

**POLICY STATEMENT**

**TITLE:**

**HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) STUDENT ASSESSMENT POLICY**

**INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW:**

Northampton College is committed to the implementation of an assessment framework that meets the assessment needs of all HE students and supports the specific standards of our HE Awarding Bodies i.e. Pearson, the University of Northampton and the University of Warwick. It also complies with all regulatory requirements for the retention of students' work and associated records that are subject to internal/external monitoring and audit.

Assessment is a fundamental tool in supporting student development and the maintenance of academic standards. It consists of two definitive aspects:

- Assessment activities and performance
- Staff judgements on student achievement of learning outcomes

There is a focus on the demonstration of learning and the extent to which it has been demonstrated and on furthering the student's learning via interim feedback, ultimately leading to the grading of student performance.

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

1. The College will ensure the equitable treatment of all students through the consistency and regularity of assessment practice, including keeping all auditable assessment, internal quality assurance/moderation, student registration and certification records in secure locations.
2. The College will ensure the requirements of contracting, funding, validating and examination bodies are met.
3. The College will conduct assessment practice in line with the requirements of the HE Awarding Organisations and the relevant Regulatory Body.

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## QUALITY STATEMENTS:

At the start of each programme of study students will be provided at induction with written details, either in a course handbook or via their VLE platform, regarding assessment of the learning programme, incorporating the following:

- An Assessment Calendar/Plan, outlining when students will be issued with an assessment and their formative and summative deadlines for all units/learning outcomes for the whole academic year.
- Details of actions following failure to meet deadlines
- Details of the process for extensions to submission dates, including mitigating circumstances and how these will be recorded
- Arrangements for the provision of a receipt for all work submitted for formal assessment
- Details of where work is to be submitted
- Details of procedures to deal with referred work
- Details of the Assessment Appeals Procedure

The exact nature of these details must be in line with the requirements of the relevant Awarding Organisations. All information must be issued to students at the start of the academic year.

All qualifications will adhere to the following requirements:

1. All students will have a clear statement of the assessment requirements for their programme.
2. The use of Recognition of Prior Learning will follow the relevant Awarding Organisation guidelines.
3. Assessment will be based on outcomes of learning and will be free from unnecessary barriers that might restrict access.
4. Assessment methods will be consistent with the requirements of specific qualifications/awards.
5. The wide range of assessment methods will relate to the differing needs of individual students and will be applied as appropriate. Students with declared additional support needs will be referred to *Additional Learning Support*
6. Assessment decisions on performance and progress will be communicated to students, feedback to include positive comment and areas for improvement
7. Student registration and certification claims will be accurately maintained and made available for scrutiny. In addition, individual Awarding Organisation requirements will be met.
8. Internal Verification/Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)/moderation practice and records will comply with College and Awarding Body procedures.
9. Records of standardisation/moderation meetings will be maintained and made available for scrutiny.

**QUALITY STATEMENTS  
(cont'd):**

10. Student progress tracking and internal verification/IQA moderation and student registration/certification records will be retained for a minimum of three years. In addition, individual Awarding Organisation requirements will be met.
11. Student evidence files or online portfolios will be retained intact until the next SV/EQA/EE sample/visit, for inspection purposes. Thereafter, students will be informed by letter to collect any portfolio evidence within three weeks. For all other students' work subject to external moderation, individual Awarding Body requirements will be strictly adhered to.
12. The College's assessment Appeals Procedure does not compromise an Awarding Organisation's procedure, where it applies, and is in addition to it.
13. Formal assessment will be returned to students, with appropriate feedback and required IV/IQA monitoring completed, within 15 working days. Any other work submitted by students for marking, e.g. classwork or homework, will be returned to students within 5 working days.

