

Assessment Policy & Procedures

Policy

1. Introduction

Assessment is a vital part of the learning and teaching process. This policy and associated procedures provide a framework to ensure the highest quality in assessment that meets the needs of all learners, in all settings and includes work based assessments.

The policy recognises the importance of giving constructive feedback that is appropriate, timely, adequate and shared with the learner, enabling them to be fully involved in their learning. The policy outlines the assessment entitlement, identifies and offers guidelines for assessment malpractice and identifies roles and responsibilities of suitably qualified staff in the process of implementing assessment. It also outlines the procedure for appeals against internal assessment of work for external qualifications.

2. Learner entitlement – based on the Learning Journey

Screening – to include Advice & Guidance and a skills check to identify literacy, language or numeracy skills



Initial Assessment – identifies the learner’s level, allowing selection of the right learning programme



Diagnostic Assessment – leads to a detailed personal profile, providing the basis for an Individual Learning Plan (ILP)



Formative Assessment – takes place regularly to review progress against the learning plan and objectives. This would include assurance that there are proportionate processes in place which measure the progress and achievement of learners on non-accredited learning programmes (i.e. RARPA)



Summative Assessment – takes place at the end of each learning episode, giving feedback on learning achievements; may be a qualification, test, a completed ILP

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It is essential that assessment is:

- fair and ensures parity of treatment and also ensures comparable assessment demands in subjects of equal level and credit;
- reliable, ensuring that assessment decisions are made consistently throughout the College and conducted by staff who have the appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills, and are trained in the activity. Where a set of work is divided between staff, internal moderation and standardisation will ensure consistency;
- valid, by ensuring that each assessment relates to the intended outcomes of the subject(s) studied;
- transparent, in that it is clear to students, staff and external auditors the criteria and methods by which students' work is being judged;
- recognises and respects equality and diversity;
- carried out in accordance with awarding body requirements and the instructions issued by the JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) in the case of controlled assessments
- based on identified training needs and evidence sources (including Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) /Accreditation of Prior Achievement) and structured presentation of evidence and achievement of the learning outcome recorded on assessment records.

RACC is committed to ensuring that assessment evidence provided by candidates is produced and authenticated according to the requirements of the relevant specifications for each subject

The RACC Appeals Procedure (appeals against Internal Assessment of Work for External Qualifications) must be followed in cases where a learner disagrees with the outcome of an assessment.

Examination re-sits: Learners who have followed a course and taken the exam at the College may be eligible to apply to re-sit the exam the following year if and when the exam is arranged for the following year's cohort. Details of the application process and forms for a re-sit are available from the Exams Officer. The learner will be considered for one re-sit only in most cases except for GCSEs and AAT exams where different procedures will apply.

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3. Assessment Malpractice

Malpractice consists of those acts which undermine the integrity and validity of assessment, and the certification of qualifications.

The term 'malpractice' is intended to encompass other similar terms such as 'non-compliance', 'maladministration' and 'professional misconduct'.

In cases of malpractice by centre staff, RACC will impose the Staff Disciplinary procedures. Learner malpractice will be dealt through the RACC Student disciplinary procedures. Where assessment malpractice is proven awarding bodies may also impose penalties or sanctions.

3.1 Centre Staff Malpractice

The following are examples of malpractice by College staff. Other instances of malpractice may be considered by the College or relevant awarding body.

- Failing to keep assessment papers secure prior to assessment
- Obtaining unauthorised access to assessment material prior to assessment
- Failure to keep learner, computer or other files secure
- Assisting or prompting learners with the production of answers
- Failure to abide by the conditions of supervision designed to ensure the security of assessment
- Fraudulent certificate claims (claiming a certificate prior to the learner completing all the requirements of assessment)
- Falsifying records/certificates (by alteration, substitution or by fraud)
- Misusing the conditions for special learner requirements
- Allowing evidence, which is known not to be the learner's own work, to be included in a learner's assignment/task/portfolio/coursework

3.2 Learner Malpractice

The following are examples of malpractice by learners. Other instances of malpractice may be considered by the College or relevant awarding body.

