Assessment and Examinations Policy

QAA Quality Code Chapter A3: Expectation A3.2
Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where: • *the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment* • *both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.*

Assessment is the process by which the College and the student can measure their current level of understanding against a set of predefined national indicators of competence. These Threshold Academic Standards represent the key level of competence to achieve an award.

QAA Quality Code Chapter B6: Indicator 1
Providers operate effective policies, regulations and processes which ensure that the academic standard for each award of credit or a qualification is rigorously set and maintained at the appropriate level, and that student performance is equitably judged against this standard.

The College seeks to ensure that students have appropriate opportunities to show they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the award of a qualification or credit. The College actively seeks to comply with all requirements of the relevant awarding organisations, through ensuring that there are effective mechanisms for:

- designing, approving, monitoring and reviewing the assessment strategies for programmes and awards
- implementing rigorous assessment policies and practices that ensure the standard for each award and award element is set and maintained at the appropriate level, and that student performance is properly judged against this
- evaluating how academic standards are maintained through assessment practice that also encourages effective learning.

In promoting an efficient and effective assessment regime that embodies the requirements of QAA Quality Code Chapter 6 (Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning) and promotes student achievement, the College seeks to:

- publicise and implement principles and procedures for, and processes of, assessment that are explicit, valid and reliable;
- encourage assessment practice that promotes effective learning;
- publicise and implement effective, clear and consistent policies for the membership, procedures, powers and accountability of assessment panels and boards of examiners;
- ensure that assessment is conducted with rigour, probity and fairness and with due regard for security;

- ensure that the amount and timing of assessment enables effective and appropriate measurement of students' achievement of intended learning outcomes;
- have transparent and fair mechanisms for marking and for moderating marks;
- publicise and implement clear rules and regulations for progressing from one stage of a programme to another and for qualifying for an award;
- ensure that everyone involved in the assessment of students is competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities.
- review and amend assessment regulations periodically, as appropriate, to assure themselves that the regulations remain fit for purpose.
- encourage students to adopt good academic conduct in respect of assessment and seek to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities.
- ensure that assessment decisions are recorded and documented accurately and systematically and that the decisions of relevant assessment panels and examination boards are communicated as quickly as possible.

QAA Quality Code Chapter B4: Indicator 5
To enable student development and achievement, higher education providers put in place policies, practices and systems that facilitate successful transitions and academic progression.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment will give feedback to the student on their learning and how it can be modified. It will inform students how well they have met/not met assessment criteria and how they can improve.

Where applicable and unless otherwise stated in the programme specification, assignments may have a formative deadline and a summative deadline. Students are required to attempt to meet both deadlines. The formative deadline allows an opportunity for tutors to feedback to the student on the assignment or part of the assignment that they have submitted. Feedback on formative assessment should be given to students within a reasonable period of time, but no longer than 15 working days, unless explained to the students.

QAA Quality Code Chapter B6: Indicators 2 and 6
Assessment policies, regulations and processes, including those for the recognition of prior learning, are explicit, transparent and accessible to all intended audiences.
Assessment and feedback practices are informed by reflection, consideration of professional practice, and subject-specific and educational scholarship.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is the student's demonstration that they have achieved the learning outcomes of the programme. Feedback on summative assessment will be available to students at a feedback event, tutorial or through a formal request for their examination paper. See Personal Information Policy.

The summative deadline or the date of an examination is considered a final submission. If an assignment or examination fails to meet the pass criteria at the summative deadline, then the student has one more attempt to re-submit a new assignment or re-sit a new examination to meet the pass criteria for the assignment, unless otherwise stated in the programme specification. The resubmission assignment will only assess pass criteria, so the maximum mark achievable will be a pass.

All students will be treated fairly with regard to assessment. See the college's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Internal and External Verification

All assessment tasks, whether assignment, exam paper or otherwise, will be internally verified by a competent member of academic staff to ensure that it meets the assessment criteria of the awarding body. If specified in the programme specification, or is a requirement of the awarding body, the College will also arrange for external verification as well. All such verification shall take place before the students are set the assessment task.

Students are to submit all coursework by the deadlines set by their tutors and attend all exams on the given dates and times. If students are unable to meet a deadline or exam time due to no fault of their own, they must submit a request for the extenuating circumstances to be considered before the deadline itself, along with any documentary proof. Requests submitted after the deadline cannot be considered, so the student will be deemed to have failed in that aspect of the course's assessment.

QAA Quality Code Chapter B6: Indicators 4 and 13
Providers assure themselves that everyone involved in the assessment of student work, including prior learning, and associated assessment processes is competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities.   *Processes for marking assessments and for moderating marks are clearly articulated and consistently operated by those involved in the assessment process.*

To ensure fairness in summative assessment, different modes of study should offer the same assessment for the same unit or module. Furthermore, prior to the assessment students should be made aware of the assessment criteria according to which they will be assessed. Students should be kept informed in a timely manner about the processes and outcomes of their assessment.

