

ASSESSMENT, VERIFICATION & ACADEMIC APPEALS (A STUDENT GUIDELINE)

Purpose

The purpose of this Guide is to provide you, as a student of Dundee and Angus College, with an overview of assessment to support you in your studies with us. Specific information regarding assessment of the individual units you study will be discussed with you by your lecturers.

Assessment

Assessment is an important tool for determining the achievement of learners at the end of a course, but it is more than that. Assessment provides evidence of progress and invaluable feedback to both you and your lecturer/assessor throughout the year. It is something that all of us must take seriously.

You are likely to hear the following terms:

Formative assessment – this is on-going. It helps you and your lecturer find out how you are doing so far. Are you understanding (and retaining!) the work you are doing? It provides an opportunity for your lecturers to provide feedback so that, if necessary, you can improve and develop so that you are ready for summative assessment. Formative assessment can be as simple as regular informal questioning during classes. If students aren't "getting it", this may highlight to the lecturer that they need to change their approach. Formative assessment is about working together and using assessment to support learning (Assessment **for** learning).

Summative assessment - This may take place during and/or at the end of a course/unit and demonstrates whether you have achieved the stated learning outcomes, judged against the original learning objectives. This is the formal type of assessment (Assessment **of** Learning).

Your responsibility as a Learner

It is your individual responsibility to take an active role in your learning. **You are accountable for your own success.** You must:

- demonstrate academic integrity and honesty
- attend and participate in classes
- complete work in a timely manner with attention to quality of work
- dedicate sufficient time outside of class to college work

Assessments have to be carried out by you with no assistance from staff or other students. You should read the Student Guide on Assessment Malpractice and be aware at all time of the serious implications of any form of candidate malpractice (such as plagiarism, collusion, copying, personation, inclusion of offensive, inappropriate, obscene, or discriminatory material in assessment evidence or behaving in such a way as to disrupt others during an assessment). **Any suspected malpractice will be investigated, and appropriate action taken when a suspected case is upheld.**

Number of attempts at Assessment

Your lecturers should plan learning, teaching and assessment activity to ensure that you are prepared to succeed on the first attempt at assessment. Normally there will be one opportunity for reassessment. A further re-assessment opportunity, in exceptional circumstances only, will be subject to Head of Curriculum & Quality approval.

You should note that if you do not attempt the first given opportunity for assessment due to unauthorised absence you will be deemed to have failed that assessment. Your first attempt will therefore be classed as the one normal opportunity for re-assessment.

Responsibility of teaching staff/lecturers/assessors

Your lecturers are responsible for ensuring that assessments are:

- **valid** - this means that the assessment is appropriate for its purpose, has been designed to allow learners to show that they have the required knowledge, understanding and skills to meet the standards of the qualification and that any interpretation and use of the assessment results are supported and can be justified
- **reliable** - this is about ensuring that assessment results are consistent from one learner to the next, and from one assessor to the next and from one occasion to the next, for example with a different assessor
- **practicable** – the time and resources must be available to carry out that assessment efficiently and effectively
- **equitable and fair** - ensuring that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment in the specification of skills, knowledge and understanding or the development of the assessment

Teaching staff must ensure that assessments are undertaken only when students have suitable opportunity to prepare and that the assessments are appropriately spaced to avoid assessment overload. To that end, the scheduling of assessments must be pre-planned and communicated to you to allow you adequate time for preparation. You should also be given information about the competencies which will be assessed and the conditions of assessment.

Staff are responsible for assessing/marking your work in accordance with a pre-verified marking scheme, keeping appropriate records and providing feedback to you within an agreed period of time. An assessment cover sheet should be used for all assessments. The feedback you receive should be clear, professional and should accompany all achieved or non-achieved statements. Feedback may be recorded electronically where your work is submitted via the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Methods and Conditions of assessment

The assessment **methods** which you experience will vary depending on the course you are studying. Some examples of methods of assessment are:

Assignment, Case study, Exam/written test, Objective test, Listening test, Oral questions, Performance, Portfolio, Practical activity, Professional discussion, Project, Simulation.

Your lecturer will discuss the relevant methods of assessment with you. Methods of assessment may be specified in the Awarding Body Unit Specification for particular units of study.

