

Assessment and Feedback Policy

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Purpose
<p>This policy aligns practice at the University with the <u>QAA Quality Code</u> for Higher Education (2024) and associated <u>Advice and Guidance</u>. The aim of this policy is to guide the ongoing development of University-wide approaches to assessment and feedback that enhance the effectiveness of assessment by supporting students to achieve the knowledge, skills, and competencies described in a module or programme intended learning outcomes. The policy is underpinned by principles of assessment and feedback that reflect this aim and a commitment to ensuring all assessment and feedback practices are fair, transparent, and continuously reviewed. It applies to all assessment attempts, including reassessment.</p>
Scope
<p>This policy applies to all undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and postgraduate research programmes that have taught elements.</p>

Assessment and Feedback Policy

Introduction

1. This policy aligns practice at the University with the [QAA Quality Code for Higher Education \(2024\)](#) and associated [Advice and Guidance](#).
2. The University defines assessment as: a structured process that involves the development and evaluation of a student's knowledge and understanding, skills, or competencies through prescribed activities.
3. The University believes that assessment must be designed to facilitate students' attainment of intended learning outcomes set out in Module Descriptors and Programme Specifications and to measure their attainment transparently and fairly against explicit criteria. This approach recognises that assessment is a core part of learning and teaching, not solely a means of measuring achievement.
4. The aim of this policy is to guide the ongoing development of University-wide approaches to assessment and feedback that enhance the effectiveness of assessment by supporting students to achieve the knowledge, skills, and competencies described in a module or programme intended learning outcomes.
5. The policy is underpinned by principles of assessment and feedback that reflect this aim and a commitment to ensuring all assessment and feedback practices are fair, transparent, and continuously reviewed. It applies to all assessment attempts, including reassessment.

Scope

6. This policy applies to all undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and postgraduate research programmes that have taught elements. It should be read in conjunction with the following [University policies, procedures](#), as well as [General Academic and Programme Regulations](#).
 - a) Policy and Procedure on Programme and Module Approval.
 - b) Policy on Marking Assessments in Undergraduate & Postgraduate Programmes.
 - c) Policy on Exams.
 - d) Procedure for Returning Marks and Disseminating Results.
 - e) Policy on Moderation and Double Marking.
 - f) Policy and Procedure on Extensions to Coursework Submission.
 - g) Policy and Procedure for Late Submission of Coursework.
 - h) Policy on Compensation Scheme.
 - i) Personal Circumstances Procedure.
 - j) Procedure and Guidelines for External Examiners of Taught Courses.
 - k) Student Module Evaluation Policy.

- l) Student Disability and Neurodivergence Inclusion Policy.
- m) Guidance and Support for Students on Matters of Religion and Belief.
- n) Guidance on Maintaining Academic Integrity.
- o) Assessment Audit Toolkit.
- p) Equality Impact Assessment Tool.
- q) Policy and Procedure for Boards of Examiners.
- r) Procedure on Oral Exams.

Assessment and feedback principles

7. The University expects that all assessment and feedback activities will align with and adhere to the following four principles: 1. Assessment and feedback practices are designed to promote effective student learning; 2. Assessment and feedback practices are appropriate, inclusive, fair, and transparent; 3. Assessment and feedback practices are clearly communicated to students and staff; and, 4. Assessment and feedback practices are continuously reviewed. The substance of these principles and the specific expectations they hold is detailed below.
8. The University recognises that tensions can arise between these principles, for example, between ensuring inclusive assessment practices and maintaining appropriate security, and emphasises the need for a balanced, holistic approach that upholds all principles without allowing one to undermine another.

Principle 1: Assessment and feedback practices are designed to promote effective student learning.

This means that assessment and feedback activities must:

9. Support, as well as measure students' attainment of the knowledge, skills, and competencies that are stated in module and programme level intended learning outcomes. This means that Programme Specifications and Module Descriptors must list clearly all intended learning outcomes and clearly indicate which, if any, of its intended learning outcomes are competence standards. Not all programmes will have competence standards.
10. Be based on and align coherently with intended learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Module Descriptors must show how each assessment in a module aligns with the module's intended learning outcomes.
11. Include an appropriately diverse range of assessment methods across a programme which increase in complexity and challenge with level of study.
12. Account for student and staff workloads within modules and across programmes.
13. Provide opportunities for students to be active participants in the assessment and feedback process, including opportunities for students to discuss feedback.

