

Higher Education Assessment and Moderation Policy and Procedure

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4.0	Replacement	Change of title from Assessment of Students Policy and Procedure to UCEN Manchester Assessment and Moderation Policy

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Whilst taking into account regulations within partner Universities, this policy makes clear the processes that must be adopted within higher education across UCEN Manchester in relation to assessment of students. Assessment is described as 'any process that appraises an individual's knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills'. This procedure is a reflection of UCEN Manchester's commitment to ensuring students are given appropriate opportunities to achieve intended learning outcomes for a module/unit or programme with rigour, fairness and probity and relates to undergraduate and postgraduate assessment.

Additional guidance can be obtained by visiting www.qaa.ac.uk and referring to the Revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2018.

1. Introduction

This policy makes clear UCEN Manchester's expectations regarding conduct in relation to assessment. The policy has been developed in recognition that coherence in relation to the assessment process is essential if effective quality assurance processes and the ongoing maintenance of academic standards are to be achieved without undue variance.

The policy is mindful of the regulations specified by partner Universities who are in most instances the final arbitrator of quality and standards, in addition to the Revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2018 specified by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

Principles

The key principles which underpin this policy are:

- **Validity**
Validity ensures assessment measures what it claims to measure
- **Reliability**
Reliability refers to the accuracy with which an assessment measures the skill or attainment it is designed to measure. A reliable assessment consistently gives the same results under similar conditions.
- **Fairness and inclusivity**
A fair assessment, in addition to being valid and reliable, provides equity of opportunity for learner in line with Equality legislation.
- **Transparency**
A transparent assessment policy and guidelines will ensure clarity and understanding by all relevant stakeholders.
- **Quality**
Quality is a key principle in ensuring the credibility and status of awards. Quality will be assured through adherence to the regulations and requirements of awarding and professional bodies and UCEN Manchester policy and guidelines, national award standards, programme approval and validation and monitoring and evaluation.

The policy brings together a range of processes relating to assessment including:

- i. designing, approving, monitoring and reviewing assessment strategies for programmes and awards;
- ii. implementing rigorous assessment practices that ensure the standard for each award and award element is set and maintained at the appropriate level, and that student performance is properly judged against this;
- iii. evaluating how academic standards are maintained through assessment practice that also encourages effective learning;
- iv. encouraging assessment practice that promotes effective learning;

- v. ensuring that assessment is carried out by competent and impartial markers using methods that enable rigour, probity and fairness and due regard for security; in accordance with the Equality and Diversity Policy and the Equality Act 2010
- vi. reasonable adjustments to examination and assessment arrangements may be made to enable students with disabilities to demonstrate their abilities

Further guidance from awarding institutions is available on the links below:

[Manchester Metropolitan University](#)

[Sheffield Hallam University](#)

[University of Huddersfield](#)

[Pearson](#)

2. Modules/Units and Assessment

Module/unit tutors must provide students with clear and exact information about the means through which they will be assessed in each module/unit. Students can expect that at the start of each module/unit they will be provided with a module/unit handbook and module/unit specification that will describe the precise requirements of the assessment. This will include:

- i. The assessment method e.g. case study, report, presentation and the number of components which make up the module/unit;
- ii. The methods of reassessment;
- iii. Whether the assessment is formative;
- iv. Whether the assessment is summative and what requirements exist for passing the assessment;
- v. The assessment brief;
- vi. The learning outcomes which are relevant for each assessment;
- vii. Whether there are any professional, statutory or professional requirements that impact the assessment;
- viii. The assessment tariff (word count/duration or equivalent) for each assessment;
- ix. The assessment weighting e.g. what percentage of the grade awarded for the assessment will contribute to the overall mark of the module/unit;
- x. The assessment grading criteria which should be clearly linked to module/unit learning outcomes;
- xi. Supervision arrangements for any major pieces of assessed coursework, e.g. projects, dissertations;
- xii. The assessment deadlines for submission;
- xiii. How and where to submit work;
- xiv. Penalties for late submission;
- xv. Penalties for over length assessments;
- xvi. What methods will be used to provide assessment feedback;
- xvii. What timescale can be expected with regard to assessment feedback.

Summative assessments must be communicated to all students at the beginning of the module/unit.

Module/unit tutors will provide assessment information within module/unit handbooks to ensure all students (including those who join the programme late) are fully aware of matters relating to assessment conduct.

