requirements will be planned with regard to structure, timing and assessment. Tutors/Assessors will design a holistic assessment plan so that where possible, bunching of assessments can be minimised. The assessment plan will also include capacity for assessment and internal verification of resubmissions and retakes where these are permitted by the Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institution.

### **Formative Assessment**

Teachers will ensure that they use a range of assessment strategies throughout their teaching to assess the progress of learning amongst the student cohort. These may include:

- a) Question and Answer, especially Socratic Questioning

- b) Classroom discussions
- c) In class tests
- d) Homework
- e) Draft assignments

### **Summative Assessment**

Heads of Curriculum, their Deputies, and Tutors/Assessors will ensure that:

- All assessment is planned and delivered in line with the relevant Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institution's rules and regulations under the supervision of the Lead IQA for the qualification.
- Submission of all summative work will be subject to plagiarism checking at Level 3 or above, where this is practicable
- All work is subject to IQA prior to the return of marks to the students
- All students are issued with an assessment timetable or plan at the beginning of their programme
- The Examinations Team are notified at the start of the academic year of the dates for controlled assessments and all other assessments that are being supervised by curriculum teams so that the examination team can ensure the examinations are administered and invigilated in line with Joint Council for Qualification (JCQ) requirements.
- Students who require special access arrangements for examinations are referred to the Learning Support Team for assessment at the start of their programme or training

The assessment plan should leave sufficient time between internal and external quality assurance to ensure that students are given a second opportunity, when applicable, to meet the required standards before work is externally moderated.

### **Late submission of work**

All course teams should make students aware of any penalties that they will incur as a result of late submission of coursework. Where Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institutions have prescribed rules for late submission these must be adhered to and explained to the students at the start of the programme and prior to submission of all assessments.

### **Extenuating circumstances**

Extenuating circumstances can often be claimed to enable tutors/assessors to mark late submitted work without the student incurring penalties providing students have negotiated and agreed an extension before the submission date.

The process for application of extenuation circumstances for students is specified within the student programme handbooks. The Lead IQA has responsibility for managing and authorising requests for extenuating circumstances to allow late submissions.

The rules and regulations relating to extenuating circumstances' must be referenced and applied for each Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institution. The Senior Quality and Compliance Officer will provide support and guidance with all aspects of Awarding

Organisation/ Validating Institution requirements.

To apply for extenuating circumstances students must complete an extenuating circumstances form (EC01 or FQ09) prior to the assessment deadline outlining why they feel they should be given extra time. The Extenuating Circumstances forms are available on the student portal and also from the TLAS Office. This should be supported by any relevant documentation for example medical notes.

**In all cases consideration must** be given to student support assessment reports, EHCPs and any other evidence of possible barriers. Students will be informed by curriculum teams within 2 working days of their decision.

Students have the right to appeal against the decision and must do so within 5 working days of receiving the original decision. Please see the **Appeals Procedure** section of this document

### **Suspension of Studies**

Where a student is unable to complete the course within their period of registration, they may request that their registration be suspended for a period of time to allow them to be ready to return to study. They complete the SoS01 form and forward it to the Head of HE, or Head of Curriculum for FE students. The receiving Head investigates the application and makes a decision which must be ratified by the Board of Examiners for HE and by the Director of Quality of Education for FE students.

## **STAGE 3 - PROGRESSION**

Criteria for students progressing onto any further programme of study or into the second year of a two-year course should be clearly explained to all students at the start of their programme and at opportune times throughout their programme. Where Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institutions allow students to carry modules over to year two of a programme these students must sign an individual action plan and complete the outstanding units by the specified time. Students with special requirements should be given appropriate and sufficient consideration of their individual needs.

### **Enquiries about Examination Results following publication (GCSE, AS or A Level)**

Enquiries about results may be requested by teaching staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there may have been an error in marking. If this is requested, The Examination Officer may agree that an appeal can be made at the College's expense. If the Examinations Officer does not agree to an appeal, the candidate may decide to proceed but, in this case, they will be charged for the cost of the appeal.

The College will notify all stakeholders of the outcomes of appeals including when lines of enquiry have been exhausted and where the College considers there are no further grounds for appeal.

## **4. ASSESSMENT APPEALS PROCESS FOR FE STUDENTS**

(HE Students should refer to the HE Appeals Policy and Procedure)

If a student is dissatisfied with a summative assessment decision, they should discuss this with the relevant member of staff concerned in the first instance. If this does not lead to a satisfactory resolution, then reassessment by a second member of staff should be requested. It is only having been through the above process that an appeal should be considered.