To ensure quality of assessment within the College a number of quality assurance policies have been adopted, which will apply to all assessments, unless stated otherwise in a programme specification to meet the requirements of a specific awarding body.

Security: Assessment details will be stored and communicated securely and kept confidential until the time when the assessment is due to start. No student or member of staff who is not directly responsible for an aspect of the assessment will have access to the assessment details. Any suspected breaches of security must be reported immediately to the College Examinations Officer.

Confidentiality: Staff of the College will keep students' assessment outcomes confidential and will not share such information with other than the student who undertook the assessment. Staff may, however, share anonymised assessment data with all students.

Integrity: Students will be made well aware of what plagiarism is, how to avoid it, and the consequences of plagiarising. Assessments will be checked for signs of plagiarism. Students found guilty of plagiarism will be warned initially, and allowed one more attempt to re-submit a new assignment to meet the pass criteria for the assignment, unless otherwise stated in the programme specification. The resubmission assignment will only assess pass criteria, so the maximum mark achievable will be a pass.

QAA Quality Code Chapter B5: Indicator 6
Higher education providers ensure all students have opportunities to develop skills that enable their academic, personal and professional progression.

Group Assessment

"Working in groups is an accepted part of learning within higher education. There are widely recognised benefits of collaborative group work in terms of learning and skills development. When groups work well, students can produce quality learning outcomes and develop specific team work skills, as well as generic skills valued by employers." (Pearson 2014)

The team-working transferable skills should not be the basis of assessment, rather it is a benefit to be derived from the experience of group work, or it is a necessity to completing a complex task. The assessment of group work should recognise the level of contribution of individuals within the group, so the assessment is actually based upon individual work. The assessment criteria, therefore, should be linked to individual contribution and the method to determine this should be known to the students undertaking the group-work assignment. A group grade should not be assigned to all members of the group.

QAA Quality Code Chapter B5: Indicator 1
Providers, in partnership with their student body, define and promote the range of opportunities for any student to engage in educational enhancement and quality assurance.

Authentication

Students must authenticate the evidence that they provide for assessment. They do this by stating that it is their own work when they submit it.

Each student will have some of their assessed work verified by an appointed verifier. They may be asked to discuss their work in person, on the phone, using a live internet video call, or via email. The purpose of the discussion is to verify the authenticity of the work. Any assessment suspected of unfair practice will trigger the Unfair Practice Procedure.

QAA Quality Code Chapter B6: Indicator 7
Students are provided with opportunities to develop an understanding of, and the necessary skills to demonstrate, good academic practice

Planning

Each time a module or unit is conducted according to a written assessment plan. Such a plan will contain the following information:

- date when assignment was written or updated;
- date when assignment was/is to be verified and by whom;
- date when assignment will be handed out to students;
- draft submission date and final submission date;
- names of people who will be assessing the student submission;
- names of people who will be verifying the student submission;
- resubmission opportunities permitted.

At the beginning of each module or unit, the students will receive an induction into the learning objectives and assessment criteria, the level of study and what is expected.

QAA Quality Code Chapter B3: Indicator 2
Learning and teaching activities and associated resources provide every student with an equal and effective opportunity to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Verification

All assignment and exam papers will be internally verified by an appointed member of staff who has the relevant qualifications for that unit or module, according to the awarding body's criteria. Internal verification of assignment and exam papers is to ensure that the:

- assessment criteria are correct for the unit or module's learning outcomes,
- wording of questions and tasks is appropriate for the assessment criteria,
- correct level of work is being assessed.

External verifiers may verify assignment and exam papers according to programme specification and awarding body rules.

No assignment or exam paper will be shown to students until all internal and external verification has ended.

Samples of student assessments will be internally verified by an appointed member of staff who has the relevant qualifications for that unit or module, according to the awarding body's criteria. The number and spread of assessments internally verified will be according to the following criteria. Every:

- unit or module must have samples verified each time it is run;
- student must have samples verified during their time at the College;
- assessor must have samples verified for every cohort of student's that they assess;
- grade band must have samples verified, whether failing, passing, merit or distinction grades;

- unit or module will submit 20% of its assessments for verification, with a minimum of ten.

All dissertations must be verified.

Internal verification of assessments will aim to ensure that assessors are marking fairly and consistently according to the assessment criteria, and that no student is being disadvantaged or given unfair advantage during assessment.

Samples of work will be made available to external verifiers and examiners according to programme specification and awarding body rules.

Students will be informed of the mark or grade of summative assessment after all necessary internal and external verification has ended, or before that if it is made explicitly clear that such grades are provisional pending verification. Where work is to be referred back to the student for resubmission or re-sitting of exams, then the students will be informed within one week of the decision being taken and verification having taken place if required.