- **Plagiarism** by copying and passing off, as the learner's own, the whole or part(s) of another person's work, including artwork, images, words, computer generated work (including Internet sources), thoughts, inventions and/or discoveries whether published or not, with or without the originator's permission and without appropriately acknowledging the source
- **Collusion** by working collaboratively with other learners, or other third party, to produce work that is submitted as individual learner work. Learners should not be

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discouraged from teamwork, as this is an essential key skill for many sectors and subject areas, but the use of minutes, allocating tasks, agreeing outcomes, etc are an essential part of team work and this must be made clear to the learners

- **Impersonation** by pretending to be someone else in order to produce the work for another or arranging for another to take one's place in an assessment/examination/test
- **Fabrication** of results and/or evidence
- **Failing** to abide by the instructions or advice of an assessor, a supervisor, an invigilator, or awarding body conditions in relation to the assessment/examination/test rules, regulations and security
- **Misuse** of assessment/examination material
- **Introduction and/or use** of unauthorised material contrary to the requirements of supervised assessment/examination/test conditions, for example: smart devices, notes, study guides, personal organisers, calculators, dictionaries (when prohibited), personal stereos, mobile phones or other similar electronic devices
- **Obtaining**, receiving, exchanging or passing on information which could be assessment/examination/test related (or the attempt to) by means of talking or written papers/notes during supervised assessment/examination/test conditions
- **Behaving** in such a way as to undermine the integrity of the assessment/examination/test
- **The alteration** of any results document, including certificates

Assessment Procedures

It is essential that assessment is carried out in accordance with Awarding Body requirements. Refer to documentation under the relevant Awarding Organisations (eg, OCN London for Access to HE, Edexcel for BTECs) for information on conducting Formative and Summative assessments.

1.1 Screening at entry

Learners on Government funded provision will have initial assessment to check their level of English and mathematics at entry where applicable to certain qualifications.

This takes the form of a skills check and identification of a learner's English and mathematics skills and whether there should be referral for a more detailed assessment.

- **Purpose** – informs signposting and referral to appropriate learning, training or employment opportunities, and ensures that the learner has the skills to match what they want to do
- **Undertaken by** – any full time learners, substantial part-time learners, 16-18 year olds and workplace learners (as part of the employees individual Training Needs Analysis) where applicable to the requirements of that qualification and its awarding body.

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- **Responsibility** – Carried out by the Learning Resource Centre staff under the direction of the Curriculum Leader. Screening can include the use of an ‘off the shelf’ paper or computer based assessment tool.

1.2 Initial Assessment

Holistic process to identify the learner’s achievements, skills, interests, previous learning experiences, goals and learning needs.

- **Purpose** – to ensure the learner is on the right learning programme
- **Undertaken by** – all full-time and part-time learners
- **Responsibility** – the tutor / assessor in the classroom or workplace

1.3 Diagnostic Assessment

Detailed diagnostic assessment of specific skills required for the course. This can include a diagnostic assessment of the underpinning skills of English and mathematics. This will be linked to the Initial Assessment.

- **Purpose** – to identify specific learning strengths and needs, referral for Additional Learning Support (ALS), and to determine learning targets and appropriate teaching and learning strategies to achieve them. Informs the learner’s Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
- **Undertaken by** – all learners at the beginning of a learning programme and subsequently when the need arises
- **Responsibility** - the course tutor / personal tutor / assessor, ALS coordinator

1.4 Formative assessment

Ongoing assessment of progress and constructive feedback and analysis of assessment outcomes

- **Purpose** – to inform learners of their progress and help course tutors/assessors and learners to adapt teaching and learning strategies to improve performance. Update ILPs
- **Undertaken by** – all learners throughout the course or programme through a range of approaches: teachers led assessment, self assessment, peer assessment, through written and verbal feedback and as part of review, target setting and action planning
- **Responsibility** – the course tutor/assessor and the learner. All assessment, review and Health and Safety documentation must be kept in the learner file which should be kept in a locked location within the work place and be made available for monitoring and audit purposes

1.5 Summative assessment

Takes place at the end of each learning episode, establishing the level of competence reached and the progress made and giving feedback to learners on their learning achievements

- **Purpose** – to enable tutor / assessor / learner to know how the quality of work relates to the standards of external awarding bodies and helps students to set their targets. Update ILPs
- **Undertaken by** – all learners through a range of approaches: ongoing assessment from written and oral tasks, marked and graded coursework, mock exams and end of year assessments / exams / controlled assessments, portfolios

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- **Responsibility** – course tutors / assessors. Assessment will be internally verified and moderated according to the College’s Internal Verification Policy and Procedures.

External assessment will be administered strictly in accordance with instructions issue by relevant awarding bodies.

1.6 Controlled assessments (eg GCSE English, Science and languages) **The Curriculum Leader/tutor/assessor:**

- It is the responsibility of the Curriculum Leader to inform Exams at the start of the Academic year (and no later than 15th October) of any controlled assessments taking place and the names of tutors involved
- The Curriculum Leader obtains the controlled assessment task details from the exam boards and the CL and the tutor plan when and how the assessments will take place
- The Curriculum Leader informs the Exams officer of the dates of any high level controlled assessments and of any learners needing special arrangements
- The tutor schedules the assessments into the Scheme of Work
- The tutor carries out the assessment according to the instructions for conducting controlled assessment (JCQ)
- Learners are expected to complete the controlled assessment on the planned dates. A second date will only be offered in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the college
- When all assessments are complete, and within the relevant deadline, the Curriculum Leader should submit the marks via the awarding body portal. Immediately following mark submission all assessment materials, completed assignments and signed declarations of authentication must be returned to Exams for secure storage.
- If suspected malpractice occurs the tutor must inform the Head of School and the Exams officer