For vocational courses where the qualification grade is calculated from the grades for each unit studied, it is not possible to appeal the qualification grade.

A flow chart outlining the Internal Appeals Procedure is available for students on the Student Portal and also on the College Staff Portal (in the Internal Quality Assurance section). In addition, Enquiries about Results (EARs) and Assessment decision from Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institutions are outlined within the Examination Procedure. Most Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institutions will only consider an appeal from a student or student representative if the Provider's internal appeals process has been exhausted.

**Grounds on which an appeal can be made:** There are only two sets of circumstances in which the decision of a constituted course / subject team may be changed by a higher authority within the college. Namely where there has been:

(1) **Material error or irregularity:** Examples include one or more of the following.

- a) administrative error
- b) the assessment was not conducted in accordance with the course regulations
- c) the College failed or refused to undertake re-assessment by a second assessor / examiner
- d) that some other material irregularity has occurred.

(2) **Personal circumstances not known to the Tutor or Assessor**

1. Personal Circumstances not known to the tutor may be considered if a student establishes to the satisfaction of the programme team that his or her performance in the examination or other form of assessment was adversely affected by illness or other factors which he or she was unable or for valid reasons unwilling to divulge prior to assessment. The student's request must be supported by medical documentation. The Senior Quality and Compliance Officer is responsible for conducting appeals and can be contacted at [QI-Admin@yorkcollege.ac.uk](mailto:QI-Admin@yorkcollege.ac.uk). An AP01 Appeal against Assessment Decision form must be completed to outline the grounds on which an appeal is being made.

2. An appeal should be lodged with the Senior Quality and Compliance Officer within 5 working days of the assessment decision about which the appeal is to be made.



3. The Appeals Panel shall consist of two members of the College Leadership Team. This will usually be a Head of Curriculum and one other, none of whom will have been involved in the assessment in question.

The purpose of the Appeals Panel is to establish whether or not the grounds of the appeal are valid, and to order a reassessment should the appeal be upheld certificates or other appropriate evidence.

## **APPEALS PROCEDURE**

4. The Panel will normally meet to hear the appeal within 10 working days of it being lodged. The student making the appeal will be given at least 5 days' notice in writing which will include the date, time and venue of the hearing and composition of the Appeals Panel.

5. The person making the appeal may be accompanied by one other person who can give support to the student as necessary.

6. The student may withdraw their appeal at any stage in the Appeals Procedure.

## **CONDUCT OF HEARING**

- The person making the appeal or their representative has the opportunity to present their case and to be questioned.
- Staff involved in the assessment have the opportunity to state their case and be questioned.
- Both parties then withdraw to allow the panel to consider its decision.
- The outcome of the appeal will be communicated, within 2 working days to all parties concerned, stating reasons and any appropriate action that is required.

## **5. MALPRACTICE**

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Maladministration and Malpractice Policy and the relevant Academic Misconduct Procedures which can be found on the Student Portal

Examiners, moderators and verifiers, members of staff or students who suspect malpractice must report this immediately to the Senior Quality and Compliance Officer.

1. The College will notify an Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institution by completing the appropriate documentation, as soon as any established, suspected or alleged case of malpractice (which includes maladministration) is

discovered

2. Notification will be made to an Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institution whether involving a candidate (during examinations or following the authentication of controlled assessment, coursework or verification of other assessed qualifications) or malpractice or maladministration by a member of staff

3. The College will investigate any instances of suspected malpractice (which includes maladministration) in accordance with the most current JCQ publication ***Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments: Policies and Procedures***, and provide such information and advice as the Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institution may reasonably require.

## **6. General Guidance on the Retention of Assessment Records, Verification Records and Students' Work and or Portfolios including electronic assessment and records of assessment**

### **6.1 Assessor and Internal Quality Assurance Records**

The assessor must retain records to show student progress and achievement throughout the programme.

- For NVQs, Diplomas and Apprenticeships this would include assessment plans, assessment feedback sheet per element or unit for each candidate.
- For each cohort a summary tracking sheet to show unit completion dates and qualification completion dates.
- For Internal Quality Assurance unit and portfolio sampling reports need to be retained. All assessor and IV records listed above need to be kept for three years
- RPL applications and documentation need to be retained for 3 years from the point of application completion.

### **6.2 Student work NVQ and Non NVQ, Diplomas and Apprenticeships**

Student portfolios should be returned to students following the completion of external verification and certification. Curriculum teams should arrange for students to be notified to collect their work within a reasonable amount of time - usually four weeks, except in particular and agreed circumstances.

