SWC

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Feedback on Assessment Policy

Policy Owner:	Head of Higher Education
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Location:	Gateway

CONTENTS

1. **Purpose**

1.1. This policy has been aligned to and meets the requirements of the UK Quality Code under Expectations for Standards and Expectations for Quality. For further information visit https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code or refer to the Quality Assurance Agency's advice and guidance on assessment via https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/advice-and-guidance-assessment.pdf?sfvrsn=ca29c181_4

1.2. This Policy offers guidance on:
- The principles of good assessment and feedback.
- Practical feedback methods for coursework and exams.
- The South West College Quality Assurance expectations regarding assessment feedback to students.
- JISC's revised Principles of Good Assessment and Feedback, available via https://beta.jisc.ac.uk/guides/principles-of-good-assessment-and-feedback

2. **Feedback**

2.1. The role of feedback in the learning process is to inform the student of where and how their learning and performance can be improved. Feedback on learning can come from fellow students, lecturers, staff supporting the learning process such as demonstrators, or the students themselves.

2.2. The provision of feedback on assessment is clearly a matter of importance to students and is consistently rated as one of the most important issues of concern in the National Student Survey.

2.3. The QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education's chapter on Assessment of Students and the recognition of Prior Learning, states that in meeting the needs of students for feedback on their progression and attainment, it can be helpful to consider:
- The desirability of providing feedback at an appropriate time in the learning process and as soon as possible after the student has completed the assessment

task. It is college policy that students should receive feedback on all assessment within 10 working days.

- Specifying the nature and extent of feedback that students can expect and whether this is to be accompanied by the return of assessed work. It is important to consider the particular needs of students studying part-time and/or remotely.

- The effective use of comments on returned work, including relating feedback to intended learning outcomes and assessment criteria, in order to help students identify areas for improvement as well as commending them for achievement.

- The role of oral feedback, either on a group or individual basis, as a means of supplementing or replacing written feedback.

- Providing guidance about the point in the module or programme where it is no longer appropriate for a member of staff to continue providing feedback to a student on his/her work. This is normally when a student is approaching a summative assessment, such as submission of a dissertation, or handing in a coursework assignment.

2.4. It is recognised however that feedback comes in a variety of forms dependent on the discipline, and applying a strict College policy may actually inhibit the process of informing the student of where and how their learning and performance can be improved, where this process is better undertaken by other means. Feedback may encompass formal feedback, informal feedback, written, oral, individual, group, lecturer-student, student-student.

3. **Feedback Statements**

3.1. This policy therefore seeks to specify how feedback on assessment should be provided at module, programme, and department level.

3.2. There are many innovative ways of incorporating feedback into the teaching process. This policy attempts to provide a framework within which such innovative methods can be operated.

3.3. For feedback on coursework, a statement on practice within the programme, including timescales where appropriate, should be published in the programme handbook or other appropriate forum. This may, where appropriate, refer to module specifications for full details.

3.4. A statement on the form that feedback will take within each module should also be published. This could include, for example, whether feedback will be oral or written, whether template reports will be used, and whether feedback will be provided on an individual basis or in the form of a report to all students giving a general report on an individual assessment exercise. This may be published in module specifications or in programme handbooks.

3.5. Feedback on coursework may include a provisional mark for the piece of work in question. It should however be noted that all marks are subject to ratification by the relevant Progress-Board and Board of Examiners, normally at their meetings in January and June of each year. Progress-Boards and Boards reserve the right to assign a mark other than the provisional mark where, in the academic judgment of the Progress-Board / Board, it is appropriate to do so, or where mark is amended as a result of College/University regulation or policy (for instance in the event of a subsequent finding that an assessment offence has been committed).

3.6. Feedback on coursework should normally be provided, in the format specified in the appropriate feedback statement, within 10 working days of the deadline for submission of the piece of work in question. It should be noted that, where a piece of work is submitted after the normal deadline then it may not be possible to provide feedback within 10 working days.