Module/unit tutors will make every effort to plan assessment submission dates with regard to other assessments that a student is undertaking within the same period. Further, module/unit tutors will plan appropriately to ensure that students are able to benefit from feedback in one piece of assessment to allow students to carry out subsequent assessments with greater insight.

Module/unit tutors must ensure that assessment titles and/or criteria and other assessments such as examinations are modified each time an assessment is released/ published to students. This includes briefs and/or criteria released to students for reassessments unless otherwise stated. The method of the assessment need not be changed (such as in cases of an essay, report, presentation).

The reason for changes in assessment brief forms part of UCEN Manchester's commitment to reducing opportunities for academic misconduct and to ensure teaching, learning and assessment methods are revised, updated and remain relevant and appropriate.

In some instances, an assessment brief may not need changing as a routine annual process. This is likely to be in situations where assessments do not lend themselves to ease of copying from other students who may have previously completed the same assessment. For example, this may include assessments that require the student to produce art work or to give a practical performance.

Students should note that the information provided about assessment is defined, approved and governed by the awarding Institution through which their programme of study is validated.

Reasonable adjustments to examination and assessment arrangements may be made to enable students with disabilities to demonstrate their abilities. This must not change the purpose of the assessment but may alter the method. It is important that academic standards are maintained when reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities are made.

The person responsible for the assessment must consider appropriately the needs of any student with a particular health or other problem. Students with alternative needs are assessed through the FutureU Service and changes to the arrangements of assessments for these students must only be made on their advice. This applies equally to summative and formative assessments.

Further guidance from awarding institutions regarding modules/units and assessment is available on the links below:

[Manchester Metropolitan University](#)

[Sheffield Hallam University](#)

[University of Huddersfield](#)

[Pearson](#)

3. Moderation Process

The moderation process seeks to ensure that all students have access to fair and accurate assessment and that assessment practices are consistent, transparent, valid and reliable and meet the requirements and standards of awarding bodies.

Internal moderators/verifiers or second markers must have qualifications, experience and knowledge relevant to the assessment and verification of the qualification they are moderating. It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader (in consultation with the Head of Department) to exercise professional judgement in selecting competent internal moderators/verifiers/second markers.

Other forms of moderation will be undertaken by External Examiners (EE) and link tutors from partner universities.

Internal Moderation Stages and Activities

It is important to note that the key functions of internal moderation/verification described below may be carried out (subject to validating HEI policy) without a designated “internal verifier”. For example, staff may be paired to review assessment briefs and a representative sample of summative assessments may be subject to a rigorous process of double marking.

For UCEN validated programmes internal moderation will be planned to cover:

- All students in the cohort over the academic year
- All modules and assessments
- All assessors/tutors making assessment decisions
- All assessed work below the pass mark and above 70%
- A sample of work across each of the grade boundaries, including borderline grades – the sample size will be based on the square root of the cohort size but will be no smaller than 6 and no larger than 15
- Dissertations should be double marked and where reasonably possible the whole cohort should be double marked rather than a sample

Timescale	Internal Moderation Activities
August/September/	Tutors allocated to modules/units. Internal moderators identified by Programme Leader/Head of Department Sampling plan to be agreed with EE
	Internal moderator moderates assessment briefs before briefs sent to EE (see checklist Appendix 1)
	Establish internal moderation sampling plan (See below for guidance)
	Send assessment brief(s) to EE for approval
	Ongoing monitoring and checking of assessment completion by students

November / December	Moderation of student work completed so far and completes moderation documentation (see Appendix 2)
January – end April (inc)	Continue to sample assessments/assessed pieces of work on both a formative and summative basis as per sampling plan EE to sign off sample work before the scheduled exam board
	Hold standardisation meetings on a monthly basis – as part of team meeting/staff meetings If there is a semester one board, complete interim sampling and give EE access to all work
May	Complete final sampling and standardisation
	Prepare all documentation for EE EE to sign off before the scheduled exam
July	Review and evaluate IV process

Second Marking and Moderation

This section of the procedure is intended to provide clarity over the differing terms used within the marking process.

