



POLICY AND PROCEDURE	Assessment Policy
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Other Documents Policy Refers to

Document Number	Document Title
	Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
	Conflict of Interest Procedure
	Complaints Handling Policy
	Awarding Bodies Guides to Assessment
	Teaching Masterpacks
	Inclusive Learning Procedure
	Site Selection Procedure

History of amendments

Date	Version/Pages/Sections affected	Summary of changes
August 2016	The policy was completely reviewed and disaggregated into an Assessment Policy and a separate Academic Appeals Policy.	All sections have been reviewed and amended.

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1. Policy Statement

This policy provides guidance to staff and students on Ayrshire College's assessment process and will ensure that this process is applied consistently across all campuses of Ayrshire College and will meet the requirements of Awarding Bodies and SQA Accreditation (or Ofqual if relevant).

2. Equality Statement

The College is committed to advancing and promoting equality and diversity in all of its activities and aims to establish an inclusive culture free from discrimination and based upon the values of dignity and respect.

3. Assessment Policy

- 3.1 Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching and is extremely important for the student's learning experience. It is an essential step to attainment and certification of formal, recognised qualifications.
- 3.2 Assessment involves generating and collecting evidence of a student's attainment of knowledge, understanding and skills and judging that evidence against defined national or professional standards. There are many different ways in which assessment evidence can be generated and assessing staff should familiarise themselves with these (see Awarding Bodies Guides to Assessment in the Quality Section of the staff intranet).
- 3.3 All assessments at Ayrshire College will be valid, reliable, practicable, consistent, equitable and fair – including access to them.
- 3.4 Assessment Instruments will be subject to both internal and external verification. All Assessment Instruments to be used in the forthcoming Academic Year (and any developed in-year) will be reviewed at a Standardisation Meeting prior to delivery by the relevant verification group. This includes awarding body developed assessment instruments to ensure that they remain fit-for-purpose.
- 3.5 All assessments will be conducted in accordance with the regulations of the relevant awarding body and the qualification. This will include the assessment conditions and may also cover the number of assessment opportunities and notification periods.
- 3.6 All Assessment Instruments, internally and externally devised, must adhere to the QUELTM Guidelines (see Teaching Master-pack Pro-forma in the Quality Section of the staff intranet).
- 3.7 All students will be informed of the assessment policy and their right to appeal an assessment decision (see Appeals Policy) at the start of their course. These policies will also be published on the student intranet.

- 3.8 All types of assessment misconduct will be dealt with in accordance with the College's Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration Policy. This policy is also published on both the staff and student intranet.
- 3.9 No-one with a personal interest in the outcome of an assessment decision can be involved in the assessment process. This includes assessors, internal verifiers and invigilators. If a member of staff believes this applies to them they must disclose this to their Line Manager, in the first instance (see Conflict of Interest Procedure in the Quality Section of the staff intranet).

4. Assessment Procedures

4.1 Pre-Delivery

4.1.1 The Verification Group will agree which Assessment Instruments will be used prior to delivery of the unit/qualification and will ensure that the assessment instrument remains valid and fit-for-purpose. This is to ensure the validity of the assessment instrument and consistency across all campuses. This also applies to assessment instruments published by awarding bodies.

4.1.2 There are different regulations for each awarding body regarding access to their Assessment Instruments. Therefore, access to these is usually controlled by the Quality Enhancement Team.

A request for access to these must be made by email from a college staff email account to Quality@ayrshire.ac.uk.

Assessment Instruments or the means to access them will only be sent by the Quality Enhancement Team to a college staff email account.

4.1.3 Where a member of staff or team wish to devise their own assessment instrument it must be internally verified and agreed by the verification group before it can be used with students.

Where the awarding body offers a prior verification service this should be utilised before the assessment instrument is used. All prior verification requests must be made via the Quality Enhancement Team.

4.2 Assessment Process

4.2.1 Every unit/qualification delivered in the College must have a Teaching Master-pack.

This should contain an assessment schedule which should be disseminated to students at the start of delivery (see Teaching Master-pack Pro-forma in the Quality Section of the staff intranet). Any changes to the assessment schedule must be clearly communicated to all students.

4.2.2 Assessors must give clear guidance to students on the planned assessments to be undertaken together with dates when the assessment will take place or submission date for coursework. A minimum of one week's notice will be given of assessment activities. Any changes to the assessment or submission date must be clearly communicated to students and still allow for one week's notice.

