

Higher Education Assessment Policy

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Assessment Principals and Procedures on Taught Programmes

Today in higher education, “assessment” describes any process that involves the evaluation or appraisal of a student’s knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes or abilities. Assessment is taken to be an integral component of teaching and learning, and serves multiple purposes. In addition to enabling evaluation and measurement of students’ learning, effective assessment shapes and enhances student learning. Assessments should therefore be designed to facilitate students’ attainment of intended learning outcomes, and permit the measurement of such attainments against explicit criteria.

1. Principals of Assessment

Purpose

Assessment is a key part of the learning process at HBUC and is central to ensuring the maintenance of our academic standards in associated with or partner Universities. The main purpose of assessment is to provide structured opportunities for students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the learning outcomes of the programme, and of the modules that make up the programme, and achieved the standard required for the award they seek.

2. Assessment for Learning

1.2.1 Learning and assessment should be integrated and fully aligned as an integral part of the learning process. There should be a focus on the development and achievement of intended programme outcomes rather than on marks and grades.

- Assessment for learning provides the bedrock for formative assessment strategies, allowing maximum opportunity for learner self-reflection, tutor feedback and academic and vocational development.
- A rigorous schedule of internal moderation ensures the consistency of standards and is further augmented through prescribed external scrutiny.
- Schemes of work acknowledge the importance of timely and supportive feedback by giving appropriate consideration to workload. Scheduling information is clear and consistent with information across all course documentation whether paper based or electronic.
- A greater depth of study and successful achievement are supported through the provision of assessment criteria to all students through handbooks and online documentation.
- Feedback and feed forward marking approaches provide students with critical, supportive and clear identification of key areas for development designed to stretch and challenge.
- A range of assessment methods is adopted to minimize opportunities for plagiarism and ensure authenticity of student work and enhance differentiation.

3. Methods of Assessment

1.3.1 Assessment methods should derive from, and reflect, the variety of the learning outcomes identified for each module/programme of study at the required level.

Learning outcomes and methods of assessment are agreed by partner Universities as part of the validation process and form part of the definitive documentation. The assessment methods used measure the extent to which students have met the learning outcomes and should accommodate and encourage creativity and originality.

1.3.2 All assessment methods, both formative and summative meet standards of authenticity, reliability and validity and allow the effective referencing of learning outcomes.

1.3.3 As part of new programme development innovative approaches to assessment will be explored to take advantage of developing technologies.

1.4 Student Information

1.4.1 Course Leaders are responsible for ensuring that assessment information relating to programmes and modules are made available to students at the commencement of the programme or module through Student Handbooks, in particular this includes:

- the purpose and form of assessment
- the assessment criteria
- specific attendance requirements
- submission procedures and deadlines
- penalties for late submission or poor attendance
- project/dissertation guidelines
- subject referencing guidelines
- student feedback arrangements

1.4.2 Partner University wide procedures in relation to the submission of mitigating circumstances, the code of conduct for examinations, academic malpractice, support for disabled students and/or those with learning difficulties/disabilities and the operation of the appeals procedure will also be included in Course Handbooks.

1.5 Assignment briefs

1.5.1 It is important to clearly explain to students what is expected of them in carrying out the assessment, and how marks will be awarded, i.e. the assignment brief, and the marking criteria. A clear principle is that assignment briefs and marking criteria should be written clearly, and be available to and discussed with students and are available on the HBUC Teams page.

1.5.2 Assignment moderation - All assignments written by HBUC HE tutors are to be internally moderated to ensure they meet the required expected standards of the award in question. This process will be overseen by the HE Academic Lead Standards.

1.5.3 Assignment verification -Ultimately the EE will have responsibility for formally approving assignment briefs as per partner University academic regulations.