14. Ensure that reassessment tasks enable students to demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes they have not yet met. Reassessment must be proportionate to the timeframe available and, where appropriate, adapted so that it does not simply replicate the original assessment while still allowing students to evidence the required knowledge, skills, and competencies.
15. Follow documented procedures to verify the accuracy of marks prior to their release.
16. Ensure marks awarded to students' work reflect achievement of the stated intended learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Marks must align with the feedback provided.
17. Always be scheduled so that the release date for all feedback accounts for students' ability to access support services. In particular, scheduling the release of grades and feedback immediately before periods where the University is closed must be avoided.
18. Ensure feedback is scheduled and provided in a way that is timely, constructive, accessible and supportive, so that it helps students understand the extent to which they have fulfilled the assessment criteria and provides them with information that could help them to improve subsequent work. For continuous forms of assessment (such as coursework), it is expected that grades and feedback are returned to students within 15 working days. Where double-marking is required and/or an assessment is scheduled within a formal assessment period, the timeframe for the return of grades and feedback is likely to be longer than 15 working days.
19. Include provision of feedback to students, individual, group, or whole class feedback, as appropriate to the assessment. Where examinations are used, students must receive at least general feedback after the examination. Students who wish to view their exam scripts following the provision of general feedback must be facilitated to do so under supervision of staff.

Principle 2. Assessment and feedback practices are appropriate, inclusive, fair, and transparent.

This means that assessment and feedback activities must:

20. Be appropriate to the disciplinary and/or professional context of learning.
21. Apply rigorous academic standards related to and across the discipline(s) or professional context and always be based on clearly defined assessment criteria.
22. Measure students' achievement solely against specified criteria and standards that have been shared with students and staff at the start of a module. Norm-referenced marking (such as marking according to a prescribed grade distribution) is not permitted.
23. Use the appropriate marking scale and standards that are outlined in the Policy on Marking Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught assessments. At module level, the use of a 'Fail Overall' outcome must be applied carefully, transparently, and only where a student has demonstrably not met the minimum intended learning outcomes for the module.

24. Be designed to foster inclusive student engagement. While not every intended learning outcome will directly correspond to a competence standard (if applicable), there must be clear and coherent alignment between the intended learning across a programme and any relevant competence or threshold standards.
25. Ensure that module assessments assess only intended learning outcomes set out in a Module Descriptor. This means that 'attendance' in itself cannot be an intended learning outcome in a module or programme, and grades are never awarded based on attendance alone. However, some assessments may require a student to demonstrate a competence standard that can only be evidenced through direct observation. In these cases, attendance is a condition of the assessment, not a learning outcome. Where attendance is required to evidence a competence standard, reasonable adjustments may alter the timing, conditions, or mode of attendance, provided the competence standard itself is not changed.
26. Be inclusive by accounting for the needs of different students in the design and management of all assessment and feedback activities and take reasonable action to ensure individual students are not disadvantaged where this is necessary to address challenges with accessibility, except where competence standards apply.
27. Apply anonymous marking wherever possible, including of formal examinations at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Where anonymous marking is not possible, for example where students are assessed via a presentation, or where an alternative method of assessment has been used for an individual student, additional scrutiny by a second marker or moderator must be undertaken. In other instances where anonymous marking is impractical, appropriate moderation must be applied to ensure fairness. The Policy on Moderation and Double-Marking defines the approaches to internal quality assurance and explains where double-marking must be used instead of moderation.

Principle 3. Assessment and feedback practices are clearly communicated to students and staff.

This means that students must be made aware at the beginning of a module and at other relevant times, of:

28. The details of all assessments, including the purpose, weighting, timing, and format. The arrangements for reassessment must also be made clear at the beginning of a module.
29. Guidance on the method of assessment. For example, where students are assessed in group work, expectations for collaboration, division of responsibilities, communication, and managing challenges, must be explained to students. They must also be informed of how individual and group contributions will be assessed, and where to access support.
30. The criteria and standards that will be used to assess and provide feedback on students' work.

31. Arrangements and procedures for marking, moderation and double-marking, and external examination of their submitted work.
32. The format and timing of the grades and feedback they will receive on their assessments. Where exceptional and/or unexpected problems cause a delay in the return of grades and feedback within the expected turnaround time (for example, 15 working days), an explanation will be provided to students in advance of the deadline for returning grades and feedback, with a new date for the return of grades and feedback.
33. All policies and procedures relevant to their experience with assessment and feedback, including those related to academic integrity, the use and acknowledgement of generative artificial intelligence (Gen-AI) in learning and assessments, and of procedures associated with personal circumstances, coursework extensions, and late submission.
34. Opportunities to discuss with staff the assessment requirements and the feedback they have received.

Principle 4. Assessment and feedback practices are continuously reviewed.