Assessors may use various means of communication with their students (email, text, VLE, notice-boards) to communicate this information. Assessors should, therefore, agree the method of communication to be used with their students in advance and ensure that they are aware of, and have access to, the agreed method.

4.2.3 Students will normally be allowed no more than two opportunities at any one assessment. However, in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Curriculum Manager, a third opportunity may be allowed. The Assessment Instrument to be used for re-assessment may be a different one to the original. The rules of the Awarding Body apply here.

If a third opportunity is agreed then a suitable date must be agreed between the student, assessor and curriculum manager. When agreeing this date the following should be taken into consideration:-

- a) The 3rd opportunity should be scheduled as soon as is practically possible, factoring in the workload of the student and giving them a realistic chance of successfully completing the assessment.
- b) If the 3rd opportunity will take place in the next semester the end date of the unit must be changed at MIS.

Where an Awarding Body's regulations differ from this then their rules apply for their qualifications.

- 4.2.4 Where a student is absent from class at the time an assessment is offered, or does not submit the assessment on time, this shall be recorded as one opportunity unless an agreement, based upon a satisfactory reason, has been made with the assessor and/or curriculum manager.
- 4.2.5 If an assessor believes there could be a potential conflict of interest with a student whose work they will assess, they should make their Curriculum Manager aware as soon as possible and in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Procedure.
- 4.2.6 All student assessment evidence must be retained by the College for the purposes of verification and should be retained securely. This will be for a minimum period of 6 weeks after the end date of the unit/qualification OR the awarding or regulatory body's regulations for the unit/qualification, if it requires the evidence to be held for longer than 6 weeks. This date may not necessarily be 6 weeks after the completion of delivery of the unit or group award.

Further, if the College has been advised of a planned external verification or quality assurance visit or event student assessment evidence is required to be retained until the College is advised of a positive outcome.

Photographic evidence is usually acceptable for bulky assessments that have to be dismantled (eg construction evidence). Check the Awarding Body regulations before doing this.

Scottish/National Vocational Qualifications (S/NVQs) Portfolios must be retained until the student has completed the full award.

4.2.7 All assessments must have a marking scheme, agreed at the pre-delivery meeting, included as part of the master teaching pack to ensure consistency when marking.

4.3 Storage of Assessment Materials

- 4.3.1 The security of assessment materials (e.g. assessment instruments, exam question papers, scripts and electronically stored evidence) is everyone's responsibility. This is particularly important for assessment materials which are used for assessment in controlled conditions (e.g. closed-book assessments, HN Graded Unit exams).
- 4.3.2 Assessment instruments will be sent via college staff email accounts unless it is impossible to do this. In these cases an arrangement must be made with the Quality Enhancement Team.
- 4.3.3 Once assessment materials have been received by lecturers/assessors it is their responsibility to ensure that they are stored securely. This could be on an encrypted memory stick, a secure personal drive or in a secure area of the staff intranet.
- 4.3.4 Assessment Instruments should only be passed on to lecturers/assessors by the Quality Enhancement Team or the Verification Group Co-ordinator/Curriculum Manager who has knowledge of individual's rights of access (i.e. staff may only access assessment instruments for units that they are or will be scheduled to teach).
- 4.3.5 When printed off the assessment materials must be passed on securely.
- 4.3.6 Printed assessment materials must be stored securely at all times in either locked cabinets or locked rooms with controlled access. They must not be left in public places (including unsupervised classrooms) or areas which are accessed by students or staff from outwith the teaching area.
- 4.3.7 Photocopying of assessment materials should be via the College's secure photocopying service. However, if a lecturer/assessor is copying assessment

materials themselves they must not leave the photocopier unattended and must ensure that they remove all the assessment materials and copies.

- 4.3.8 Assessment materials which are delivered under controlled conditions must be supervised while in use and collected back in. Spare assessment instruments and materials past the evidence retention period must be destroyed securely by either shredding or placing in confidential waste or stored securely again.
- 4.3.9 Students must be made aware that taking away assessments, copies or images of assessments which are delivered under controlled conditions is malpractice and could result in disciplinary action (see Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration Policy)
- 4.3.10 It is also malpractice for staff to give assessment materials, copies or images of assessments to students outwith the assessment process, without good reason or permission (see Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration Policy).
- 4.3.11 Student's assessment evidence must also be held and moved securely. This is necessary to protect the interests of students and the integrity of the assessment by ensuring that the evidence cannot be tampered with.
- 4.3.12 Any breaches of security of assessment must be reported immediately to the Head of Quality Enhancement in order that the relevant awarding body can be notified.
- 4.3.13 Electronic evidence must be submitted and received securely. Students must be able to protect/lock their evidence before they submit it and it must be stored securely in a restricted access file throughout the assessment process and until the assessment and verification processes are complete.
- E-portfolios are ideal for this.
- 4.3.14 External Verifiers will need to be given secure access to electronic evidence during a Visit.