QAA Quality Code Chapter B6: Indicators 8 and 17
The volume, timing and nature of assessment enable students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes   *The decisions of examination boards and assessment panels are recorded accurately, and communicated to students promptly and in accordance with stated timescales.*

When the unit or module is completed, then the verifiers shall produce a report on the analysis and quality of student submissions. This report shall be considered at the next Academic Committee meeting.

Students with special needs with regard to formative and summative assessment should inform their tutor at the earliest opportunity. The College will endeavour to make appropriate arrangements for such students.

Extenuating Circumstances

The College has established a Mitigating Circumstances Committee to consider any conditions that might have impacted upon a student's performance in any assessment. This committee will consist of the Programme Director, the Student Welfare Officer, and two nominated members of the academic staff. The Mitigating Circumstances Committee will meet before each Examination Board and will make recommendations to the Board as appropriate regarding any mitigating circumstances reported to it.

If a student believes that he/she has acceptable mitigating circumstances that may have an impact on the student's performance in any assignment or examination then the student must submit details of the circumstances to the Programme Director at the earliest possible opportunity so that the student's case can be considered by the Mitigating Circumstances Committee.

Please also read the Appeals and Complaints Policy.

QAA Quality Code Chapter B6: Indicator 10
Through inclusive design wherever possible, and through individual reasonable adjustments wherever required, assessment tasks provide every student with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievement.

Conflicts of Interest

All staff involved in assessing student's work should declare any potential conflict of interest at the earliest opportunity, such as a student being related to or a partner of the assessor, invigilator or verifier. Other examples include being related to, a spouse or partner of a member of staff at the awarding body or an external examiner.

The Examinations Officer should record such potential conflicts of interest to be presented to the awarding body upon request. Furthermore, the Examinations Officer should take appropriate action to lessen the impact of the potential conflict of interest, also recorded for presentation upon request.

Examination Policy and Practice

The College nominates an Examinations Officer who is responsible for ensuring the quality of all examinations and assessments within the College.

The London College of Business (LCB) is an approved Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) centre for conducting Edexcel GCSE and GCE examinations. For all examinations, unless stated otherwise in a programme specification to meet the requirements of a specific awarding body, the College commits to adhere to the regulations of the JCQ as detailed in the General Regulations for Approved Centres 2013-2014 document available here (http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations).

All persons involved with the conduct of examinations should have access to and read the 'ICE' – Instructions for Conducting Examinations available on the JCQ website.

QAA Quality Code Chapter B6: Indicator 9
Feedback on assessment is timely, constructive and developmental.

For students with special access arrangements require prior approval from the JCQ. Please refer to the JCQ website (http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration) which contains deadlines for applications for approval of special access arrangements. This Data Protection Notice should be read and signed by students making a special access arrangements approval application (http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/aao-access-arrangements-online/data-protection-notice).

The Examinations Officer

The Examinations Officer will:

- Appoint and train invigilators for examinations.
- Ensure that a register of attendance for all examination candidates is kept.
- Ensure that all examination papers are kept securely until the time of the examination.

- Ensure that JCQ and/or awarding body rules are adhered to with regard to all examinations.
- Ensure that no unauthorised equipment or papers enter the examination room during examinations.
- Ensure that no unauthorised persons are allowed entry to the examination rooms during examinations.
- Ensure that necessary equipment is made available to candidates.
- Ensure that all examination papers, student scripts or any other papers are collected from the examination room and stored securely until transported to the relevant location for marking.
- Ensure that candidates may not leave the examination room until at least 45 minutes after the start of the examination and at least 15 minutes before the end of the examination.
- Ensure that candidates suspected of engaging in unfair practice shall be informed that the suspicion will be reported to the Examinations Officer. Evidence of such unfair practice should be confiscated. The candidate will be allowed to continue with the examination.
- Ensure that all invigilators report on the happenings of the examination.

QAA Quality Code Chapter B6: Indicator 11
Assessment is carried out securely.

Examination candidates who are absent for the examination will be treated as having failed the assessment, unless genuine extenuating circumstances are submitted to the College.

QAA Quality Code Chapter B6: Indicator 14
Providers operate processes for preventing, identifying, investigating and responding to unacceptable academic practice.

Students should have access to and read the relevant Information for Candidates documents available here on the JCQ website (http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents).

The JCQ Appeals Booklet (http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/appeals) contains details of how to appeal against decisions related to GCSE and GCE examinations.

This link will take you to the JCQ website page with posters that the college will display during examinations (http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/exam-room-posters).

This link will take you to a Crown Publications checklist for preparing examination rooms (http://www.lcbuk.org/pdf/Exam_Room_Checklist.pdf).

References

Pearson 2014 BTEC Centre Guide to Managing Quality, available at (http://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/btec-brand/deliver-btec/BTEC_Centre_Guide_to_Managing_Quality.pdf).

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