

Quality in Learning and Teaching Committee

10 March 2017

Agenda item 11

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Coventry University Assessment and Feedback Policy

Policy Statement

Course Assessment Strategy and schedule

Course teams produce a course assessment strategy which shows details of the mode and timing of each formative and summative assessment task and its application to Course Learning Outcomes. Both formative tasks and summative assessments are an integral component of the course specification document. Course teams are to publish an annual schedule of assessments that is available to students at the start of a teaching period (i.e. semester, block, term). The schedule, inclusive of both mandatory and option modules, shall contain the following:

- Date of Release
- Date of Submission/ Dates of examination period
- Date of Mark Release
- Assessment mode – exam, presentation etc
- Indication of formative or summative
- Cross-Module assessment

Assessments should be distributed across the teaching period to minimise bunching and reduce pressure on both students and staff. Take into account other activities, for example CQEM meetings or conference, during demanding marking periods and prioritise accordingly. This may require planning resources appropriately.

When submission dates are first published, include information on the detailed arrangements for coursework submission (e.g. to whom, where, how, at what time etc). Make clear to students that if they miss this announcement they are responsible for finding out about, and complying with the submission arrangements.

Design

- Module leaders are to develop detailed assessments that enable students to meet the course learning outcomes. The design must explicitly take into account the total hours of student effort represented by the credit weighting of the module
- The baseline of all assessments is to adhere to the outlined assessment principle and provide equal opportunities for all students.
- The number and frequency of summative assessments should be based on consistent criteria to be established and clearly articulated within each Faculty/School according to the needs and practices of different subject disciplines.
- Each assessment should 'fit' within the overall course assessment strategy to show a progression of learning and demonstration of knowledge and skills, clearly demonstrating
 - how the task relates to the intended course learning outcomes and the learning outcomes of the module;
 - the criteria against which marking/grading will be carried out (these may include assessment criteria which are generic to several modules);
 - the marking/grading scheme to be applied.
- Design assignments to minimise the chances of cheating.
- All students must be given support to understand the assignment.
- A specific rubric should accompany each assignment release.

- Faculties must stipulate maximum word-counts for written assignments. Explicit inclusions or exclusion to the word limit, for example, citation and a reference list should be made clear. This must be included on the assignment submission sheet as well as the assignment itself.
 - Penalties may be imposed for a significant breach of the maximum word limit and take the form of a deduction of 10% of the moderated mark OR marking work up to the stipulated limit only
 - No penalties can be applied if the information given to students did not stipulate any maximum/minimum length.

Normally no single task should contribute less than 10% to the overall assessment mark

Internal and external review

- The EE role is to comment on standards of the assessment task and the appropriateness of assessment tasks to the intended learning outcomes.
- Assessments for FHEQ Level 4 are not required to be externally moderated, unless their marks directly contribute to the academic award (e.g. HNC). All other assessment tasks are to be provided to the External Examiner to moderate and provide comment, prior to the release date.
- Moderation should be recorded as defined in the Academic Regulations.
- The Course Team/ School/ Faculty has responsibility to ensure that each assessment task (or set of tasks) has been independently reviewed and verified to ensure that an assessment at all levels:
 - is effective for measuring attainment of the relevant module learning outcomes;
 - is of an appropriate standard;
 - allows scope for students to demonstrate strengths and weaknesses and is sufficiently discriminatory;
 - enables the anticipated student effort to be consistent with the weight given to the assessment in the calculation of the module mark; and
 - provides a clear indication to students of what is required and how marks/grades will be allocated.

Note: Evidence of internal and external review the checking process for setting assessment tasks must be demonstrated.

Submission

Submission arrangements should include a method of recording the receipt of coursework which can be made available for inspection in the event of a student disputing a non-submission decision

- Assignments are to be submitted using the VLE wherever practical.
- Ensure that students are aware of the process of submission and adherence to deadlines is applied consistently.
- Take every care to prevent loss or damage of work.

Marking and Feedback

Marks released are subject to final exam board decisions and a statement to this effect should be communicated to all students in the course handbook and restated for each assignment.

Anonymous marking

Anonymous marking is to be used for all assessments where practically possible. If peer assessment is included as a portion of any mark awarded, clear guidance should be provided to students. The University requires all formal written examinations to be marked and moderated anonymously to protect students against bias – whether consciously or unconsciously – on the part of examiners. This is an important element of the University's quality assurance process with regard to these assessments.