4.4 Assessment Feedback

- 4.1 Written and/or oral feedback from assessors must be given to students as soon as possible after assessment has taken place.
- 4.2 In the case of written or project work, feedback must be given as soon as is practically possible. It is good practice for this to occur within 1 week of the submission date. However, if this is not practical feedback must be given within 2 weeks of the set submission date.
- 4.3 Feedback should confirm what the student has done well and give clear guidance on what the student needs to do in order to improve on their performance.
- 4.4 Feedback should be recorded and kept with the assessment evidence for verification purposes.
- 4.5 Students should also be given the opportunity to provide feedback on their assessment experience as this may inform the delivery and planning process (see Teaching Masterpack).

5. Re-Assessment

- 5.1 Students must be provided with suitable remediation time and support prior to any reassessment.
- 5.2 Where appropriate, an alternative instrument of assessment should be used for any re-assessment. However, in some instances, this may not be the case. The decision will be based on the appropriate awarding body requirements and an element of professional judgement.
- 5.3 If an alternative assessment instrument is required it should be available before delivery of the unit and is subject to the same quality assurance process as set out in Section 4.1.

6. External Assessment Sites

- 6.1 All sites where candidates undertake assessments assessed or verified by Ayrshire College must be safe and appropriately resourced, and must provide access for candidates, staff, awarding body and regulator personnel.
- 6.2 Ayrshire College's quality assurance system extends to all sites where candidates are assessed or verified by Ayrshire College.
- 6.3 A site checklist must be completed for every external site where Ayrshire College is assessing or verifying candidates (see Site Selection Procedure in the Quality Section of the staff intranet).

7. Assessment of Higher National (HN) Graded units

- 7.1 Graded units are either assessed by an examination or project. Graded Units are internally assessed and verified and will also be subject to Qualification Verification by SQA.
- 7.2 The normal College assessment entitlement applies to HN Graded Units.
- 7.3 Staff must refer to the current SQA subject specific Arrangement Document regarding assessment of Graded Units.
- 7.4 The following applies to Graded Unit Examinations:-
- All Graded Unit Question papers must be kept in a secure location within each Centre (see 4.3)
 - Examinations requiring two separate sittings (i.e. for day class students and evening/open learning) will require to be timetabled either concurrently to ensure the security of question papers or a different paper issued at each sitting.

- Students unable to sit the initial examination will be required to sit a different examination paper.
- Students must be provided with remediation prior to any reassessment (see 4.4)
- Students who achieve a pass at the first attempt will normally have this result sent to SQA.
- Where a student has passed but seeks to upgrade their original result, the following criteria (where applicable) will apply:
 - *Requests to upgrade an initial result must be agreed by the Curriculum Manager and the assessor.*
 - *Where a request has been agreed the next attempt must take place in the same academic session using a different question paper.*

7.5 The following applies to Project based Graded Units:-

- All project assessment materials must be held in a secure location within the Centre prior to delivery (see 4.3)
- All project based assessment submission dates will be agreed and set by the unit assessor.
- Unit assessors must ensure that students are given on-going guidance in relation to authenticating their work, plagiarism and referencing of material.
- All assessment material will be handed in to the Assessor by the agreed submission date. Failure to meet the submission date without a valid reason will count as the student's initial assessment entitlement.
- A student who achieves a pass at the first attempt will normally have this result sent to SQA.
- Where a student has passed but seeks to upgrade their original result, the following criteria (where applicable) will apply:
 - *Requests to upgrade an initial result must be agreed by the Curriculum Manager and the Assessor.*
 - *Where a request has been agreed the next attempt must take place within the same academic session.*

8. Malpractice

8.1 Malpractice occurs when a student plagiarises, colludes, pretends to be someone else, uses unauthorised aids (e.g. calculator, mobile phone, notes, images etc), behaves in a disruptive manner during an examination or assessment or submits coursework deemed to be frivolous, offensive or obscene (this list is not exhaustive).

8.2 Unauthorised conferring or referring to notes

For students who confer during an assessment, or refer to notes without authorisation, the Assessor, in consultation with the Curriculum Manager, is authorised to implement the following:

- The student(s) can be deemed to have failed to attain competence, and
- The student(s) may or may not be re-assessed, and
- The student can be withdrawn from the unit.

