

# Assessment & Verification Policy

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**QA39**

## **Assessment & Verification Policy**

**Review Date: April 2020**

## 1.0 Introduction

North East Scotland College will ensure that assessment criteria established by awarding bodies are met, that national standards are applied and the integrity of the assessment process is assured by way of robust verification.

This Policy sets out the means by which the College will manage the assessment and verification processes and the responsibilities for these key quality assurance functions.

## 2.0 Internal Assessment

Assessment and verification will be carried out to meet the required standards and assessment conditions set down by relevant Awarding Bodies and internal College requirements. The application of fair, reliable and practicable assessments is a prime responsibility of teaching staff. Breaches of the assessment process by staff will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter.

Assessors should advise students whether or not they have attained the necessary standards to be recommended to the awarding body for certification, subject to that recommendation being verified by the relevant internal and external verification processes. Further detailed information on types and management of assessment are provided in the *Guide to Assessment*.

## 3.0 Conflict of Interest

It is the responsibility of individual staff to declare any potential conflict of interest relating to teaching and assessment to their line manager in writing. The line manager will then determine what action may be required, e.g. move the candidate into another group; change the assessor/IV/invigilator, etc. The decision and agreed action must be recorded and the record kept for one year after the completion of assessment.

## 4.0 Assessment Instruments

Internal verification teams are responsible for ensuring suitable assessment instruments are used. These should be, where

available, assessments provided by, or at least prior verified by, the Awarding Body. Where these are not available, locally derived assessment instruments may be used, but only after it has been ensured that they meet Awarding Body requirements and are approved by internal verification teams. Re-assessments must be clearly differentiated from original (or subsequent) assessments. Remediation and re-assessment also need to be clearly differentiated. E-assessment should be used where available, practicable and appropriate.

### **5.0 Timing of Assessment**

Teaching staff must ensure that assessments are undertaken only when students have suitable opportunity to prepare and that the assessments are appropriately spaced to avoid assessment overload. To that end, the scheduling of assessments must be pre-planned and recorded in an assessment schedule which must be communicated to students to allow them adequate time for preparation. Students should also be pre-informed as to the competencies which will be assessed and the conditions of assessment.

### **6.0 Alternative Assessments**

Where a student has additional learning requirements such that a particular assessment may not be suitable for his/her needs, they should be referred to the Student Advice Centre. Student Advice Centre staff will assess the student's needs and provide additional support or advise on special assessment arrangements where these are indicated, possible and permitted by the Awarding Body.

### **7.0 Attempts at Assessment**

Students will normally be allowed no more than two attempts at assessment. Failure to attend a planned assessment or to submit work within the timescale indicated by the assessor shall count as one attempt. In exceptional circumstances, students may apply for an exceptional re-assessment attempt, providing a justification for the additional requirement. Heads of Faculty will be responsible for evaluating the requests on a case-by-case basis.

### **8.0 Candidate Malpractice**

Assessments have to be carried out by the student with no assistance from staff or other students. Staff must take all necessary action to prevent any form of candidate malpractice such as plagiarism, cheating, collusion, copying, impersonation, inclusion of offensive, inappropriate, obscene, or discriminatory material in assessment evidence or behaving in such a way as to disrupt others during an assessment. Authentication of evidence is required when the assessment process is not directly observed.

Suspected malpractice will be investigated and appropriate action taken when a suspected case is upheld. Any incidences of malpractice will be recorded and records will be available. Specific details relating to this section can be found in Procedure 14: Candidate Malpractice.

### **9.0 Centre Malpractice/Maladministration**

The College will take all necessary action to prevent any form of centre malpractice or maladministration. In the event of any suspicion of maladministration, the College will arrange a full investigation to be carried out by competent persons with no personal interest in the outcome, and report relevant findings to awarding bodies. Specific details relating to this section can be found in Procedure 16: Centre Malpractice.

### **10.0 Internal Verification of Assessed Work**

Assessed work will be subject to internal verification. Managers of teaching teams/departments will identify staff to be internal verifiers. Where there is a lack of appropriately qualified verifiers for a subject area, the Head of Faculty may make provision for suitably qualified external staff to be appointed as internal verifiers.

The Director of Quality will maintain an up to date list of internal verifiers. The HR Manager (Organisational Development) will arrange training for staff identified as internal verifiers to ensure that they are appropriately qualified to carry out these duties.

Verification records must be maintained using standard documentation.

Responsibility for ensuring that assessment and verification is effectively managed rests with Curriculum Managers.

### **11.0 Student Appeals against Assessment Decisions in Internally Assessed Units**

Students will be given feedback on assessments they have undertaken and, when they have not attained the required standard to pass an assessment, they will be given the reasons for this together with advice on the areas they need to work on to be able to achieve it in future. They will have an opportunity to question assessment decisions with the assessor on an informal basis.