1.6 Marking Criteria

- 1.6.1 **Marking criteria** are used to judge the standard to which each learning outcome has been achieved. They are specific to the assignment because they link the criteria and the intended learning outcomes for the module. These are agreed as part of the validation process and can only be amended through formal minor changes and PCR processes via the partner University.
- 1.6.2 Marking criteria which have been developed with partner university should be included in the Module Handbook, and will be reviewed as per partner University course review processes to ensure that they are being applied a. consistently; b. transparently; c. in such a way that the full range of marks is deployed. Parity marking is practiced in a number of schools, and should be adopted by all.

1.7 Verification

- 1.7.1 Verification is the checking of assessment briefs which form part of a module assessment scheme (whether examination paper questions or coursework assignments of any type) against level descriptors as given in the FHEQ before publication to students. A process of internal verification is required for every element of assessment, to consider the appropriateness of the brief in relation to the intended learning outcomes. The process must be undertaken by a minimum of two members of academic staff (author and one other) and be recorded.

1.8 Moderation

- 1.8.1 Moderation is the checking of a sample of students' assessed work in order to confirm that the verified assessment and marking criteria for a component of assessment have been properly applied.
- 1.8.2 Internal moderation is required for every element of assessment and the process followed will comply with partner University academic regulations. As a minimum requirement, internal and external moderation shall consist of a confirmation that the assessment criteria have been correctly and accurately applied. Changes may not be made exclusively to marks within a representative sample. Should concerns be identified during internal moderation regarding the accuracy or consistency of marking based upon the sample, which suggests the need to review the marks, the assessment in question for the entire cohort should be re-marked. This might be through scaling up or down, should the sample be considered to be consistently over or under – marked, or a full re-mark if the pattern of error is inconsistent.
- 1.8.3 The minimum requirement for moderation samples is set at 10% of all work submitted for a particular element of assessment, and (where student numbers on modules are small) the sample to include 3 pieces of work from the batch to be taken from work awarded the highest marks, marks in the middle range and the lowest marks.

- 1.8.4 An exemplar moderation form detailing the minimum requirements for evidencing moderation can be found in Partner University's academic regulation documents and this will be used as part of external moderation activities.
As part of the internal standardization of assessment documentation internally agreed moderation forms will be used.

1.9 First marking

- 1.9.1 The marker will mark the assessment within 15 working days and will write comments on the assignment feedback sheet, which will be discussed individually with the student.

1.10 Second Marking

- 1.10.1 Second marking is where all assessments in the set are independently marked by two markers with a view to agreeing on a mark. This is documented using the internal assessment feedback sheet

1.11 Assessment Feedback (To go before marking process)

- 1.11.1 Feedback will consist of statements from the marker of what was expected of the student in answering the assessment, this would also include what problems the student encountered in answering the assessment.. Verbal feedback is offered initially to the students followed by written feedback which will discuss if the learning outcomes have been met and what is the area of improvement to be made, in order for the student to move up the grade boundary.
- 1.11.2 Staff and students should develop their own and a shared understanding of what is required from, and entailed in, the assessment and feedback process. Students will be provided with feedback in relation to their performance in all forms of assessment including examinations. Feedback in relation to coursework will be provided within fifteen working days of the submission deadline.

1.12 Liaison with External Examiners

- 1.12.1 The Chair of the Assessment Board for the partner University School concerned is responsible for ensuring proper liaison with the external examiner during the assessment period and during the year. Course leaders will be discussing with the external examiner progress of work, extenuating circumstances, view samples of student's work and talk to students re course.

1.13 Assessment Boards

- 1.13.1 Each partner university will operate a Module Assessment Board for all the modules assigned to that School, and membership will comprise the Dean of School or nominee (Chair) and academic staff, including those from partner institutions, associated with the delivery of the modules. External examiners will act as specialist advisers to the Board.
- 1.13.2 The quorum for Module Assessment Boards shall be the attendance of the Dean of School or nominee (Chair) and an internal examiner for each module considered by the Board able to report fully on all results for that module.
- 1.13.3 It is the responsibility of the Module Assessment Board to determine the mark/grade achieved by each student in individual modules and to make recommendations to the appropriate Course Board in relation to reassessment and compensation. In relation to modules assessed at the end of semester 1, the Module Board will determine offers of reassessment.
- 1.13.4 Marks/grades determined by Module Assessment Boards shall not be subject to revision by other Boards.

