Assessment Policy – Higher Education

1. Reason for the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear approach to assessment for all students studying at Higher Education programmes at Weymouth College.

2. Policy Objectives

Principles of Assessment

2.1. Assessment provides a measure of student performance but also provides students with exposure to a range of assessment methods, informs student development through feedback and acts as a tool to monitor student progress.

2.2. The purpose of assessment is to enable students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the learning outcomes of the programme of study and achieved the standard required for the award they seek. The assessment requirements of each programme must therefore relate to its learning outcomes, reflect the achievement of the individual student in fulfilling programme learning outcomes, and at the same time relate that achievement to a consistent national standard of awards.

2.3. During a normal course of study students will undergo different types of assessment including:

- Formative: enabling students to obtain feedback on progress and pointing out areas and strategies for improvement.

- Summative: providing clear statement about performance in relation to stated objectives.

2.4. Summative assessment counts towards the final element/module/unit mark and must therefore be marked, independently marked and moderated in accordance with the partner university or awarding body requirements.

2.5. Summative assessment must always be carried out by competent and impartial examiners, using methods which enable them to assess students fairly and provide timely and effective feedback on their performance.

2.6. Summative assessment components must be adhered to by staff and clearly communicated to students. The formally defined elements of assessment, their weightings and size for each module/unit are outlined in course documentation and must be adhered to.

2.8 In addition to summative assessment, formative assessment can be set to promote effective learning. Formative assessment provides students with feedback on their performance before summative assessment takes place. It does not count towards the final element/module/unit mark and may not always be marked. Formative assessments do not need to be independently marked or moderated.

2.9 The process for administering assignments and examinations must be secure and ensure that all students are treated fairly.

3 Assessment Design and Planning

3.1 Students should be provided with a variety of assessment methods,

3.2 The design of assessments should be informed by good pedagogic practice and take into account feedback received from peers, students and external examiners. Assessment tasks must be changed sufficiently from year to year to account for students that may be repeating modules/units.

3.3 Programme induction should include information on assessment practices and understanding marking criteria.

3.4 Coursework assignments should ideally be designed at the beginning of the year. Module/Unit guides should give precise details of each assignment, including length/workload equivalence, format, style, weighting, submission deadline, resources available, ILOs tested, clear

Policy Title:	Assessment Policy - HE	Policy Owner:	Assistant Principal, Higher Education
		Policy Author	HE Registrar
Status:	FINAL	Approval Date:	February 2018
EIA Required Yes or No due regard given Yes - EIA Date:	Due regard given	Review Date:	February 2020

assessment criteria and the referencing protocol in line with the approved Module/Unit Specification.

3.5 Draft examination papers need to be prepared well in advance of the examination and will be sent to the External Examiner for comment/final approval. The specific regulations for timescales for these processes will be followed in accordance with the University of Plymouth guidelines.

3.6 When designing assessments, staff will consider the deadline and schedules for assessments across the level.

3.7 Assignment deadlines and return dates will be established at the start of the academic year in consultation with the Programme Leader and Programme Team, who are required to produce a balanced assignment schedule for issue to students via Moodle and all relevant academic staff. It is essential that marking schedules, and therefore assignment deadlines, are carefully planned so as to avoid excessive 'bunching' for students and staff.

3.8 Module/Unit Tutors will not change the deadlines published in the assignment schedule without the agreement of the Programme Leader.

3.9 Updated and approved copies of assignment schedules will be published to the students via Moodle.

4. Assessment Feedback and Return of Assessed Work

Principles:

4.1 Students on University of Plymouth programmes have the opportunity to use originality checking software (Turnitin) prior to submitting their work..

4.2 Students should have access to face-to-face feedback for at least the first piece of assessment each academic year.

4.2 Students should be supported to review their own work and that of fellow students . Peer review and self reflection is an important skill for future employment as well as deepening their own learning.

4.3 Where possible students work should be marked anonymously. Anonymous marking provides reassurance for students and staff against the perception of discrimination. Where anonymous marking is not possible there should be stringent measures to blind double mark.

4.4 Students should be given the opportunity to submit their assessments electronically providing a clear and secure system has been established to ensure that work is not lost and confidentiality is retained.