Exams:

- It is the responsibility of the Exams officer to inform Programme Leaders and Members of the Curriculum Senior Management Team (CSMT) at the start of the academic year (September) of the regulations for conducting controlled assessments. The PLs/HoS will then disseminate the information to tutors involved in controlled assessments
- Exams maintains a diary of controlled assessments and students needing special arrangements

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- Exam conducts and keeps a record of risk assessments following the standard JCQ procedure for controlled risk assessment
- Exams receives all completed assessment materials for secure storage and delivers to the exams boards

2. Marking learners' work and correction of Spelling, Punctuation and Grammatical [SPaG] errors and inaccuracies

It is essential that marking, including error analysis, includes:

- regular, accurate and consistent feedback to learners;
- the correction of spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors;
- written guidance on what learners have to do to improve their skills and knowledge;
- clear written feedback that is understood by learners; and
- regular checks and reviews on progress and improvement of skills.

The preferred approach to marking learners' work is use of the "error analysis" approach as it is a very effective way of developing learners' self-correcting skills. It also helps learners identify their errors, focus on specific difficulties and structure their work.

A marking code understood by learners is used to indicate the error and to identify what type it is.

Some examples might be Sp for spelling, P for punctuation, T for tense, E for (grammatical) ending or G for grammar, SS for sentence structure, V for vocabulary.

Strategies to improve SPaG will be incorporated in the delivery of teaching, learning and assessment. Learners will also be encouraged to develop these skills independently, with their peers and to proofread their written work. :

3. Appeals against Internal Assessment of Work for External Qualifications

If a learner disagrees with the outcome of an assessment, he/she may make use of the following appeals procedure:

- Appeals may only be made against the process that led to the internal assessment decision and not against the mark or grade submitted by the centre.

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- Appeals should be made in writing by the candidate to the Exams Officer, and should be made as early as possible and within 2 weeks of the student receiving the assessment decision. Please note that if the assessment result has already been sent to the Awarding Body it may not be possible to change it.
- The appeal will be passed to the Complaints coordinator who will log it as a complaint and demand an investigation by the appropriate manager, provided they have played no part in the original internal assessment process.
- The purpose of the investigation will be to decide whether the process used for the internal assessment conformed to the published requirements of the awarding organisation and the examinations code of practice of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)
- The investigating officer will inform the candidate in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including any relevant correspondence with the awarding body and any changes made to the procedure relating to internal assessment. The outcome will also be passed to the complaints coordinator to be logged.

4. Enquiries about results (Re-marks)

Where a candidate disagrees with the mark for a particular written exam unit, he/she may request a clerical check or re-mark via the Exams Officer. This must take place within the timeframe specified by the awarding body. The candidate will be required to acknowledge in writing that the grade may be confirmed, raised or lowered and will be responsible for paying the relevant fee at the time of the request.

This procedure is available from the Exams Officer and each GCSE/GCE candidate receives a copy with their results slip.

5. Conflicts of Interest

A simple definition of conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual or organisation has competing interests or loyalties.

The following are examples of conflicts or potential conflicts of interest from different areas of the College. These are intended to be helpful to staff in making decisions that relate to potential conflict of interest situations in their day-to-day work.

- If a teaching member of staff is involved in any way with the development of a secure assessment for either internal or national use, he or she cannot make use of the knowledge of that assessment in any teaching or learning activity
- The appointment of all assessors, invigilators, internal verifiers and assessment-related administrative staff is not made against published criteria and on a transparent basis

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- Assessors, invigilators, internal verifiers and assessment related administrators do not take responsibility to ensure the security and confidentiality of all assessment instruments, including examination papers.
- Learning and teaching materials are based on live examination of other assessment materials (although they can make use of past examination of other assessment materials)
- A member of staff is asked to assess, invigilate or internally verify the work of an enrolled student who is a family member, other relative, close friend or colleague undertaking CPD within the college
- A member of staff makes assessment materials available to individuals, whether or not students of the College, when not specifically tasked with assessing them as part of a timetabled activity.
- In the case of any situation where an assessor carries out assessment on behalf of the RACC in an organisation where they are also employed, they must adhere to the relevant assessment strategy and the quality standards set by the College.

In all cases, lecturers/assessors should notify their line manager

Related documents:

Internal Verification Policy & Procedures
 RACC Staff Disciplinary Procedures
 RACC Student Disciplinary Procedures
 Examination Procedure
 Disability Procedure (Exams)
 Equality and Diversity Policy

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