3.7. Verbal feedback on examination performance, beyond the confirmed mark may be provided to students and this has been agreed with the college's higher education awarding bodies.

4. The Principles of Providing Assessment Feedback to Students

4.1. JISC has developed Principles of Good Assessment and Feedback which aim to facilitate assessment practice. The principles are available with supporting explanations via: https://beta.jisc.ac.uk/guides/principles-of-good-assessment-and-feedback

4.2. The principles propose that assessment and feedback for learning should:
- Help learners understand what good looks like by engaging learners with the requirements and performance criteria for each task.
- Support the personalised needs of learners by being accessible, inclusive, and compassionate.
- Foster active learning by recognising that engagement with learning resources, peers and tutors can all offer opportunities for formative development.
- Develop autonomous learners by encouraging self-generated feedback, self-regulation, reflection, dialogue, and peer review.
- Manage staff and learner workload effectively by having the right assessment, at the right time, supported by efficient business processes.
- Foster a motivated learning community by involving students in decision-making and supporting staff to critique and develop their own practice.
- Promote learner employability by assessing authentic tasks and promoting ethical conduct.

4.3. In addition, the College promotes the REAP principles of assessment and feedback. It is expected that all Higher Education teams consider and implement these principles as part of their assessment planning and when designing and validating new curriculum as follows:
- **Clarify good performance**: Help to clarify, from the early stages of a programme, what good performance means (goals, criteria, standards).
- **Encourage time and effort on task**: Encourage 'time and effort' on challenging learning tasks, which recognise the importance of learning from the tasks, not just demonstrating learning through tasks.

- **Deliver timely high-quality feedback**: Deliver timely learner-related feedback information that helps students to self-correct and communicates clear, high, expectations and professionalism.

- **Provide opportunities to act on feedback**: Provide opportunities for students to act on feedback and close any gap between current and desired performance through complementary and integrated curriculum design and pedagogic practice.

- **Encourage positive motivational beliefs**: Ensure that all assessment has a beneficial, constructive, impact on student learning, encouraging positive motivational beliefs, confidence, and self-esteem.

- **Develop self-assessment and reflection**: Facilitate the development of self and peer-assessment skills and reflection on learning, to enable students to progressively take more responsibility for their own learning, and to inspire a lifelong capacity to learn.

- **Encourage interaction and dialogue**: Encourage interaction and dialogue around learning and professional practice (student-student, lecturer-student, and lecturer-lecturer) including supporting the development of student learning groups and peer learning communities.

5. <u>Practical Feedback Methods</u>

5.1. The most common forms we tend to use in Higher Education for giving feedback is written feedback on students' individual work, or verbal feedback either to individuals or groups of students. But workload pressure, innovative means of assessment, direct student demands and a range of other pressures, can lead to a need to use less traditional modes of feedback.

- Providing generic feedback in lectures or workshops: feedback is given on what most students seem to be struggling with, without reference to individual assessments.

- Self-assessment: allow students to provide an initial self-assessment at the end of their assessed work, according to a set grid or checklist of assessment criteria. This helps students in the fastest possible manner, to have an indication of the quality of their achievement.

- Student steered feedback: the student is asked at the end of their assessment to put forward a request for feedback on a particular part of their learning. This is one of the strongest means to make a student evaluate their own progress and allows the assessor to target a student's concerns most precisely.

- Feedback statement banks: collate a structured listing of carefully phrased feedback remarks you most often use for a particular assessment. You can then use it alongside your marking for each piece of assessed work. When marking, simply cross reference to the relevant feedback comment, or use a fixed coding system and give the student the marked-up feedback statement list along with the marked work. Ideally, your feedback statement listing also leaves space for individual feedback.

- Introducing feedback statement banks are a prime opportunity to improve the quality of feedback, by commenting on how improvements can be made regarding the issue for which the student is being marked down.