4.5 Receiving feedback should not be exclusive to certain forms of assessment. Students should receive a mark and feedback for every piece of work submitted as a formal summative assignment and for all formal summative examinations (as specified in the Module/Unit Specification).

4.6 Feedback must be clear and detailed to enable the student to comprehend their mark and to learn from the comments provided. Written feedback must be legible and oral feedback should be clear and understandable and conducted in an appropriate manner/setting etc. The format for providing feedback (e.g. written, verbal, audio, video or electronic) should be appropriate to the assessment.

4.7 Feedback to students should be constructive and include the assessed mark. Feedback should:

- be appropriately critical, highlighting areas of strength and areas for development;
- focus on how an improved mark could have been achieved and should help students to improve on their performance in subsequent assessments;
- explain why the students gained the mark awarded;
- be directly related to the intended learning outcomes and relevant generic assessment criteria as well as more specifically to the marking criteria as set for the assignment and detailed within the assignment brief;
- refer students to additional/further support when and where appropriate.

Feedback:

4.8 Feedback on all written assignments will be provided to students within 20 working days from the submission date.

4.9 Feedback should be given on an appropriate feedback form as outlined by the University of Plymouth or Pearson.

4.10 Feedback on summative assessments should normally be given to students on an individual basis, but may be supported by more generic feedback for the whole group.

Policy Title:	Assessment Policy - HE	Policy Owner:	Assistant Principal, Higher Education
		Policy Author	HE Registrar
Status:	FINAL	Approval Date:	February 2018
EIA Required Yes or No due regard given	Due regard given	Review Date:	February 2020
Yes - EIA Date:			

4.11 Written feedback must be legible and normally word processed but may be hand-written on the feedback template, and oral feedback should be clear and understandable and conducted in an appropriate manner/setting etc.

4.12 The agreed mark awarded for each assessment should be provided to students as part of any summative assessment feedback. Students should be made aware that no mark, for coursework or examination, is final until ratified by the appropriate Assessment Boards or visit of External Examiner.

Penalties for late submission of work:

- **University of Plymouth Courses:**

4.13 Summatively assessed work submitted after the published deadline, will be penalised in accordance with the University of Plymouth Assessment Regulations *(available on Moodle or https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/regulations).* However staff are advised to mark late submissions and provide feedback to students, including the mark they would have received had they submitted their work on time.

- **Pearson HND/C Courses:**

4.14 Summatively assessed work submitted after the deadline will be capped at a Pass

Resubmission of Work (Pearson HND/C Only):

4.15 A student may request or be offered a resubmission (see guidance below).

QCF Frameworks	RQF Frameworks
One opportunity for resubmission will be permitted (new assignment)	One resubmission is allowed if a student does not achieve a Pass on first submission for the overall unit (same assignment)
Resubmissions will not be capped at a Pass, unless a student who submitted work late is offered a resubmission when this will be capped at a Pass.	The reassessment opportunity will be capped at Pass for that unit.
A student may request or be offered a resubmission if they have not met all of the criteria (Pass, Merit or Distinction) available in an assignment.	A student will not be entitled to be reassessed in any component for which a Pass or higher has already been awarded.

4.17 Arrangements for resubmitting assessments must be made in such a way that it does not adversely affect other assessments and does not give the student an unfair advantage.

4.18 Resubmissions can be authorised by the Programme Leader or the Assessment Board.

4.19 A list of all resubmissions authorised by the Programme Leader must be submitted to the Assessment Board and made available to the External Examiner (EE) for review and discussion to ensure that the Assessment Board and EE have oversight of all authorised resubmissions.

4.20 After the Assessment Board a student studying on a QCF Framework is further allowed on request to resubmit the coursework for up to two units which have been completed in order to gain a higher grade (see below).

Pearson Guidance on awarding of higher grades:

QCF Frameworks	RQF Frameworks
Generic indicative characteristics for Merit/Distinction grade descriptors are suggested but not exhaustive therefore centres can develop their own descriptors.	Merit and Distinction criteria are already contextualised in the specification grading criteria.
They do not need to be applied to all assignments; it is recommended that learners have at least one opportunity prior to the Assessment Board per unit to achieve higher grades and one opportunity after the Board.	They are a qualitative extension of the assessment criteria for Pass.

Different descriptors can be used on different assignments within the same unit. Not ALL characteristics need to be included.	Merit and Distinction cannot be awarded if Pass has not been achieved.