1.14 Disclosure of Marks

- 1.14.1 The HBUC is committed to the policy of disclosure of moderated and unmoderated grades and marks to individual students and this can be viewed by the student on Markbook.
- 1.14.2 A moderated mark/grade is defined as a mark or grade which has been confirmed by a Module Assessment Board of the partner university.
An unmoderated mark/grade is defined as the provisional mark which is submitted to the Module Assessment Board.
- 1.14.3 Moderated marks/grades will be published to students through the provision of a transcript issued by the partner University and can also be viewed by the student online via partner university websites.
- 1.14.4 Students will have access via ProMonitor to unmoderated mark/grade prior to the Module Assessment Board has confirmed the mark or grade. However, they will be advised that these could be subject to change as a result of moderation as indicated on Markbook.
- 1.14.5 All students will be provided with an official transcript detailing their performance in each module studied as well as the overall recommendation by the relevant HEI.

1.15 Interruption of Study

1.15.1 Interruption (suspending your study)

1.15.2 Students may find themselves in a situation where they need to suspend their studies due to personal circumstances for a period of time. Examples of why students suspend study are pregnancy, medical reasons, bereavement, work, family or financial commitments.

1.15.3 If a student decides to interrupt, the persona tutor and course leader will be informed, and they can arrange for the appropriate notification of suspension documentation to be completed, so as to enable the student's record to be updated and sent by the Director (S) to the partner university.

Extension Requests for Taught Programmes

2.1 Policy and Procedures on Extensions

2.1.1 The HBUC requires all students to adhere to submission deadlines for any form of assessment. Students are expected to plan ahead and manage the demands of their workload.

2.1.2 Where students are experiencing difficulties in meeting a submission date, they should discuss any issues promptly with the appropriate tutor. The module tutor will advise if an extension request is appropriate in the circumstances or if the matter should progress to the Extenuating Circumstances procedure as per partner university.

2.1.3 Extensions may be granted for up to 10 working days. The module tutor will confirm the number of days for the extension, having taken into account the individual circumstances. (The module tutor will consider the reason for the extension, student workload and the nature of the assessment). Extensions for UCLan students now have to abide with the updated Academic Regulations September 2019

In all cases, the module tutor will take into account and abide by the practices and guidelines of the individual partner HEI School. All extensions are to be logged on the HBUC Pro- Monitor.

2.1.4 Requests for extensions should be made prior to the published submission date as extensions cannot be given retrospectively.

2.1.5 There is no automatic right for an extension to be granted and students are advised to continue working to the original submission deadline until a decision regarding the extension is received.

2.1.6 Requests for extensions should be made in writing to the appropriate module leader clearly stating the reason for the extension and detailing the module and assessment where an extension is required.

2.1.7 Requests for extensions may be granted where circumstances or events are of a temporary nature and are sufficiently disruptive to prevent submission by the due date. Such circumstances should not be foreseeable or preventable. These may include for example;

- short-term illness
- caring for a sick relative
- unexpected personal difficulties.

2.1.8 Requests for extensions will not normally be granted for the following reasons:

- Planned events such as holidays, religious festivals for moving house.
- Appointments arranged on the submission date.
- Attending courses.
- Paid employment.
- IT issues (printer problems/PC crashes/USB issues), including denied access to the University systems due to debt.
- Inadequate time planning.
- Planned TurnitinUK downtime.

Advice will be sought by module tutors from Partner University's in any cases of uncertainty.

2.1.9 Where adverse weather conditions prevent the handing in of work on the submission day the assessment should either be submitted remotely by student using TurnitinUK; or emailed to the appropriate tutor to prevent a penalty being applied. The formal submission should be made at the earliest opportunity. Submission of portfolios can also be sent by e- mail.

2.1.10 If the extension request is declined, the original submission date remains and the rules regarding late submission will apply.

