

IFD College

ASSESSMENT POLICY

PRINCIPLES, ENTITLEMENTS AND PROCESSES

ASSESSMENT POLICY

Ethos

1. The common principles for the assessment and entitlements of students/learners/candidates are that:
 - there will be equity and consistency in assessment for all students.
 - they will provide a basis for assessment standards and means of monitoring assessment across College.
 - assessment procedures will be endorsed by College Governors, the CEO and awarding bodies.
 - they will indicate the generic assessment process which constitutes good practice on all programmes.
 - students/learners/candidates will have access to assessment policy and programmes details at all stages of their learning.
 - the requirements of the awarding bodies will be encompassed within the College assessment policy.

Principles

2. All students will be assessed using principles which are common to all programmes in the College.
3. These principles which relate to the equitable treatment of students/learners/candidates and their rights in the assessment process, can be expected as follows:
 - the primary purpose of assessment will be enhancement/confirmation of learning and the acquisition of those qualities expressed in the required qualification.
 - assessment will be based on a series of agreed common procedures including those required by awarding bodies. These will be for:
 - assessment planning
 - assessment procedure
 - assessing candidate performance
 - feedback to the candidate
 - recording of achievement
 - internal verification, standardisation and moderation
 - accreditation, if applicable

- monitoring of candidate performance
 - monitoring of assessment planning
- all assessment will be based on explicit criteria or assessment objectives which should be clear and comprehensible.
 - there will be support and guidance to enable students/learners/candidates to access appropriate resources and services for assessment
 - there will be appropriate staffing to support student/learners/candidates assessment
 - moderators, examiners, assessors and internal verifiers will be trained according to the awarding and accrediting body regulations.
 - there will be clearly defined roles for those involved in assessment, based on the use of common terminology and systems.
 - procedures will be in place to promote equity and counteract any cultural and linguistic factors.
 - students/learners/candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities will be provided with appropriate assessment and support.
 - there will be appropriate quality assurance procedures in place for verifying and monitoring assessment practice.
4. It will be the responsibility of the Internal Verifier/Moderator to ensure that all assessment including key skills is consistent, valid, transparent and that evidence is authentic, current, reliable and sufficient.

Entitlements

5. Assessment is a core activity and access to assessment is an entitlement on all programmes. All students will be assessed at the level which is appropriate to their level of learning. The students/learners/candidates entitlement will be:
- access to guidance on assessment at all information points with specialist information provided by specialist staff.
 - access to initial information on the assessment procedures and evidence requirements of programmes.
 - where appropriate involvement in the assessment processes through self-assessment and review of assessment activities.
 - where appropriate assessment planned and negotiated with an assessor.
 - that all programmes, where appropriate, will offer APL services in addition to their other assessment activities.

- both written and oral feedback on activities being assessed.
- that all NVQ staff working as assessors will be working towards appropriate nationally recognised accreditation or hold such accreditation when undertaking assessments.
- access to the College assessment appeals procedures which are explained and presented to them in written form as part of their induction to a programme.
- that any costs of providing assessment will be explained to all students.
- course handbooks and quality documents which will provide information on assessment procedures and quality standards.
- an assessment process carried out by staff who will follow the Charter Standards.

Internal Verification, Standardisation/Moderation

6. It is the aim of the internal verification/moderation policy and practices to ensure that assessment of programmes meets the National Standards and is consistent across College. To fulfil these aims, internal verification standardisation/moderation processes will be employed by the course team, and if applicable programme area teams and a cross College team.

Functions of Teams

Course Team

7. For NVQ course teams one or more members will be trained to A and V unit standards. These members will scrutinise the assessment decisions of the team of assessors. For all other teams experienced assessors/markers led by a lead verifier/team leader will be responsible for scrutinising the assessment practices and decisions of assessors/markers in their team. It is the internal verifier's/moderator's responsibility to establish mechanisms to monitor the quality of assessment within course teams. The internal verifiers/moderators will sample evidence to check that decisions have been made:
 - against National Standards
 - consistently
 - using valid evidence
 - using sufficient evidence
 - using authentic evidence
 - using current evidence

9. The outcomes from the Internal Verifier's sampling activities will be:
 - written and oral feedback to assessors confirming decisions or suggesting action plans to ensure validity of assessment.
 - documentation of verification activities, decisions and feedback for the team and external verifier.
 - collation of the results of the verification activity.
 - plan of future sampling activities.
10. The Internal Verifier will meet formally at least twice per term. These meetings may be part of a scheduled team meeting. At the formal meetings the following areas will be discussed:
 - assessment plans
 - assessment decisions
 - evidence generated for vocational and key skills units
 - understanding of the validity, authenticity and sufficiency of evidence
 - issues arising from assessment decisions
 - understanding and interpretation of specifications
 - progress and clarity of the candidates' portfolios
 - External Verifier reports
11. Minutes will be generated from the formal meeting and circulated to all College Governors.
12. In fulfilling the role, the Internal Verifier has a responsibility to support and develop the whole course team and ensure that assessment resources are appropriate and adequate.