Notification to collect work should either be given verbally or, if this is not possible then students must be contacted by letter. Students should be informed that failure to collect the work within the agreed time will result in the work being destroyed. Students are encouraged to keep their portfolios for prescribed time periods by the Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institutions.

The college is not required to keep portfolios for any length of time following external quality assurance. Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institutions regard portfolios as the students' responsibility and property. The guidance for retention periods for portfolios is

for Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institutions audit and not College audit.

### **6.3 GCSE and A Level Course Work**

Tutors should keep a record of coursework grades awarded until the time allowed for appeals has elapsed.

For the summer series the coursework will be kept until the end of October in the JCQ approved exams secure room. Students have four weeks to collect coursework following the official release dates.

### **6.4 Vocational student work**

Tutors should keep a record of coursework grades awarded and coursework until 12 weeks after Certification and the time allowed for appeals has elapsed.

#### **6.4.1 Ownership of students' portfolios of evidence**

A portfolio of evidence is the property of the student and remains the property of the student when they leave the College.

City & Guilds recommended good practice is that the College **hold back the portfolio until the next sampling activity.**

It is a requirement for all **BTEC programmes** that we retain student work for the twelve weeks after the issue of certificates in case of any appeal or investigation.

The following guidelines are generic and if in any doubt the Senior Quality and Compliance Officer will advise on specific issues.

We should hold **indefinitely** copies of the following documentation for reference to policy, practice and requirements. This documentation is held electronically and should be archived electronically when programmes are no longer live.

- College and qualification approval documentation
- EQA reports / visit planners / action plans

#### **6.4.2 Retention of student work held electronically**

Student work should be retained until the time allowed for appeals has elapsed.

Examples of this are student portfolios of evidence uploaded to an electronic portfolio or Blackboard. It is the responsibility of students to ensure they hold a copy of all assessed work they upload to electronic systems.

The maximum required retention period for student work for any Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institution is 12 weeks after certification, for some Awarding Organisation/ Validating Institutions this timeline is less. Most certificates are issued in September or October. Where this is the case student work does not need to be retained beyond December of the year of certifications.

Where course end dates are other than June or July the 12-week rule after the course end date will apply

Work for students on two year or longer courses will be retained for the duration of the programme and until 12 weeks after the end date of the programme.

### **6.5 College documents and records**

The following must be held by the College as soon as students are registered and must be retained for a **minimum of three years** following student certification:

- student College enrolment records
- student database (manual or electronic) to include; - student name - date of birth -ULN (when this is established) - particular assessment requirements - contact address - workplace - Assessor(s) name - IQA(s) name - date of registration - student enrolment number - qualification title and level - progress records, including unit accreditation and qualification completion dates
- student examination papers (internally marked)

The actual assessment records are the property of the College and College staff are accountable for maintaining them. If assessment records are kept together with the evidence of competence in the student portfolio, the College must also hold a copy independently. The assessment records expected to be kept for a **minimum of three years** are:

- Assessment plans, action plans and feedback reports
- Student interview records
- IQA sampling plans, records and feedback reports
- Record of achievement and or tracking documents
- Audio and visual assessment records
- Evidence of the arrangements for the conduct of examinations (including on-line examinations).

#### **a) Student assessment information**

Student assessment records that the College must hold for a **minimum of three years** as required for regulatory compliance purposes include:

- who assessed what and when
- the assessment decision
- the assessment methods used for each unit or component
- the location of the supporting evidence.

#### **b) College staff information**

The following staff information must be held by the College for all staff involved in the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of qualifications:

- Assessor and or IQA vocational competence and continuing professional development (CPD) records, including brief CVs showing how staff satisfy assessment strategy requirements (originals or EQA endorsed copies of certificates)

- Assessor/IQA Update training records to show that all relevant staff have completed the training within the last three academic years
- Assessor/ IQA achievements of D/A/V/TAQA/ Learning & Development SVQ unit (originals or EQA endorsed copies of certificates) - where D unit certificates are shown, there must be evidence of updating to A or V units
- monitoring records of Assessor/IQA progress towards D/A/V/TAQA Learning & Development SVQ unit achievement.

c) **Quality assurance information**

The quality assurance records and associated documentation that the College must hold for a **minimum of three years**, as required for regulatory compliance purposes, includes records of internal quality assurance activity detailing:

- who internally quality assured what and when
- details of the sample selected and its rationale
- details of IQA standardisation meetings
- Assessor support meetings
- Assessor and IQA competence and the monitoring of Assessor and IQA progress towards achievement of required qualifications.