Extenuating Circumstances for Taught Programmes

3.1 Policy and Procedures on Extenuating Circumstances

- 3.1.1 Extenuating circumstances arise where students suffer from some illness or misfortune that adversely affects their ability to complete an assessment or the results they obtain for an assessment. The HBUC Teams page has the appropriate links to the relevant forms for applying for extenuating circumstances from the Partner University.
- 3.1.2 The procedure is not intended to operate at the day to day level of requests for extensions or other matters which can (and should) be dealt with at the time by course/module leaders.
- 3.1.3 Deadlines for the submission of extenuating circumstances prior to an assessment period are published on the HBUC Teams page.
- 3.1.4 **A** disability or learning difficulty does not constitute an extenuating circumstance. Students requiring special arrangements in relation to assessment (e.g. Dyslexia, Physical Disability) should be made in conjunction with procedures identified in partner University academic regulations. Support as required will be organised through HBC Study Support.
- 3.1.5 Requests for extenuating circumstances submitted after the published date for the submission (except as a result of circumstances that have prevented the submission) will not be considered unless a credible and compelling explanation can be given as to why the circumstances were not known or could not have been shown beforehand.
- 3.1.6 Requests for extenuating circumstances should be processed formally and judged impartially. Partner University should have processes that properly document each case. Arrangements should also be proportionate, so that minor problems can be dealt with quickly with a minimum of bureaucracy.
- 3.1.7 Extenuating Circumstances panels from the partner university should meet prior to the Assessment Board but should not consider the marks or profile of the individual students concerned. The purpose of the panel is to establish the severity of the extenuating circumstances and to determine if they might have a negligible or significant effect on the outcomes of the assessment. It is then the role of an Assessment Board to consider the effects and determine the recommendation.

- 3.1.8 Students are responsible for submitting their own requests for consideration of extenuating circumstances. Hence they should be made aware of the partner university definition of extenuating circumstances and of the procedures for submitting a request for consideration. They should also have a realistic appreciation of the range of actions or remedies available to deal with the difficulties or problems they may encounter. Information about the consideration of extenuating circumstances should be included in course handbooks, and staff responsible for advising students need to be fully aware of what circumstances may be considered under the procedure.
- 3.1.9 Students must be aware that strict confidentiality could affect the Assessment Board's ability to take full account of the extenuating circumstances in their considerations. All students should be encouraged to allow information to be shared at least with the Chairs of the appropriate Assessment Boards.
- 3.1.10 Extenuating circumstances are considered in three stages. The first stage identifies any cases that were received after the published deadline for submission and excludes them from the process. The second stage will establish whether those cases received by the due date have sufficient grounds for consideration, and if they have, the final stage determines what actions should be applied to the outcomes of the student's assessments.
- 3.1.11 The second and final stages are the responsibility of partner University School academic staff. However, partner universities will designate a member of administrative staff to take overall responsibility for handling extenuating circumstances cases. Duties would include making information available to staff and to students, observing the deadlines for submission, advising students and academic colleagues and receiving submissions.
- 3.1.12 Where reasonably possible, approved extenuating circumstances should be handled by applying flexibility in the arrangements for assessment, e.g. by extending a coursework deadline (including an extension of time to submit a dissertation), rescheduling a presentation, setting a special examination paper, or allowing an examination to be sat outside the normal examination period. Such arrangements are at the discretion of the partner university. Students have no automatic right to individual assessment. In the interests of speed and efficiency, Partner University should agree guidelines for standard arrangements to be handled as administrative matters outside the full procedure described below but subject to the same principles in order to ensure consistent treatment of students.