Quality Review Policy

13. The quality of assessment will be maintained against:
 - stated assessment standards
 - assessment policy and practice statements
 - student entitlements to assessment
 - College Charter statements
14. The regular quality review cycle will provide further monitoring through programme review and validation panels.

15. The use of data on assessment decisions and final achievements will be used to verify the quality of assessment practice as a means of statistical quality assurance by course teams.

Monitoring Procedures

Assessment Standards

16. **On Entry** Students/learners/candidates will be given clear information on how and when the qualification is assessed; entry requirements; additional support available; costs associated with assessment.
17. There will be access to diagnostic assessment where appropriate; this will be equitable and the procedures clearly understood by all staff.
18. The students/learners/candidates will be given information on APL.
19. No matter what time of year an applicant is seeking entry to a programme, the same procedures will apply.
20. If an applicant does not meet the entry requirements of a particular programme, further guidance and assessment opportunities will be offered at the earliest opportunity.
21. Where the need for additional learning support is identified, there will be procedures to analyse and meet them. All staff will be made aware of these procedures.
22. The same procedures will be applicable to both full and substantial part-time applicants.

Induction

23. Guidance and assessment will continue and be developed.
24. In-depth assessment of students, especially in key skills, will be used to identify additional support needs.
25. There will be opportunities for transfer to a different level or vocational area during this period.
26. There will be recognition of existing skills and achievements.
27. There will be full explanation of the assessment process and the roles and responsibilities of staff and students/learners/candidates.
28. Students/learners/candidates will be encouraged to begin tracking and recording their own achievements.

On Programme

38. Assessments will be:

- formative to allow students/learners/candidates to develop and enhance knowledge and skills – assessment for learning.
 - where appropriate summative, to provide the students with the opportunity to generate evidence for accreditation – assessment of learning.
39. Where appropriate there will be the opportunity for the assessment of the students' key skills at the level of, or higher than the level of the award.
40. Students/learners/candidates will be given both written and verbal feedback on assessment decisions so that they may:
- assess their progress towards achievement of the award.
 - have an indication of their knowledge and understanding.
 - be made aware of level of skills development.
 - adjust individual action plans or learning agreements.
41. With assessors/markers there will be the opportunity for students/learners/candidates to:
- plan their own assessment
 - suggest opportunities for generating evidence
42. There will be the opportunity for students/learners/candidates to take some responsibility for their own learning.

At Accreditation/or Certification

43. When accreditation is dependant upon internally assessed work guidance will be given to the students/learners/candidates in assembling a portfolio of evidence or coursework folder. Completed assessor/lecturer/verifier/moderator records will be available for scrutiny by internal and external verifiers and other awarding body agents.
44. The students/learners/candidates' portfolio or coursework folder will be available for external verifier/moderator scrutiny.
45. The students/learners/candidates achievements will be notified to the relevant Awarding Body.

Course Review and Evaluation

46. The course review procedure at entry, on programme and on exit will, through student/candidate questionnaires, monitor assessment policy at entry and on programme.
47. Individual unit questionnaires will monitor assessment policy in those specific areas.
48. Course team reviews of the course will provide further evidence of the quality of assessment.

Internal Verifier Reports

49. For all internally verified programmes review of the assessment monitoring reports of Internal Verifiers will provide a measurement of consistency of practice. For A level, examiner/moderator reports will provide a measurement of consistency of practice. In each case reports will be used to determine whether specific teams or subject areas show a pattern of achievement above or below the norm.

Evaluation

50. Statistical quality assurance will be used to monitor assessment quality in the following ways:
 - comparison of entry level qualifications and final achievements.
 - monitoring achievements in different subject areas.
 - monitoring the awarding of grades across programmes.
 - correlation of mandatory test results against tutor predicted achievement.
 - comparison of students' achievement across programme areas to monitor equal opportunities.
 - correlation between entry level qualifications, FE achievements and progression to HE or career.
 - adoption of standardised value added analyses across programmes.

The use of the monitoring tools stipulated will ensure that quality of assessment is regularly under review. Feedback from the processes will provide the basis for course teams, Faculty Heads and College management to refine and enhance the students/learners/candidates experience of assessment.