If a student remains dissatisfied with the internally verified outcome of assessment, and they are able to provide evidence of personal circumstances affecting the case not known to those making the assessment decision or apparent irregularities/inconsistencies in assessment which could have affected the outcome, he or she may make a formal appeal using the College internal appeals process. In these circumstances the student will be expected to provide evidence to support the appeal. In exceptional circumstances, and only following exhaustion of the College Appeals process, candidates may appeal first to the Awarding Body or Organisation against the College's internal assessment decision and thereafter to the Qualification Regulator if they remain dissatisfied.

### **12.0 External Assessment**

Where an Awarding Body requires an element of external assessment for the student to achieve a qualification, the College will ensure that students are assessed according to Awarding Body requirements, using the designated instrument(s) of assessment and complying with the stated conditions of assessment. In some cases, a preliminary examination or estimate may be required in advance of the assessment. In these cases, the assessment will be conducted, marked and internally verified by the teaching team in accordance with the relevant Awarding Body requirements.

#### **12.1 Student Appeals against Assessment Decisions in External Assessments**

Appeals against the outcome of external assessments may be submitted through the College if the student's preliminary work justifies such an appeal.

## Assessment and Verification Policy

Responsibility for deciding whether an appeal is justified, collating evidence and preparing documentation rests with the Curriculum Manager.

### 13.0 External Verification

This is carried out by Verifiers appointed by the relevant awarding body. The responsibility for ensuring all evidence and documentation is prepared for external verification visits rests with the Head of Faculty and Curriculum Manager.

### 14.0 Flexible Assessment

For students whose previous experience means that they do not need to undertake a programme of study (or part thereof) but do require certification, the College offers Recognition of Prior Learning through Portfolio Production, Assessment on Demand or Credit Transfer where appropriate. The College reserves the right to charge for flexible assessment arrangements where this is indicated.

### 15.0 Retention of Assessment Evidence

It is important that assessment evidence is appropriately retained (including paper records being held securely in locked cabinets within locked rooms) until after the end of the relevant assessment period set by the awarding body; any retention/disposal date set by the awarding body is met; or until the completion of all internal verification/standardisation processes and the submission of results to the relevant awarding body.

Status:	Approved for Use
Approved by:	Senior Executive Team
Date of version:	April 2019
Responsibility for Policy:	Vice Principal (Access, Outcomes & Partnerships)
Responsibility for Implementation:	Director of Quality
Responsibility for Review:	Director of Quality
Date for review:	April 2020
EIA date	April 2019

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

**Part 1. Background Information.** (Please enter relevant information as specified.)

<b>Title of Policy or Procedure. Details of Relevant Practice:</b>	QA39: Assessment & Verification Policy
<b>Person(s) Responsible.</b>	Vice Principal (Access, Outcomes & Partnerships)
<b>Date of Assessment:</b>	01/4/19
<b>What are the aims of the policy, procedure or practice being considered?</b>	Leave blank if these are already explicit on the existing paperwork.
<b>Who will this policy, procedure or practice impact upon?</b>	All academic staff and all students

**Part 2. Public Sector Equality Duty comparison** (Consider the proposed action against each element of the PSED and describe potential impact, which may be positive, neutral or negative. Provide details of evidence.)

Need	Impact	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.</b></li> </ul>	<p>The policy provides clear guidelines on assessment and verification arrangements, the need to ensure that relevant awarding body regulations for alternative assessment arrangements and for College and awarding body regulations for exceptional circumstance re-assessment are applied equitably. This policy ensures a consistent approach is implemented that meets external body requirements. All instances of candidate or centre malpractice is dealt with in a consistent process ensuring any unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation is avoided <b>(positive)</b></p>	<p>Assessment and verification records</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Advancing Equality of Opportunity</b></li> </ul>	<p>The consistent approach in the implementation of the Policy ensures Equality of Opportunity is promoted and stakeholders are reassured rigorous processes are implemented to maintain</p>	<p>Assessment and verification records</p>

	the credibility of the assessment and internal verification process. <b>(positive)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Promoting Good relations</b></li> </ul>	Stakeholders are reassured that the college quality systems are effective in the identification, and management, of all centre or candidate malpractice relating to assessment or internal verification practice therefore the integrity of awards are maintained. <b>(positive)</b>	Assessment and verification records

**Part 3. Action & Outcome** (Following initial assessment, describe any action that will be taken to address impact detected)

**Recommendation: Implement with caution and be prepared to apply flexibly when issues arise.**

No action required. The policy will be automatically reviewed at set date or should changes to policy be required prior to that scheduled date.

<b>Sign-off, authorisation and publishing *</b>	
Name:	Gill Griffin
Position:	Director of Quality
Date of original EIA	12/4/16
Date EIA last reviewed	01/4/19

*\*Please note that an electronic sign-off is sufficient*