Repeated Units

- **University of Plymouth**

Please refer to University of Plymouth Assessment Regulations *(available on Moodle or https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/regulations).*

- **Pearson HND/C – Repeated Units** *(if a student does not achieve a Pass on first or resubmission)*

QCF Frameworks	RQF Frameworks
A unit can be repeated if the programme team and assessment board decide it is an appropriate course of action.	A unit can be repeated if the assessment board decide it is an appropriate course of action.
The unit will be studied again.	The unit will be studied again with full attendance.
The unit will be capped at a Pass grade	The unit will be capped at a Pass grade
Units can only be repeated once.	Units can only be repeated once.

5. Mitigating/Extenuating Circumstances

5.1 Extensions, without penalty, may be allowed in cases of illness or genuine mitigating personal circumstances provided that the relevant 'mitigating/*extenuating circumstances form' accompanied by evidential paperwork where necessary* has been completed prior to the assessment deadline.

6. Additional Learning Support

6.1 Students who have an identified supporting need and who are in receipt of a Disability Student Allowance may be entitled to adjustments to the examination process. Details of DSA reports outlining specific needs are held by HE Registrar.

6.2 In addition to this staff should also consider the Guidelines from their relevant awarding body regarding considerations for the marking the work of a deaf or hearing impaired student, a student with dyslexia or any other student with specific learning differences (SpLDs) whose disability affects language processing and written academic English.

7. Academic Offences

7.1 Suspicion of an academic offence (for example, plagiarism or cheating), whether in a coursework assignment or an examination, must be investigated as soon as identified in accordance with the relevant awarding body or the Weymouth College Plagiarism policy. Apart from any initial discussions between the student and the Programme Leader/HE Registrar informing them that their work is still under consideration by internal markers (an issue has been identified) all direct contact with a student under suspicion of an academic offence should be formal and documented.

7.2 When designing assessments, staff should endeavour to use strategies which minimise opportunities for plagiarism. These could include:
- changing the format and nature of the assessment e.g. poster, letter;
- linking the brief to specific primary data, students' personal experiences, current news items/themes in the discipline;
- using assignments that integrate learning activities e.g. class room tasks, field work, research;
- avoiding where possible assignments with only one solution;
- asking for drafts of work to be kept by the student and made available if required;
- providing opportunities to share work in progress.

Policy Title:	Assessment Policy - HE	Policy Owner:	Assistant Principal, Higher Education
		Policy Author	HE Registrar
Status:	FINAL	Approval Date:	February 2018
EIA Required Yes or No due regard given	Due regard given	Review Date:	February 2020
Yes - EIA Date:			

7.3   Students must be advised about the consequences of plagiarising[i] and self-plagiarising[ii] on their assessment brief and be supported to develop appropriate skills to avoid this.

7.   Publication of End of Year Results

8.1   Staff should not provide or discuss any information directly or indirectly to any candidate regarding overall performance until after the results have been formally ratified and published after the assessment boards. Results must not be communicated to students by telephone. Students will be sent their results in the post within the agreed deadlines outlined in the assessment boards. It is not permitted to discuss results with anyone other than the candidate unless they have given their express permission.

8.   Definitions

None

9.   Policy Owner

Assistant Principal, Performance & Delivery

10.   Who Will Need To Know About This Policy

- All HE staff including those who are franchised to undertake work for the College
- All HE students
- Employers with whom we work and who are in contact with the College
- External partners and stakeholders and those engaged in projects with the College

11.   History

This policy was adopted and approved:

Signed: *Nigel Evans*   Date: *31 January 2018*

Nigel Evans, Principal

---

[1] Plagiarism is defined as the representation of another person's work as one's own or the use of another person's work without acknowledgement

[2] Self-plagiarism primarily occurs when a student submits a piece of work to fulfil the assessment requirement for a particular unit and all or part of the content has been previously submitted by that student for formal assessment on the same/a different unit.

Policy Title:	Assessment Policy - HE	Policy Owner:	Assistant Principal, Higher Education	5
		Policy Author	HE Registrar	
Status:	FINAL	Approval Date:	February 2018	
EIA Required Yes or No due regard given	Due regard given	Review Date:	February 2020	
Yes - EIA Date:				