Feedback

- Feedback must relate to the intended learning outcomes of the module and the rubric.

- Feedback must be uploaded for all assignments, for student review on the VLE. Immediate, verbal feedback, for example following a performance, should be recorded or summarised and uploaded to the VLE. •
- Feedback must complement the mark awarded and provide students with specific guidance (feedforward) to enable them to develop their understanding and progression against the CLOs.
- Feedback must inform students of both the strengths and areas for improvement in their work.
- The feedback must justify the grade and/or mark awarded for the assessed work.
- The feedback provided should help the student to know how the assessed work could have been improved and help the student learn for other assessed work on the module and/or course being studied.
- Feedback should encourage students to reflect on their own performance and feel that they know how they could improve.
- Written feedback must be legible and understandable to students.
- Provision must be made to provide feedback to students on examination performance.

Groupwork

- Feedback for each individual member of the group should include both academic feedback and feedback on their contribution to the group as a whole.
- Where differential marks may be awarded to different members of the group justification should be given about the awarding of different marks to individual group members.
- If a student disputes the differential award of marks, a transparent process should be in place to resolve the dispute.
- Group work also includes work undertaken by a group which is then written up separately by each student in the group. Here, feedback must follow the guidelines for coursework.

Moderation of Assessed Work

- Moderation is important to ensure that internal markers apply marking criteria consistently, and also to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the academic standards students are expected to achieve.
- It is essential that marked coursework and examination scripts are properly scrutinised in order to ensure that staff, students, external reviewers, external partners and stakeholders (and the wider public) can have faith and confidence in the marks awarded and the awards conferred on students.
- Moderation should be constructive and developmental. Besides being an element of assurance of standards and quality, it may also provide peer support and staff development for academic staff.
- Marking teams must still adhere to Coventry University marking turnaround times.
- The internal moderation process should be completed and marks agreed before the marks are released to students.
- Major assessment tasks, should continue to be independently double-marked. Contributing marks should be recorded, and made available to the External Examiner. A single agreed mark is made available to students.
- Where double-marking is not carried out, the Module Leader will be responsible for ensuring that moderation of a sample of marked work is carried out.
- If there is disagreement between the moderator and the marker, an appropriate third party will adjudicate.

The minimum sample size should be as follows:

Group Size	Minimum Sample Size
< 25	4
25 – 50	6
50 – 100	8
> 100	10

The sample must include work across the full range of marks and include those on the borderline.

The moderator should also comment on whether appropriate feedback has been provided to students in a way which promotes learning and facilitates improvement. There must be clear written evidence that the moderation has taken place.

In cases where the assessment of a module component comprises several relatively small assessments tasks, the checking and moderation procedures could be applied to the package as a whole or to a sample of the assessment tasks. If a sample of tasks is used, the sample should be chosen such that at least 50% of the assessments contributing to each module component are subject to the checking and moderation procedures described above.

Faculties must explain their internal moderation procedures to EEs and agree the extent to which they should be involved in further moderation and, where appropriate, the sampling methods to be used.

Return of work

ALL work must be marked, moderated and returned to students within the following timeframe.

Actual dates should be included in the Module guide.

At the same time, tell students of the time limit after which work will be disposed of (ensuring all reasonable efforts are made to return the work).

Undergraduate Years 1 & 2	3 teaching weeks, i.e. 15 working days
Final Year undergraduate	2 teaching weeks, i.e. 10 working days
Taught postgraduate	2 teaching weeks, i.e. 10 working days

For late submissions the maximum time limit for the return of the marked work should apply from the actual date of submission of the work by the student.

- Mark turnaround times are published to staff and students and are to be strictly adhered to. In the case of any exceptions, for example illness, the Course Director should do the following:
 - Communicate with students and provide a revised date.
 - Update the annual assessment schedule where published
 - Review the impact on subsequent assignments and revise as appropriate so that students are not disadvantaged by the delay in receiving their marks and feedback.

If a member of staff is ill or unable for other justified reasons to meet the revised return deadlines, arrangements should be made, where possible, for others to both mark the work and provide feedback to students. If this is not possible, all students must be properly informed that there will be a delay and when they can expect to get their marked work and feedback on their work back. In some circumstances it may be possible to give students their marks for their piece of work in advance of actually handing back the work itself. In the latter case, and where possible, feedback should be given at the same time.

Students can ask for their examination scripts to be returned to them. In these cases, the original examination script should be retained by the Faculty and a scanned copy provided to the student.