8.3 Plagiarism and Collusion

The College view on plagiarism is to focus on **prevention** in preference to detection, by providing students with information and support on how to avoid plagiarism. Staff should ensure that students are made fully aware of what plagiarism and collusion are, how these can be avoided, and the action which will be taken should they plagiarise or collude in the production of their work. This will normally be covered within the student's curriculum induction.

Electronic student assessment submissions should be processed through the anti-plagiarism software, Turnitin. The college has a license for this and guidelines for its use are on the intranet.

Plagiarism and collusion extends to the submission of all assessed work however it is presented e.g. electronic, written, graphical, practical and oral.

Plagiarism is defined as "The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own." (Oxford University Press 2014)

When work is judged to have been plagiarised or collusion has taken place the assessor should follow the procedures and guidelines laid out in the Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

9. Additional Assessment Arrangements

- 9.1 Additional assessment arrangements are available to students to help support their programme of study. The request for support may come from the student; the student's school; relevant professionals or a member of staff.

Requests for additional assessment arrangements are initially made via the Inclusive Learning Team (see the Inclusive Learning Procedure on the staff intranet).

10. Credit Transfer & Recognition of Prior Learning

- 10.1 Credit Transfer is a process which enables a student to gain credit for all or specified outcomes of a unit(s) for competence(s) gained and evidenced by previous **certificated** learning.

10.2 The Process:

- The student requesting Credit Transfer should discuss the request with their subject assessor who should advise the Curriculum Manager.
- The Curriculum Manager should obtain a written request from the student for those unit(s) for which Credit Transfer is requested and view the original Qualification Certificate.
- The currency of the certificated competence, indicated by the year gained, must be taken into account prior to a decision to proceed with this accreditation process.

- The written request for Credit Transfer, a photocopy of the original certificate, and a copy of the certificated course content should be given to an appropriately qualified subject specialist (usually a Lecturer).
- The subject specialist should map the certificated course content against the unit specification(s). This must be done at Outcome, Performance Criteria and Knowledge and Skills levels. Reference should also be made to appropriate Awarding Body subject Arrangement Documents which may state where credit transfer may be given.
- The outcome of the mapping exercise and the decision to grant Credit Transfer must be forwarded to the Head of Quality Enhancement who will ratify the decision (if appropriate) and confirm to MIS that the result may be submitted by way of Credit Transfer.
- The outcome of the mapping exercise and the decision to grant Credit Transfer must be recorded and retained for the purposes of Internal and Qualification Verification.
- The decision should be communicated to the student, and any Credit Transfer awarded recorded on the appropriate Unit Register.

10.3 Recognition of Prior learning (RPL), is a process which enables a student to gain credit for all or specified outcomes of a unit(s) for their past achievements. The learning may have been achieved in different ways – through work experience; leisure pursuits; or through non-certificated training.

In order to maintain the standards and credibility of certification, it is important that the learning offered for RPL meets the criteria of:

- Validity
- Reliability
- Sufficiency
- Authenticity
- Currency

10.4 The Process:

- The student requesting credit for RPL should discuss his/her previous learning with the Curriculum Manager.
- The Curriculum Manager will outline the RPL process to the student, together with the evidence gathering mechanisms required, prior to a decision being made. Evidence may be gathered from a number of sources that may include:
 - Reflective account
 - Portfolio
 - Interview
 - Assessment on demand
 - Observation of practice
- The student should then produce the required evidence to prove the claim of prior learning for a specific unit(s) and present the evidence to the Curriculum Manager. This evidence must be presented in English or as appropriate, Gaelic.
- The evidence provided will be reviewed by a relevant subject specialist(s) to check that it:
 - Meets the outcomes and performance criteria of the unit(s); that RPL is being requested for.
 - Reflects the SCQF level and credit value attached to the Unit(s), where appropriate.
- The decision to give RPL is based on the submitted evidence. Where the submitted evidence only partially meets the Evidence Requirements of a Unit, standard assessment should be used to complete the outstanding requirements.
- The subject specialist(s) will recommend and document the credit that the student can gain, and inform the Curriculum Manager, who then will inform the student.
- The competence(s) gained by RPL should be recorded in the appropriate Unit Register(s).
- The Curriculum Manager will retain a copy of all documentation pertaining to the process for Internal and/or Qualification Verification purposes.

- Should a student wish to appeal the RPL decision, the Academic Appeal process should be followed.

Contact the Head of Quality Enhancement for further advice, if required.