This means that:

35. Assessment and feedback activities are continuously reviewed through evaluation and review activities with staff, students, external examiners, and relevant Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB). It is also beneficial to consult other parties (such as employers) and sector benchmarks, such as relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statements, to ensure effective alignment with a programme's intended learning outcomes and the attributes expected of Strathclyde graduates.
36. The timing of all assessment and feedback activities, including the scheduling of examinations, must be regularly monitored and reviewed at programme level, to minimise assessment bunching and over-assessment.
37. The outcomes of module and programme approval/review processes, external examining processes, and student voice exercises (such as module evaluation) must be used to enhance the approach to assessment and feedback within modules and across programmes.
38. Opportunities to develop effective practice and innovation in assessment and feedback are made available and actively promoted to all staff involved in assessment and feedback.

Responsibilities for the implementation of this policy

39. The **University** is responsible for:
 - a) Monitoring adherence to this policy through the University's education committees and relevant working groups.
 - b) The maintenance, development and communication of this and other relevant policies, procedures, regulations, and guidance.

- c) Providing staff with training and development opportunities to develop effective practice in assessment and feedback.
- d) Providing adequate resources, including digital tools, to support effective practice.

40. **Faculties** are responsible for:

- a) Overseeing programme and module level assessment design and implementation, including reassessment.
- b) Ensuring consistency in the application of University policies relating to the assessment of students across departments.
- c) Oversight of the submission of External Examiners' reports and departments' responses.
- d) Sharing effective practice within and between faculties.

41. **Heads of Department** are responsible for ensuring:

- a) Colleagues within their Department are aware of and adhere to the policies and procedures listed in this policy.
- b) The responsibilities outlined in this policy are allocated to appropriate role-holders.
- c) That the marking of assessments is sufficiently resourced to enable staff to mark assessments and return feedback within the timeframes specified in this policy.
- d) That documented procedures are in place to ensure the accurate and timely recording and return of marks and feedback to students.
- e) That External Examiner(s) are in place for all programmes and that they are supported to carry out the duties of the role.
- f) That points raised by External Examiners in their formal report are responded to by the Department.

42. **Boards of Examiners** are responsible for:

- a) Adhering to relevant policies, procedures and guidance for Boards of Examiners.
- b) Ensuring General and Programme Regulations are adhered to.
- c) Considering the attainment of students at module level in taking progression, transfer, and award decisions.

43. **Programme Leaders** are responsible for:

- a) Ensuring a coherent and effective approach to assessment and feedback is taken across a programme of study, aligned to the programme's learning intended outcomes.
- b) Ensuring all assessments are designed inclusively and appropriately varied, weighted, and scheduled.

- c) Making sure assessments across a programme are appropriate to the programme and level of study.
- d) Making sure all assessments are marked fairly and that feedback supports learning and development.
- e) Monitoring the intensity and equity of assessments across and between modules, with due consideration to programmes delivered by more than one department.
- f) Designing and reviewing the Assessment Schedule and Exam Timetable within a programme and requesting amendments where there is assessment/exam bunching.
- g) Ensuring documented procedures are adhered to for the accurate return of marks.
- h) Ensuring all relevant assessment and feedback related policies and procedures are explained to students.
- i) Ensuring procedures are in place for monitoring students' use of the Policies and Procedures on Extensions to Coursework Submission and Late Submission of Coursework, as a mechanism for identifying students who may require support.
- j) Developing effective moderation, and where appropriate, double marking procedures, in line with the Policy on Moderation and Double Marking.
- k) Ensuring those procedures related to assuring fairness in assessment, such as moderation and the role of External Examiners, are communicated to students.
- l) Addressing points raised by External Examiners.
- m) Responding to feedback from students on their experience of assessment and feedback across their programme.

44. Year Coordinators and/or Module Leaders are responsible for:

- a) Having an overview of summative assessment activities within a programme of study to avoid, where possible, a bunching of assessment deadlines, including examinations and reassessment activities.
- b) Making sure that an appropriate level of detail of all assessments is provided at the start of a module. This may include a detailed account of what is required by a student for a given assessment, or in some cases (such as an unseen exam) may simply detail the format, duration, and scope of the assessment.
- c) Ensuring assessment criteria is aligned to a module or programme's intended learning outcomes and the University's Policy on Marking Assessments in Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught programmes, and that the assessment criteria is communicated to students at the start of a module.
- d) Providing opportunities, where possible, for students to use earlier feedback prior to the submission of any subsequent related assessments.