Appendix A

Assessment Principles

Assessment is not an end point of learning, but part of the learning process. The Coventry University principles of assessment are taken from the Assessment Strategy 2015 – 2021 and have been put into place to enable any and all students to reach their potential. The ten principles are:

1. Undergraduate student progression from assessment *as learning* in level one to assessment *of learning* at level 3
2. Every course will include one or more integrative assessment points
3. Synergy of assessment between each level of study and course stage
4. Transparent and simple assessment points with no prescribed minimum or maximum number of assessments
5. Identified course stage assessment outcomes
6. Formative and summative assessment points in all courses
7. All assessments enable equal attainment opportunities for all students; whether home or overseas and regardless of socio-economic background or ethnicity
8. Standard maximum marking turnaround times for each level of study
9. Early and ongoing feedback, including course feedback and feedforward for individual students and groups
10. The opportunity for an individual mark as a contribution of every assessment

These are based upon the pillars of the Education Strategy 2015 – 2021:

- Research inspired teaching
- Embedded employability
- Creativity and Enterprise
- Intercultural and international engagement
- Community contribution and responsibility
- Innovation and digital fluency

These support the pedagogical approaches taken by experts to engage and inspire our students, providing relevance and excellence in their learning.

Appendix B

Alternative Variations in methods of Assessment

An overarching policy of this nature is required to ensure that all students can be assessed fairly against the specified learning outcomes, in an inclusive learning environment irrespective of disability and that, by doing so, the University maintains academic standards and adheres to both current legislation and sector wide standards.

The principles of the policy can be applied to students who have permanent disabilities; temporary disabilities and long standing health conditions for which the option to defer and/or temporarily withdraw is not appropriate

The Policy

1. It is the student's responsibility to declare their disability to the University and this will be treated in accordance with the University's data protection processes.
2. The University agrees to put in place reasonable adjustments to assessment methods, where possible and necessary, to ensure that students with disabilities are not disadvantaged by their disability and are assessed equally against their peers and in line with specified learning outcomes.
3. The decision to vary assessment methods will be made on an **exceptional basis** only and only in relation to a specific assessment task at a specific point in the student's academic journey. The majority of disabilities and/or long standing health conditions can be supported through reasonable adjustments e.g. extra time, scribe, sheltered conditions etc. without the need for varying the assessment method itself.
4. In some circumstances it may be necessary to discuss and agree alternative methods of assessment at the point of a student's application to a course and before an offer is made and accepted.
5. All decisions must be made in accordance with the University's Regulations and in conjunction with this and other related University policies.
6. It may not be possible or appropriate to approve a varied method of assessment if by doing so the student would not be able to demonstrate the learning outcomes without compromising standards and/or if it would mean that the standards and requirements of a governing, regulatory or professional body could not be met.
7. To ensure that fair, consistent and transparent decisions are made, liaison and cooperation between key parties is required (Student, Disabilities Office, Course Team, Faculty Learning Support Coordinator and Faculty Registrar). The Faculty Registrar or nominee will coordinate the consideration of such requests. External Examiner approval is required for all requests in order to assure standards. The Chair of the Subject Assessment Board will make the decision and his/her decision is final.
8. Requests to vary a method of assessment are to be submitted either by a student or by the Disabilities Office, in conjunction with, and on behalf of, the student, by completing the appropriate form and submitting to the Faculty Registrar.
9. Requests for the consideration to vary methods of assessment are to be made in a timely manner in order that adequate consideration can be given to each request. However, due to the unforeseeable and fluctuating nature of the circumstances experienced by some students, a definitive timescale is not appropriate.
10. Each request for a variation to a method of assessment must be supported by third party evidence. The nature of the evidence required must be considered proportionate and reasonable to the student's circumstances and will be determined through liaison with the Disabilities Office.
11. To ensure consistency of outcomes and allow for monitoring of trends, overarching data relating to the nature of the request, the decision made and any variation of assessment method will be recorded centrally by Registry's Policy Unit. This central record will also function as a point of reference of best practice for subsequent requests.

12. A complete audit trail in relation to each request must be kept in the form of a complete set of documentation uploaded to Filestream by the Faculty Registry team and through Subject Assessment Board minutes and records of Chair's Actions.
13. A student with an impairment, and for whom a recommendation has been made for marking without penalty, may have his/her work marked separately. In such cases, the work must be second-marked to maximise equity.