**LINKED POLICIES/  
PROCEDURES:**

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal Verification/IQA Policy/Procedures</li><li>• HE Misconduct policy</li><li>• HE Complaints Policy</li><li>• Mitigating Circumstances Policy</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• AO Assessment Codes of Practice(s)</li><li>• Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy</li></ul> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**MONITORING PROCEDURE:**

Periodic sampling by the Quality Office, Curriculum Managers, Assistant Principals (Curriculum), Quality Co-ordinators, Lead Internal Verifiers, IQAs

**DATE FOR REVIEW AND NEXT  
DIVERSITY IMPACT  
ASSESSMENT:**

June 2020

<b>RESPONSIBILITY:</b>
Overall (Directorate/Dept):
Implementation:

Deputy Principal
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<b>APPROVED BY EMT:</b> (Principal to sign)		(Signature)
	Principal	(Position)
		(Date)

OR

<b>ENDORSED BY EMT AND APPROVED BY CORPORATION:</b> (Principal to sign)		(Signature)
	Principal	(Position)
		(Date)

The appropriate Awarding Body policy for assessment will be adhered to:

Pearson - BTEC Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment 2018-19 Levels 4-7

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/Support/Quality%20Assurance/BTEC-Centre-Guide-to-Assessment-L4-7.pdf>

University of Northampton - Assessment and feedback policy

<https://www.northampton.ac.uk/more/governance-and-management/university-policies-procedures-and-regulations/>

University of Warwick - Assessment Code of Practice

[https://warwick.ac.uk/study/cll/courses/professionaldevelopment/itt/resources/staff-resources/part\\_2\\_tutor\\_handbook/itt\\_assessment\\_code\\_of\\_practice\\_17-18\\_final\\_version\\_oct\\_17.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/study/cll/courses/professionaldevelopment/itt/resources/staff-resources/part_2_tutor_handbook/itt_assessment_code_of_practice_17-18_final_version_oct_17.pdf)

## 1.0 ASSESSMENT PLANNING

1.1 Assessment should be planned to provide a range of diverse and innovative assessment methods that reliably measure student attainment of the intended learning outcomes and effectively promote and enhance learning as well as measuring engagement. Where applicable, appropriate qualification units should be selected relevant to the students' needs and local context.

1.2 Assessment tasks will be designed to demonstrate identifiable links between learning outcomes and units, teaching and learning activities and the assessment schedule. There should be an increasing level of challenge and complexity evident in assessed activities as the programme progresses. There should be clear evidence of demonstration of progression in levels of skill and understanding.

1.3 Assessment design will be inclusive and reflect the diversity of student needs and the demands of the discipline being assessed. It will also consider resource planning e.g. when to use specialist staff if appropriate, planning assignment deadlines across the programme to ensure students are not overwhelmed at key points and external resources.

1.4 Students will receive an assessment schedule(s) or plan(s) covering all modules/units

If units are integrated, an assessment plan will be able to establish that all targeted criteria can be achieved.

As a minimum requirement, the assessment plan must include:

- Names of all Assessors and Internal Verifiers
- Dates for assignment issue and submission
- Dates for formative and summative feedback
- Deadline for internal verification/moderation
- Resit dates (if applicable)

## 2.0 ASSIGNMENT BRIEFS

2.1 For each assignment a clear assignment brief must be produced using the appropriate Awarding Body templates. Key information required on an assignment brief

- Course, module and assessment title are clearly identified
- Dates for handing out, submission and feedback are clearly identified and appropriate for the assignment and its complexity
- Assessment weighting matches those in the handbook and any other paperwork
- Learning outcomes to be assessed are clearly defined
- Tasks set are unambiguous and suitable for purpose
- Assessment criteria are clearly defined and relevant for the task(s) set
- The assessment method is appropriate and tasks are achievable
- The products to be handed in for assessment are clearly identified
- Grading criteria are based on the grade descriptors, indicative characteristics and contextualised

2.2 Every assignment brief will be internally verified by a designated internal verifier (IV) **before** being handed out to students to ensure that it is fit for purpose and appropriately designed and structured. Internal verification will always be reported and recorded. If actions are identified by the IV, the assessor is required to complete all

actions and return it to the IV for sign off. This needs to be recorded to ensure a transparent audit trail.