Second marking is the process whereby a student's numerical score (or categorisation of result) is checked and validated by a second marker. Second marking will include a sample of the students work and will operate according to the following principles:

- i. All fails, borderlines and firsts must be second marked;
- ii. At the time of second marking the moderator should have access to the full list of results for the student group i.e. it is not sufficient for a first marker to merely give the moderator a sample of work without the moderator seeing the list of marks awarded for all students in the group;
- iii. The moderator should specify which scripts/ assessments are to be second marked although the first marker may request that some scripts are considered. The moderator should keep records of all marks awarded;
- iv. The documentation of moderation should demonstrate that there has been discussion between the assessor and the moderator particularly where disagreement between both markers has manifested.
- v. The EE is not the arbiter of moderation decisions. The mark should be agreed between the assessor and the moderator before being shared with the EE.
- vi. If the assessor and moderator cannot agree on the final marks then a third assessor is required.

Moderation

This is undertaken at the same time as second marking and is to ensure consistency of grades and quality of the feedback. The moderation should review that the feedback is constructive, feeds forward and is linked to the learning outcomes of the module.

Double Marking

This involves the blind marking of work by another marker. The second marker does not have access to the grades or comments of the first marker.

Further guidance from awarding institutions regarding marking and moderation is available on the links below:

[Manchester Metropolitan University](#)

[Sheffield Hallam University](#)

[University of Huddersfield](#)

[Pearson](#)

4. Over Length Assessments

All written assessments are given a tariff (word count); in some instances, some tutors may use a word limit range.

Word counts exclude (unless otherwise stated) footnotes, abstracts, reference lists, bibliographies, diagrams, appendices, graphs, charts, tables and other similar features.

Students must be mindful that information contained in an appendix is not essential to explain their findings but that these may support their analysis and validate conclusions. Any materials included in appendices, except where specifically requested in the coursework instructions, will not be marked. Students are required to declare a word count on the coversheet where a word limit is specified. An erroneous word count declaration will be dealt with as suspected academic misconduct.

Further guidance from awarding institutions regarding word counts and over length assessments is available on the links below:

[Manchester Metropolitan University](#)

[Sheffield Hallam University](#)

[University of Huddersfield](#)

[Pearson](#)

5. Failure to submit and late submissions

Module/unit tutors will encourage good time management skills to deter late submissions. This will be supported through a transparent 'assessment submission schedule' that details the range of assessment deadlines that students need to work towards within each programme to encourage effective planning and preparation for key dates in respect to others. 'Assessment submission schedules' will be published in such places as noticeboards, the VLE and programme handbooks.

The process of assessment submissions will be made clear to staff and students from the start of a particular programme of study. Individual assessment deadlines will be communicated clearly within each module/unit handbook. The procedures for handing in assessed work will be detailed in module/unit handbooks.

Penalties for late or non-submission will be communicated clearly within programme handbooks. In cases of all late work, work will be marked 'Late' upon submission and also commented upon within assessment feedback.

Assessments will always be marked against the assessment criteria and penalties will be applied afterwards. The original mark and the penalty will be clearly communicated on the feedback sheet and indicated in documentation submitted to Examination Boards.

In exceptional circumstances Examination Boards may modify decisions that have been implemented even when they have been done so in accordance with standard procedures and yet seem excessively harsh. For example, a student who repeatedly submits late assessments for previously unknown reasons may need some specific form of assistance or supportive intervention rather than a penalty; in such instances it may only be at the exam board that the consistency of lateness across modules/units is identified.

External examiners will be informed where student work shown to them has had marks reduced because of late submission.

Further guidance from awarding institutions regarding failure to submit and late submissions is available on the links below:

[Manchester Metropolitan University](#)

[Sheffield Hallam University](#)

[University of Huddersfield](#)

[Pearson](#) **Exceptional Factors/Extenuating Circumstances/Mitigating Circumstances**

- a. Students shall be informed of the designated person to whom they may submit evidence of exceptional factors/extenuating circumstances/mitigating circumstances which they consider to have caused them to sit assessments late and for which they do not wish to attract any penalty; this would normally be through the UCEN Manchester Academic Services team via mc@ucenmanchester.ac.uk. The Academic Services Panel will consider all claims regardless of the awarding partner.

- b. The programme handbooks contain details of the relevant exceptional factors/extenuating circumstances/mitigating circumstances process.