3.2 Grounds

- 3.2.1 For extenuating circumstances to be considered they should be unforeseeable or unpreventable and may have had a significant adverse effect on the academic performance of a student. Possible extenuating circumstances include:
- significant illness or injury;
 - the death or critical/significant illness of a close family member/dependent;
 - family crises or major financial problems leading to acute stress;

- absence for jury service or maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

3.2.3 The following will not be regarded as grounds for extenuating circumstances:

- holidays, moving house and events that were planned or could reasonably have been expected;
- assessments that are scheduled close together;
- misreading the timetable or misunderstanding the requirements for assessments;
- inadequate planning and time management;
- failure, loss or theft of a computer or printer that prevents submission of work on time. Students should back up work regularly and not leave completion so late that they cannot find another computer or printer;
- consequences of paid employment (except in some special cases for part-time students);
- examination stress or panic attacks not diagnosed as illness.
- being unable to access the University's computer network - in the case of debt.

Note: Events may arise during pregnancy that may constitute extenuating circumstances, and these need to be judged on an individual basis.

3.2.4 Absence from the University during the semester for any period of no more than five working days will not normally be regarded as grounds unless the absence occurred for good cause within a two-week period immediately preceding a formal university examination or the deadline for submitting a piece of assessed course work or delivering an assessed presentation.

3.3 Handling Requests for Extenuating Circumstances

3.3.1 It is the sole responsibility of the student to submit a request for consideration of extenuating circumstances according to the published procedures and deadlines. Prompt submission makes it easier to offer flexibility in the arrangements for assessment. Requests should normally be accompanied by appropriate independent third-party supporting or corroborative documentation. If the information is highly confidential, details should be submitted in a sealed envelope together with the supporting documentary evidence. Requests submitted after the published date for that assessment period (except as a result of circumstances that have arisen during the course of that assessment period) will not be considered without a credible and compelling explanation as to why the circumstances were not known or could not have been shown beforehand. Requests submitted as a result of circumstances that arose during that course of assessment should be submitted in time for the relevant meeting of the Assessment Board if possible, or for subsequent Chair's action on behalf of the Board (subject, where necessary to consultation with the External Examiners).

3.3.2 A specifically constituted Extenuating Circumstances Panel at the partner University will deal with requests for consideration of extenuating circumstances. Its membership will be taken from and approved by the Assessment Board. It will be chaired by a member of the Board and serviced by the member of administrative staff responsible for dealing with extenuating circumstances. Panels will operate by considering

documentary evidence, and students are not required to attend meetings. Since Panels will operate under delegated powers from the respective university Assessment Board, their decisions will not normally be subject to review unless some procedural irregularity has occurred. Students have no right of appeal against the decision of an Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

3.4 Approving Extenuating Circumstances

- 3.4.1 As the second stage of the extenuating circumstances procedure, the Extenuating Circumstances Panel will determine whether there is substantiated evidence of extenuating circumstances. It will then decide whether the circumstances will have had an adverse effect on the student's performance, and if so it will judge how significant the effect was likely to have been. It may judge that the effect would have been negligible (for example in the case of a minor illness or a minor disturbance in an examination room), or it may judge that the effect would have been significant, in which case extenuating circumstances are approved. They may be approved for a specific assessment, for more general impairment over a number of assessments.

All information regarding the procedure to applying for extenuating circumstances can be found on the partner universities website.

The one affected by the extenuating circumstances, so that the student would not forfeit any available re-assessment opportunities.

Plagiarism

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Approaches to unfair means prevention, detection and penalty application (plagiarism) that are aligned to partner University regulations.
- 4.1.2 Any use of unfair means in an attempt to enhance performance or to influence the standard of award obtained is regarded as a serious academic and/or disciplinary offence. Unfair means includes all forms of cheating, plagiarism, collusion and re-presentation as defined in the appropriate partner University Assessment Handbooks.
- 4.1.3 All instances or allegations of the use of unfair means will be dealt with in line with the procedure as detailed in the appropriate partner University academic regulations documents.
- 4.1.4 Material submitted for assessment through examination, coursework, project or dissertation must be the student's own efforts and must be his/her own work. Students will be required to sign a declaration indicating that individual work submitted for assessment is their own. Copying from the works of another person constitutes plagiarism, which is an examination offence. The penalties for plagiarism must be applied consistently in all circumstances, notwithstanding the level of the programme of study or whether the offence was considered to be intentional or unintentional. Brief

quotations from the published or unpublished works of another person, suitably attributed, are acceptable. Guidelines issued by Partner Schools on the use and referencing of quotations which students are required to follow must be adhered to.