### 3.0 PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment is a fundamental tool in supporting student development and the maintenance of academic standards. It should be conducted on a regular basis and demonstrate the principles of:

- Reliability
- Openness
- Fairness
- Maintenance of standards

3.1 A variety of forms of assessment will be used where possible and each form will use specific assessment criteria that must be clearly identified to students in their assignment briefs.

3.2 The process of Internal Verification and External Moderation will inform changes to the assessment procedure where necessary, and the annual evaluation and self-assessment processes will include reference to the effectiveness of assessment and identify areas for improvement.

3.3 Assessment will be timely, balanced and suited to each student's programme of study.

3.4 Changes to assessment strategy must be in keeping with the AO's protocols and formally approved by the appropriate authorities.

### 4.0 ASSESSMENT & GRADING

No assessment will take place until a student is both enrolled on their HE course and registered with the appropriate HE Awarding Body.

#### Formative Assessment

4.1 Formative assessment will involve both the assessor and the student in a conversation about their progress and takes place **prior** to summative assessment. The feedback will be prompt so it has meaning and context for the student and time must be given following feedback for actions to be completed.

4.2 The role of feedback in motivating students should not be underestimated. Feedback should outline what can be done to move the unit grade forward.

#### Summative Assessment

4.3 Summative assessment is the final assessment decision on an assignment task in relation to the assessment criteria of each unit. It is the **definitive assessment** and recording of the student's achievement.

4.4 Grading and assessment processes must follow the appropriate AO policy.

4.5 All assessment/grading records will be available for auditing purposes.

4.6 Assessors should 'mark' spelling and grammar, i.e. correct mistakes on student work and expect the student to either correct them (at the formative feedback stage) or note them (at the summative feedback stage). Mistakes in spelling and grammar should not influence assessment decisions unless:

- the mistakes are so problematic that they undermine the evidence of the student understanding or,
- specific assessment criteria require good communication, spelling and grammar and /or correct use of technical language.

If student work has consistently poor spelling, grammar or language it should not be accepted for marking but should be returned to the student to be corrected. The student must be given a deadline by which to correct the work. AO procedures for correction and grading of work must be adhered to.

## **5.0 SUBMISSION AND RETURN OF ASSESSED WORK**

5.1 Assignments must be submitted electronically, via Turnitin or as a paper copy if an electronic submission is not appropriate.

5.2 Confirmation of submission will be provided for the student. This will count as a receipt in any disputes about whether work was submitted or not.

5.3 Assessed assignments should be returned to students within 15 working days with full written individual feedback on the approved template for each AO.

5.4 The form of appropriate feedback to students should be determined by the task, the criteria and the subject of the assignment.

5.5 Final Major Project assignments and assignments submitted at the end of the final academic year will not normally be returned to students but may be collected by them within three months of the completion of the course, after which time they will not normally be retained by the institution.

5.6 Work set for students which is not part of formal or summative assessment e.g. homework or formative tasks and, therefore, is not part of an I.V. process, will be marked and returned to the student within 5 working days.

## **6.0 ASSESSMENT AND MODERATION OF ASSESSED WORK**

6.1 All assignments that contribute towards a final module grade must be subject to internal and external moderation processes. These include:

- First marking
- Second marking
- Double marking (when appropriate)
- Moderation/internal verification
- Standardisation
- External Examiner scrutiny

6.2 Where more than one tutor is involved with the teaching and marking of a piece of assessed work, the work can be assessed by both tutors at one time (for example in the case of a performance) or by both tutors separately. In both cases, a decision about the grade should be reached before the feedback sheet is written with the agreed grade and comments included on it.

6.3 A sample of assessed work will be internally moderated/verified by a designated academic colleague within the 15 working days and before the work is returned to students. If the AO does not prescribe a template then Northampton College templates should be used for this process.

6.4 All tutors engaged in marking and grading work will be required to attend regular standardisation meeting at



which samples of ungraded work from across a programme will be moderated and graded by tutors prior to discussion about the consistency of grading.

6.5 The processes of moderation/internal verification and standardisation are designed to ensure that markers are making consistent and accurate grading decisions, in accordance with published assessment criteria. These processes enable confidence in the reliability of remaining assessed work which has not been moderated. Therefore, all graded work within a total cohort is allowed, via inference, to be called moderated.