Further guidance from awarding institutions regarding exceptional factors/extenuating circumstances/mitigating circumstances is available on the links below:

[Manchester Metropolitan University](#)

[Sheffield Hallam University](#)

[University of Huddersfield](#)

[Pearson](#)

6. Formative and Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is used to indicate the extent of a student's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module/unit or programme.

Summative deadlines must always be published in programme and module/unit handbooks.

It is expected that programme teams will make good use of formative assessment methods where practicable.

Formative assessment is recognised as having a developmental purpose and is designed to give students more effective opportunities for learning and feedback on their performance. Tutors will sometimes engage students in reflective practice as a form of formative assessment.

Assessments that are formative and do not count towards the final assessment may be announced to students in advance.

Formative assessments and their date for submission should be identified in the programme and module/unit handbook.

Students should be encouraged to comply with formative assessment dates to protect the module/unit tutors' workload and to assist the tutor in planning and organising their time for marking appropriately.

Students should receive feedback on formative assessment which should demonstrate progression towards specific summative tasks.

7. Marking and Grading

Students can expect that in all instances assessment criteria and marking schemes will be fair and transparent.

Student assessments will in every instance be first marked. First marking is a process in which usually the module/unit tutor will attach a numerical score or a pass/fail grade (or Pass, Merit or Distinction in cases of HNC/HND assessments) to the piece of assessment.

Marks from summative assessment refers to the marks awarded that contribute to the overall assessment of the module/unit.

Formative marking refers to the marks awarded that do not contribute to the overall assessment of the module/unit but are designed to provide the students with feedback and guidance on their progress.

8. Assessment and Examination Boards

Whilst exam boards where appropriate are operated according to the policies, procedures and processes determined by the awarding Institution, all exam/assessment boards operated within UCEN Manchester require each module/unit to be represented by a module/unit tutor.

The terms of reference for UCEN Manchester assessment and examination boards are updated annually and can be accessed via <https://www.ucenmanchester.ac.uk/about/degree-course-policies>

9. Assessment Feedback

Students can expect in every instance timely feedback on assessed work to ensure that they are able to use feedback to inform other assessments. For example, receiving feedback on academic and study skill performance can help a student make informed changes in subsequent work.

Students can normally expect to receive written feedback on their assessment within 15 working days of the assessment being submitted for marking.

To prevent delay, written feedback must be given prior to ratification of the assessment result at the examination board; in such instances students must be made aware that the results are provisional and are not final until that time. In the latter instance this should be communicated to students clearly in programme documents i.e. programme and module/unit handbooks.

Written feedback to students must include an indication of whether the assessed learning outcomes have been achieved, not achieved or partially achieved. The learning outcomes must be detailed fully on the assessment feedback sheet. i.e. it is not sufficient to merely refer the students to the learning outcomes in their module/unit handbook. This also relates to other types of assessment such as in instances of group presentations.

Where learning outcomes have not been achieved, written tutor feedback must provide a clear explanation and offer suggestions for development.

Written feedback must refer to the student's strengths and weaknesses and include actions for future. Actions for future development should take into account:

- i. General academic features such study skills;
- ii. Presentation, style, structure;
- iii. Criticality;
- iv. Focus on the question/ establishment of a key and relevant question.

Feedback should not only also refer to areas for enhancement, but also how a student can practically go about this. For example:

- i. If a tutor points out to the student that an area for enhancement is 'the need for consistent rigour in accuracy of referencing', then the tutor may also refer the student to the relevant referencing guide.

Teaching staff should try to take into consideration different forms of assessment feedback that are effective in providing early responses to students about the assessment performance in particular circumstances. For example;

- i. encouraging students to reflect on their own performance;
- ii. using peer feedback;
- iii. using 'generic' group feedback i.e. making available a summary of comments about how the group performed in relation to the learning outcomes and other issues. This can be placed on the VLE or disseminated in class;
- iv. recognising the role of oral feedback, either in a group or on an individual basis as a means of supplementing written feedback;
- v. providing clear feedback to students about the point in the module/unit where it is not appropriate to continue seeking feedback i.e. as summative deadlines approach;
- vi. recording practical assessments or presentations and viewing them with students, a second marker and the external examiner.

10. Archiving

Student work must be appropriately archived; archived work is an important source of evidence that may be used in programme reviews, monitoring of trends, instances of query, complaint or appeal.

All student work to be archived means work that has been summatively assessed including examinations, presentations, essays, laboratory work, records of performances etc.