- Electronic feedback can combine the benefit of speedy feedback returns, with the advantages of using feedback statement banks, which list standard feedback given to common mistakes (tackling repeated feedback on, say, grammar problems or notational mistakes).

- Class marking: collate parts of actual student work, to let students themselves mark and provide feedback on an assessment they have in fact, all handed in. Question by question, the collated work could for instance consist of an example of a great answer, and an example of a problematic answer to the same question.

- Peer marking and feedback: provide clear assessment criteria and possibly model answers to students and ask students to mark each other's (anonymous) work and provide full written feedback. This not only helps the person receiving the feedback, but also moves the learning from the assessing student to a higher level. Be prepared to find that students mark each other much 'tougher' than you might ever consider, so do remind them of the need to mark the work, not the student and to be respectful and careful of each other.

- Individual verbal feedback: most suitable for the project type assessed work, such as work based learning progress feedback, or feedback on project work.

6.   Monitoring and Review

6.1. The College will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of this Policy.

6.2. The College will ensure that adequate resources are made available to promote this Policy effectively and is committed to reviewing this Policy every three years, in consultation with the recognised trade unions, statutory organisations such as the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and in line with models of good practice.

Signed Principal and Chief Executive: _____

Date: 15.04.24

Signed Chair of the Governing Body: _____

Date: 11/04/2024

Related Documentation

Title	Location	Owner
Higher Education Academic Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedure	Gateway	Head of Higher Education
Higher Education Assessment Policy	Gateway	Head of Higher Education
Higher Education Internal Moderation Policy	Gateway	Head of Higher Education
Plagiarism Policy	Gateway	Head of Higher Education
Submission of Coursework Policy	Gateway	Head of Higher Education
Equal Opportunities, Good Relations & Cultural Diversity Policy	Gateway	Head of People and Culture

Change Log

Location	Change from deletion/addition	Change to
Section 1	This policy has been aligned to and meets the requirements of the revised UK Quality Code under Expectations for Standards and Quality. For further information visit click on the link: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code	This policy has been aligned to and meets the requirements of the revised UK Quality Code under Expectations for Standards and Expectations for Quality. For further information visit click on the link: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code or refer to the Quality Assurance Agency's advice and guidance on assessment via https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/advice-and-guidance-assessment.pdf?sfvrsn=ca29c181_4
Section 1 d)	Ulster University principles of assessment and feedback as cited in the College Teaching and Learning Strategy.	JISC's revised Principles of Good Assessment and Feedback, available via: https://beta.jisc.ac.uk/guides/principles-of-good-assessment-and-feedback
Section 4	The principles in section 4 have been replaced with updated principles proposed by the UK Quality Code	The principles under section 4 have been replaced with updated principles under the UK Quality Code https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/advice-and-guidance-assessment.pdf?sfvrsn=ca29c181_4
Section 4 + Section 6	The principles in section 6 have been transferred to Section 4	The principles in section 6 have been moved to section 4

Communication

Communication requirements	
Who needs to know (for action)	Course Directors Students Senior Management Team Heads of Department Deputy Heads of Department Quality Manager HLA Manager Higher Education Development Coordinator
Who needs to be aware	All HE staff and students

Communication Plan

Action	By Whom	By When
Upload to Gateway	J Lucas	On approval
Circulation to all staff	L Curran / J Kelly	On approval

Document Development

Details of staff who were involved in the development of this policy:

Name	Role
L Curran	Head of Higher Education
J Kelly	Higher Education Development Coordinator

Details of staff, external groups or external organisations who were consulted in the development of this policy:

Name	Organisation	Date
N/A		

Approval Dates

Approved by	Date
Governing Body	10 April 2024

Document History

Issue no. under review	Date of review:	Persons involved in review	Changes made after review? Yes/No If Yes refer to change log	New Issue No.	If changes made was consultation required?	If changes made was Equality Screening required?
V2.0	February 2024	L Curran J Kelly	Yes	V3.0	No	Yes