6.6 When the programme is being planned, internal verification of assessment decisions must also be planned. An internal verification schedule must be drawn up covering every unit, every assignment and every assessor, with proposed dates. Internal verification must be carried out in a timely way throughout the year. It should not be 'end-loaded' and saved until the end of the year.

6.7 In situations where assessment of practical work such as performance is taking place, every effort should be made to record the work in order that moderation can take place. Where this is not able to happen, there should be two markers present, marking separately for later moderation and agreement about the grade to be given before formal moderation/verification takes place.

6.8 If two markers fail to agree a grade, the work should be referred to the Curriculum Manager of the Course Team in which the Programme is delivered.

6.9. If any marker suspects that a piece of assessed work demonstrates any element of academic misconduct, it must be referred to the Head of H.E who will implement the HE Academic Misconduct Policy

## **7.0 EXTERNAL MODERATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

7.1 External Examiner scrutiny forms part of the College Quality Assurance process and HE programmes will follow the procedures identified in Awarding Body's assessment policies.

7.2 Staff at Northampton College will prepare samples of work for scrutiny by External Examiners or the Internal Quality team, as and when requested by them.

## **8.0 STUDENTS WITH DECLARED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS**

8.1 A student who declares a disability or additional support needs will be contacted and signposted to the relevant assessment process and the Disabled Student Allowance. All reasonable adjustments will be made to enable students to successfully achieve on their chosen course.

8.2 Alternative means of assessment may be made available in consultation with the appropriate AO for students who, for reasons of additional needs or disability, will be disadvantaged by the means of assessment in the assignment.

## **9.0 RECORDING OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

9.1 All assessment grades will be recorded by the Course Leader, in a secure location.

## **10.0 ACADEMIC APPEALS**

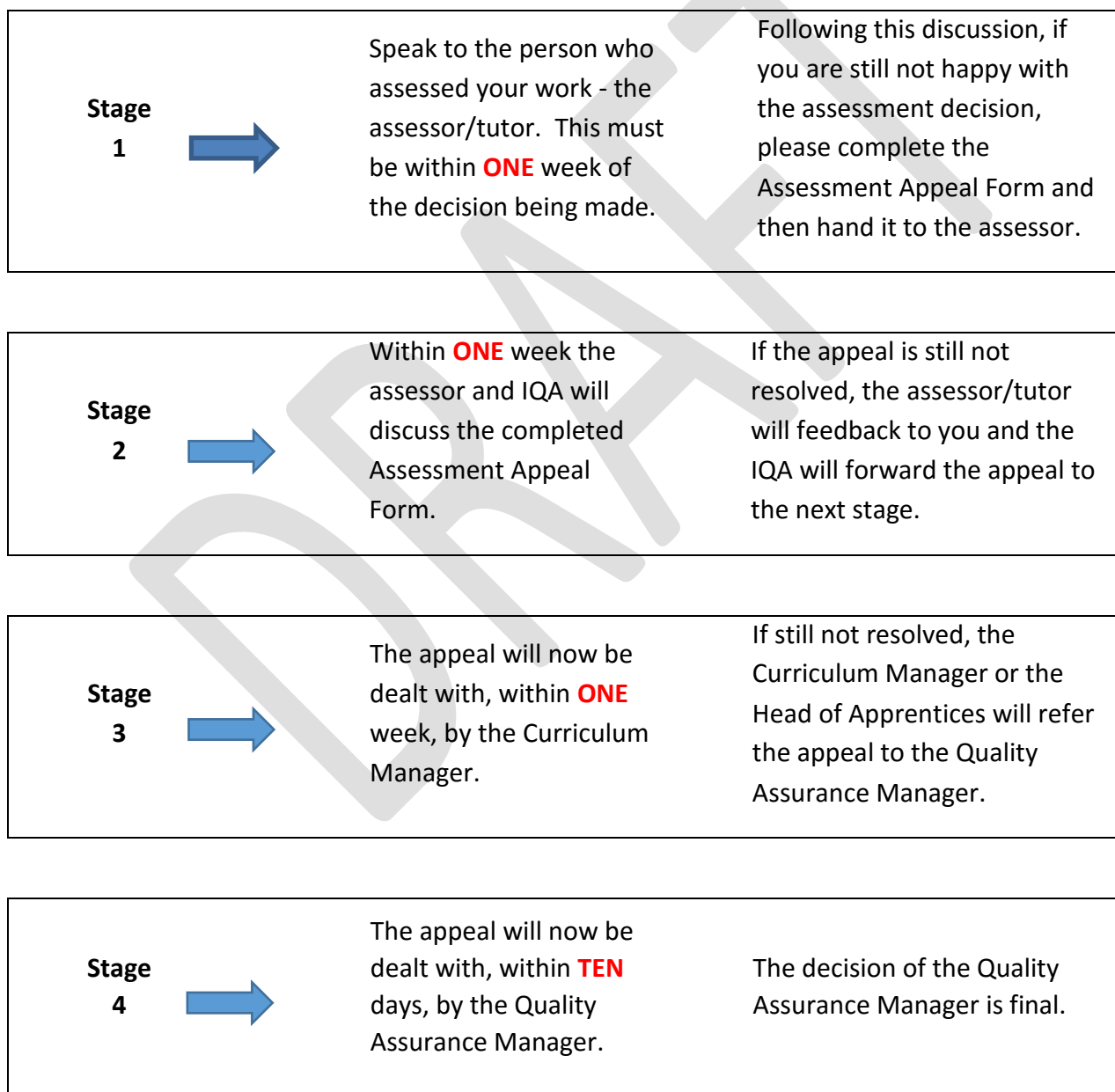
10.1 A student appeal is a request to review decisions made by the centre on their progression, assessment or awards and will be dealt with by the College in the first instance, followed by the appropriate AO's procedure, if this does not resolve the issue.