- 4.1.5 A Plagiarism Panel will be convened to provide impartial examination of suspected cases of academic malpractice. Internal investigations will be conducted in line with the HBUC Plagiarism Policy. This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that any changes stated within partner Universities' procedural guides are incorporated.
- 4.1.6 Adherence to appropriate partner University policies and procedures is the responsibility of all HE delivery staff.
- 4.1.7 Material submitted for assessment through open book examination, coursework, project or dissertation must be the student's own efforts and must be his/her own work. Students are required to sign a declaration indicating that individual work submitted for assessment is their own. Copying from the works of another person constitutes plagiarism, which is an examination offence. The penalties for plagiarism are applied consistently in all circumstances, notwithstanding the level of the programme of study or whether the offence was considered to be intentional or unintentional. Brief quotations from the published or unpublished works of another person, suitably attributed, are acceptable. The student handbook issues guidelines on the use and referencing of quotations which students are required to follow.

4.2 Detection

- 4.2.1 Students' work may be submitted electronically to TurnitinUK which is a web based system that provides comprehensive checking of submitted work for matching text on web pages, electronic journals and previously submitted student work. TurnitinUK generates an Originality Report to facilitate the identification of potential plagiarism cases. The Originality Report can be used as evidence and supports the related decision making process.

4.3 Representation of work

- 4.3.1 The same work cannot be recognised twice for academic credit. A student who attempts to submit the same work for academic credit, except where the rubric of assessment permits, shall be deemed to have used unfair means.

4.4 Collusion

- 4.4.1 Collusion is an example of unfair means because, like plagiarism, it is an attempt to deceive the examiners by disguising the true authorship of an assignment, or part of an assignment. Its most common version is that student A copies, or imitates in close detail, student B's work with student B's consent. But it also includes cases in which two or more students divide the elements of an assignment among themselves, and copy, or imitate in close detail, one another's answers. It is an unfair means offence to copy, or imitate in close detail, another student's work, even with his or her consent (in which case it becomes an offence of collusion). It is

also an offence of collusion to consent to having one's work copied or imitated in close detail. Students are expected to take reasonable steps to safeguard their work from improper use by others. Where a student is found to have engaged in collusion, the same penalties as for plagiarism will apply.

Where it is established that student B has not engaged in plagiarism, the requirement for re-submission may be waived in the case of student B. Collusion should not be confused with the normal situation in which students learn from one another, sharing ideas, as they generate the knowledge and understanding necessary for each of them successfully and independently undertake an assignment. Nor should it be confused with group work on an assignment where this is specifically authorised in the assignment brief.

5.2 Academic Appeals

These can be submitted on one or all of the following grounds:

- Material computational or administrative error;
- Irregularity in the conduct of the assessment or panel process in contravention of the regulations or published processes; and/or

5.2.1 All HE students are required to adhere to published partner University submission deadlines for any form of assessment. The partner University's Academic Regulations set down processes for extension requests along with the penalties for late submission of work; schemes for extenuating circumstances; condonement; compensation and academic appeals. Students are to be signposted to these regulations via Student Handbooks.

5.3 Reference documents

- UCLan Academic Quality Assurance 2019
- UCLan Assessment Handbook 2019 to present
- University of Cumbria Academic Regulations
- LJMU Academic Regulations

5.4 Compensation

5.4.1 Compensation describes the process by which a student who fails to satisfy some element of assessment is nevertheless recommended for progression/award on the grounds that the failure is marginal or is offset by good performance in other components of his/her study programme. It is up to the Course Assessment Board to award this at their discretion where, in it's considered academic judgement, the compensation is fair and reasonable in relation to the learning outcomes the course and the standard of the student's performance as a whole.

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