Archived work must be retained for 5 years after the end date of the course. This also applies to work undertaken by students who left the course before the end date. Please refer to the UCEN Manchester Retention of Assessed Work Policy for more detailed guidance regarding the retention of assessed work. Work must be stored appropriately, securely and safely. Our Group has a strict set of archiving procedures which help ensure we store data securely for the necessary retention period. Please speak to your line manager or our Data Protection team (dpo@lategroup.co.uk) for more information.

11. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of UCEN Manchester to ensure that systems related to assessment comply with the procedures specified within this code of practice and with the regulations of awarding institutions.

Whilst the partner institution has overall responsibility for quality assurance and the academic standards of its awards, UCEN Manchester also recognises its responsibility to:

- i. assess students fairly;
- ii. provide proper invigilation of examinations undertaken in the institute;
- iii. verify that marks have been recorded accurately to avoid transcription errors;
- iv. to facilitate the provision of the results of students' assessments as far as they relate to progression or final awards;
- v. issue individually to students their marks or grades;
- vi. investigate allegations of academic misconduct during assessment ;
- vii. conduct panels for claims of academic misconduct where applicable;
- viii. consider applications for exceptional factors/extenuating circumstances/mitigating circumstances;
- ix. consider academic appeals where applicable.

It is the responsibility of student to:

- i. undertake the learning activities specified for each module/unit for which they are registered;
- ii. attend examinations and submit work for assessment and/ or reassessment;
- iii. undertake assessments honestly and in a manner that does not attempt to gain unfair advantage;
- iv. ascertain the results of their performance in any assessment;
- v. collect returned assessments within the specified time frame;
- vi. check their transcript of results upon publication and raise any issues with the programme leader;
- vii. ensure UCEN Manchester is aware of any special need or requirement (already known to the student) for which provision will need to be made in the assessment of a module/unit
- viii. reflect on their assessment feedback and the areas for development

Appendix 1: Checklist for Assessment Briefs

(includes Case Studies, Projects, Practical Activities etc.)

This checklist is to be used by the internal verifier and the programme team to evaluate the suitability of assessment briefs and to ensure consistency of standards and practice in the design of assessment activities for UCEN Manchester programmes.

Programme Title:

Level: **Semester/term:**

Mode of Delivery: Part-time day Part-time evening Full-time Fast Track

(circle as appropriate)

Module/Unit: **Tutor:**

Assessment title/no:

	YES	NO
Are relevant learning outcomes identified?		
Are the tasks clearly identified?		
Is the assessment pitched at the correct level for the programme?		
Is the application of skills and knowledge required?		
Is the expected volume of work reasonable?		
Is there a guide to the time this assessment should take to complete?		
Are the assessment criteria clearly indicated?		
Are the assessment grades clearly defined?		
Are the issue and submission dates clearly indicated?		
Are the dates practical in relation to the scheduling of assessments relating to the rest of the programme?		
Is the assessment inclusive?		
Overall, is the assessment suitable for the learner group?		

Internal Moderator's/Verifier's Comments/suggested modifications (if applicable)

<i>Name of Internal Moderator/Verifier:</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Signature:</i>	
<i>Name of External Examiner</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Signature:</i>	

Appendix 2: Internal Moderation Assessment Report

Programme Title: **Level:**

Mode of Study: Part-time day Part-time evening Full-time Fast Track

(circle as appropriate)

Module/Unit: **Tutor/Assessor:**.....

Assessment title/no:.....

Student no/name	Assessor Grade	Moderator Grade	Comments

For completion by the Internal Verifier

	Yes	No
Is the evidence adequate to address the learning outcomes for this assessed piece of work?		
Have all the assessment criteria been met by the student?		
Do you agree with the grade awarded?		
Is feedback clear and constructive?		
Does the feedback relate to the learning outcomes?		

Further Comment or actions required
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Assessor Comments and/or actions taken:

<i>Name of Internal Verifier:</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Signature of IV:</i>	
<i>Name of Second Marker (where applicable):</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Signature of Second Marker:</i>	

Appendix 3: Internal Moderation Sampling Plan of Modules/Units

Title

Programme Start Date

Programme End Date

Year

Internal Moderator

Student	Module name	Module name	Module name	Module name	Module name	Module name	Module name	Module name	Module name	Module name	Module name	Module name