10.2 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) will consider appeals from students who remain dissatisfied at the end of the College's and AOs procedures.

10.3 The appropriate AO Appeals Procedure will be disseminated to students during induction

Procedure to be given to students:

**If you are not happy with a decision made about your assessed work:**



**Stage  
5**



If you are still not satisfied with the Quality Assurance Manager's final decision, you should use the Awarding Body appeals procedure for the qualification and, thereafter, the OIA.

#### Awarding Organisation Appeals Procedures

Pearson appeal procedure: [Enquiries and appeals about Pearson vocational qualifications policy](#)

University of Northampton appeals procedure: [Academic Appeal Policy & Procedure \(Taught Programmes\).doc](#) <http://tundrasearch.northampton.ac.uk/results/searchresult.aspx?Search=&Title=&Description=Stuiss+Ap&submit=Search>

University of Warwick appeals procedure:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/reg42academicappeals>

**At all stages a copy of the completed Assessment Appeals Form must be sent to the Quality Assurance Manager**

**Note:**

- Any work, subject to appeal, will be checked against national standards.
- The College Appeals Procedure does not compromise an Awarding Organisation's procedure, where it applies, and is in addition to it.
- If there is a change in assessment after an appeal, the College will inform the appropriate Awarding Organisation.

**ASSESSMENT APPEALS FORM**

Student name:		School:	
Qualification:		Awarding Organisation:	
Unit/Module title:			
Assignment/Assessment title:			

Stage 1	Assessor name:		Date:	
Reason for the appeal (please give as much information as possible)				
Resolved?	Y	N	Assessor signature:	

Stage 2	IQA name:		Date:	
Outcome of discussion (please give as much information as possible*)				

Resolved?	Y	N	IQA signature:

Stage 3	Curriculum Manager name:		Date:	
Outcome of appeals review (please give as much information as possible*):				
Resolved?	Y	N	Curriculum Manager signature:	

Stage 4	QA Manager:		Date:		Upheld?	Y	N
Outcome of appeals review (please give as much information as possible*):							
Recommendation(s) to Curriculum Manager:							
QA Manager signature:							

**\*If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet of paper and attach to this form.**

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