- e) Working with students to develop effective practice in assessment and feedback, including providing students with opportunities to develop their understanding of the criteria and standards used to assess their work, and supporting them to engage with and use feedback.
- f) Obtaining feedback from students in relation to assessment and feedback for module(s) for which they are responsible, and for communicating any actions on this feedback to students.
- g) Ensuring processes are in place to support students' understanding of academic integrity in their assessments, and for ensuring suspected cases of academic misconduct follow the agreed line of investigation within the Department, and in line with the Student Discipline Procedure – Academic Misconduct.
- h) Ensuring the accurate and timely return of individual assessment marks to students and module marks to Boards of Examiners.
- i) Undertaking effective moderation and/or double marking procedures, which are recorded and provided to Boards of Examiners.
- j) Ensuring that any changes to module level assessment are discussed with the wider programme team, and that they are requested through Faculty assessment change approval processes, which includes consideration of any equality impacts. Conducting an Equality Impact Assessment at the assessment design stage can support this process

45. **Staff and others** directly involved in assessing students' work are responsible for:

- a) Designing assessments that are appropriate, inclusive, fair, and aligned with the module or programme's intended learning outcomes.
- b) Assessing students' work according to published assessment criteria which are aligned to intended learning outcomes and the University's Policy on Marking Assessments in Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught programmes.
- c) Providing timely, constructive, specific, and helpful feedback which enables students to improve their learning and performance.
- d) Ensuring there is alignment between grades and feedback.
- e) Clearly explaining expectations, assessment criteria, and feedback timeline to students.
- f) Engaging in dialogue with students about assessment and feedback.
- g) Upholding the University's expectations around academic integrity in the assessment of students' work.
- h) Continuously reviewing approaches to assessment and feedback to reflect effective practice.
- i) Applying reasonable adjustments in the assessment of students' work.

46. **Students** are expected to be responsible for their own learning through:

- a) Understanding the requirements of individual assessments and actively engaging with assessment tasks by devoting appropriate time and effort.

- b) Developing an understanding of the relationship between intended learning outcomes and assessment criteria, and standards in their programme of study.
- c) Ensuring their academic work is authentic and produced with integrity.
- d) Finding out where, how, and when work is submitted and how and when feedback is provided.
- e) Planning their time to meet assessment deadlines.
- f) Actively engaging with, reflecting on, and using provided feedback.
- g) Seeking academic support when needed, for example, if feedback needs to be clarified.
- h) Understanding the academic policies and procedures related to assessment and feedback.
- i) Informing the University of any personal circumstances that are impacting their engagement with their studies.
- j) Participating in the development of assessment and feedback practices at module and programme levels through module evaluation and other student voice activities such as communication with student representatives who participate in Student-Staff Liaison Committee.

Definitions

Assessment	The process of measuring the performance of students (as in examinations, assignments, and other assessable work) that enables students to monitor their progress and contributes to their academic results.
Assessment criteria	Specific criteria against which pieces of work are assessed. An understanding of the criteria must be shared by markers and students. Feedback must relate to these criteria.
Assessment bunching	The perception of assessments within a programme of study being scheduled too closely together.
Assessment schedule	A timeline of all assessment and feedback activity across a programme.
Competence standard	“A competence standard is an academic, medical or other standard applied for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability.” Equality Act 2010, Schedule 13, paragraph 4(3).
Exam bunching	Where the scheduling of two exams falls within a 23-hour period.
Feedback	Information provided to students on the quality of their performance in relation to assessment criteria, which forms the basis of improved student learning.
Graduate attributes	Qualities, skills, dispositions, and understanding that students are expected to develop.
Intended learning outcomes	A set of statements capturing the intentions of a programme or module. They describe what a student will typically know and understand at the end of the module or programme as well as the intellectual, practical, and transferable skills that they will develop. How well they are met is reflected in the grade students achieve. Intended learning outcomes are different to competence standards.
Moderation	The process of checking that assessment criteria are consistently applied across markers in marking students' work.
Module	The individual components of a programme, normally worth 20 or 10 credits.
Module Descriptor	A document outlining the aims, intended learning outcomes, content, assessment methods, and key information for a module.

Module evaluation	The process of obtaining feedback from students on all aspects of teaching, learning, and assessment within a module
Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB)	Organisations that set and oversee professional standards and/or legal requirements for a programme or discipline. They may accredit programmes, set competency or ethical requirements, and regulate entry to and ongoing practice within a profession.
Programme	A structured set of modules and learning activities that lead to an award (e.g., degree, diploma, certificate).
Programme Specification	A Programme Specification is a document that outlines the key features of a programme, including its aims, intended learning outcomes, structure, teaching and assessment methods, place and modes of learning, and any relevant professional accreditation. It serves as a reference for both students and staff, ensuring transparency and clarity regarding what a programme entails and what is expected from those undertaking it.
Summative assessment	Assessment is summative when the grading of an assessment contributes to the final grade for a module or programme. The aim of summative assessment is to evaluate students' attainment of the intended learning outcomes within a module.
Working days	The University of Strathclyde Glasgow's standard working week is normally Monday to Friday, covering five working days. For University of Strathclyde Bahrain, and for other some overseas delivery, the standard working week is normally Sunday to Thursday. Fifteen working days would normally equate to 21 calendar days but may be longer where the period includes University closure days.