Assessment may be taken in a range of different **conditions**. The conditions of assessment used by SQA are:

- closed book - no materials, other than the assessment itself are permitted. Closed book conditions for internally assessed Outcomes/ Units must always be supervised
- open book - you are permitted access to materials, such as notes you have taken, text books or other approved source of information. Open book conditions may be supervised or may be undertaken in the learner's own time
- supervision – here, your lecturer or another member of College staff will supervise a unit internal assessments undertaken at a specified time by candidates. Your lecturer may not interfere or offer guidance on the on-going assessment
- invigilation - an individual appointed by SQA to oversee the external assessments of National Courses (eg Higher exams). Invigilators must be external to the College and have no close connection to candidates.

Reassessment and Remediation

Remediation = action required involving original assessment

Reassessment = action required involving new assessment

Open-book Assessment

- under most circumstances, if you have not given a satisfactory response this will require remediation
- with an essay, you will be required to hand in a complete piece of work, with amendments incorporated in the appropriate context, rather than a large add-on at the end, or asked to rewrite your work fully to a prescribed format if it did not meet requirements
- oral clarification could be used for minor omissions or to clarify minor detail if it is thought appropriate that you tackle a different topic or question, then that new submission would count as a reassessment
- in oral work, you can be questioned by the assessor at the end of your presentation or explanation, where minor omissions occur, or where clarity is required
- where more work is required to meet the evidence requirements (e.g. where the quality of evidence is poor in a presentation) another presentation of the same duration, on the same topic or question as the original would be required
- only where a presentation on a different topic or question is attempted would this be classed as reassessment

Closed-book Assessment

- remediation for an Outcome could be done by oral clarification for minor omissions or to clarify minor detail
- if additional information is required this can be added, as long as it is in total approximately 100 words or less per Outcome
- remediation for an Outcome could be done by oral clarification for minor omissions or to clarify minor detail
- if the aforementioned conditions cannot be met, then you should be reassessed using a different set of questions for the Outcome
- if one Outcome has been achieved but not another which is integrated with it, it will be necessary to reassess both Outcomes

You should not be given the same assessments repeatedly, or be asked identical questions.

Verification

As a College we are required to conduct **Internal Verification** of assessment. This is a checking process to ensure that:

- before we start delivering a Unit, an Internal Verifier confirms that the assessment instruments/materials to be used are valid and that the appropriate award's assessment strategy is followed
- any assessment materials developed by staff meet the required standard
- there is consistency of assessment standards and approaches. The Internal Verifier will verify a sample of assessments to ensure that assessment is carried out in accordance with the Unit Specification and Awarding Body requirements, that everyone assessing a particular unit assesses to the same standards; and that Assessors apply the standards consistently across learners

We may also be subject to **External Verification**. This is where an External Verifier, appointed by the Awarding Body, will visit the College to check that procedures and national standards are being adhered to. An External Verifier will provide feedback on the assessment instruments or on the way in which they are being applied and assessed. The External Verifier may make recommendations, or detail specific actions which must be taken by staff as a result of the visit.

You should be aware that all internal assessments are subject to Internal Verification and External Verification. This will ensure that the assessment decisions taken by one assessor in the College are consistent with the decisions taken by:

- other assessors within the College
- other assessors throughout the country

Appeals against Assessment Decisions in Internally Assessed Units

You will be given feedback on assessments you have undertaken. If you have not met the required standard to pass an assessment, you will be given the reasons for this together with advice on the areas you need to work on to be able to achieve it in future. You will be able to discuss assessment decisions with the assessor on an informal basis.

If you remain dissatisfied with the internally verified outcome of assessment, and you are able to provide evidence of personal circumstances affecting the case not known to those making the assessment decision or apparent irregularities/inconsistencies in assessment which could have affected the outcome, you may make a formal appeal using the College internal appeals process. In these circumstances you will be expected to provide evidence to support the appeal.

For regulated qualifications such as SVQs, once you have been through the full College appeals process you may appeal first to the Awarding Body against the College's decision and thereafter to the qualification regulator (SQA Accreditation, Ofqual or Qualifications Wales as appropriate) if you are dissatisfied with how the College/Awarding Body have dealt with your appeal. Please note that the qualifications regulator cannot overturn assessment decisions or academic judgements but may investigate the effectiveness of the College's/Awarding Body's appeals process and request that the College takes some corrective action.

The following College policies are available on request:

- C01 Assessment Policy
- PT06 Equality and Diversity Policy
- LS02 Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- PP01 Verification Policy
- CS07 – Data Protection Policy
- CSP02 - Academic Appeals Process
- PP04 – Malpractice and Maladministration Policy