Higher Education Award Regulations: Part B

Section: 6: Assessment and Feedback
Version: 1.5
Academic Year: 2023/24

REVISION HISTORY

Ver	Date	Author	Description
1.0	May 2014	Scott Smith	Initial Approval of Assessment and Feedback
1.1	April 2016	Scott Smith	Addition of conflict-of-interest section and removal of forms
1.2	July 2016	Scott Smith	Amendment to titles and names
1.3	March 2017	Scott Smith	Updates relating to feedback from the procedure's implementation
1.4	January 2018	Scott Smith	Inclusion of assessment regulations pertaining to: • Word count • Referencing • Spelling, punctuation and grammar
1.4.1	March 2019	Scott Smith	Removal of the reference to a specific section of the old Quality Code
1.4.2	August 2020	Scott Smith	Refinements to language
1.4.3	May 2021	Scott Smith	Removal of reference to Liverpool John Moores Provision Update to the title of the Inclusive Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
1.4.4	August 2021	Scott Smith	Minor typographical updates
1.4.5	July 2022	Scott Smith	Various amendments to better describe the process and operation of the Part B.
1.5	July 2023	Scott Smith	Annual Review

APPROVAL

Ver	Committee	Date Approved
1.0	HEAB	14 May 2014
1.1	ASDC	20 April 2016
1.2	ASDC	26 Oct 2016
1.3	ASDC	29 March 2017
1.4	ASDC	21 March 2018
1.4.1	ASDC	27 March 2019
1.4.2	ASDC	September 2020
1.4.3	ASDC	May 2021
1.4.4	ASDC	Oct 2021
1.4.5	ASDC	July 2022
1.5	ASDC	July 2023

Contents

B6.1 INTRODUCTION

These regulations relate to the provision of higher education programmes delivered at Blackpool and The Fylde College.

B6: Assessment and Feedback has been produced in consideration of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and should be read in conjunction with A4 Academic Assessments and Awards of Part A of the Higher Education Award Regulations.

This procedure ensures that students receive fair and equal access to assessment, which is free from discrimination and is made by well-informed and well-supported first markers. It also ensures that the standard of assessment remains consistent across time and between candidates with respect to individual first markers, and that there is consistency and standardisation between markers.

There are two stages to this process:

- **Verification**: To ensure assessment instruments (assignments and examinations) are fit for purpose, i.e., they enable the student to produce evidence that meets the assessment criteria and learning outcomes and that students are provided with all pertinent details including distribution and submission date
- **Moderation**: Assessment decisions accurately judge the students' work against the module grading criteria/learning outcomes and that assessment and grading are consistent across a programme

Note: To ensure guardianship of the Blackpool and The Fylde College's Regulations and to prevent any potential ambiguity, each stage of the process **must** be recorded. All relevant documentation, templates and further guidance are provided by the Higher Education Directorate.

B6.2 EXTERNALITY

Externality is a vital part of the assessment process as it ensures that assessments are set and marked appropriately. Samples must be considered by the External Examiner(s) associated with a programme at both stages of the process.

B6.3 PREPARATION

In preparation for an academic year programme teams must create:

- A sampling matrix that identifies the students, tutors, assessments and dates that will make up each moderation sample.
- An assessment schedule, which is made available to students, that identifies the type of assessment and the distribution and submission dates for each assessment. This will assist students in managing their workload and ensuring that the volume, timing and nature of assessment supports them in achieving the intended learning outcomes.

B6.4 VERIFICATION

B6.4.1 PRE-DISTRIBUTION

The requirements for pre-distribution:

All Blackpool and The Fylde College programmes should have at least one assessment per module externally considered at all levels, this will ensure academic rigour, standardisation and consistency are maintained at each stage of the programme.

In addition to the sample sent to External Examiners and before distribution to students all assessment briefs must undergo Internal Verification. The outcome of Internal Verification must be recorded. Internal verifiers are encouraged to utilise the comment section on the Verification Form to contextualise the feedback to a first marker. A rigorous internal verifier will, where appropriate, provide advice on how to improve the assessment. If an action is identified, the first marker must complete the actions and return the brief to establish that it is of the required standard.

If remedial action is identified, externally or internally, the action must be completed by the first marker prior to the distribution of the assessment to students or apprentices; internal verification must be recorded on the Verification Form. This process will ensure the assessment is fit for purpose and that:

- The evidence will allow the student and apprentices to address the learning outcomes.
- It is written in a clear and accessible language.

Once the assessment meets the required standards, it may be issued to the students and apprentices.

B6.4.1.1 INTERNAL RECORDS

The internal process must be recorded by the tutor assigned to peer review the assessment on the Verification Form and will ensure that the Assessment Front Sheet:

- Has accurate programme and module details.
- Identifies the correct learning outcomes to be assessed.
- The submission details are correct.
- Has clear deadlines for assessment in terms of date and time.
- Clearly states what evidence the student or apprentice needs to provide.
- Is likely to generate evidence which is appropriate and sufficient.
- Is set at the appropriate level.
- Has an appropriate duration.
- Uses suitable language.
- Has a clear presentation format.
- That grade descriptors inform students of the requirement to reach a particular level.

B6.4.1.2 EXAMINATIONS

FIRST MARKER AND PROGRAMME LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES

First markers are responsible for, in accordance with deadline dates issued annually:

- Writing the examination paper, ensuring it has been checked against papers within the last three years to avoid duplicate and/or similar questions.
- Working with the Programme Leader to ensure that all examination papers are sent to the External Examiner for comment along with answer sheets and/or model answers.
- Working with the Programme Leader, to provide to the Achievements Team with:
  - Electronically encrypted examination papers.
  - Completed Checklists for Higher Education Examination papers.
- Completing the examination front sheet.

The marking of examination scripts is routinely anonymised.

B6.4.1.3 EXAMINATION DATES AND TIMES

Students and apprentices will be informed of the date and time of their examination by the College's Examinations Team, students and apprentices should confirm these dates with the Curriculum Area.

Students and apprentices are responsible for correctly noting the dates and times of their Examination(s)/Assessment(s).

Students and apprentices are expected to begin their examination on time and will not normally be permitted to start examinations/assessments late.

Further details can be found in the College's Examinations Policy.

B6.4.2 MARKING

FIRST MARKING

First marking involves judging all submitted assessments against the grade descriptors identified in the assessment brief and is a measure of whether a student or apprentice has met all the specified learning outcomes. First marking will normally be completed by the tutor(s) responsible for the delivery of the module.

SECOND MARKING

Second markers, when engaging in the moderation process, will make the same judgements as first markers but only in relation to the prescribed moderation sample. They should however not be influenced, wherever possible, by the marks or comments attributed by the first marker.

B6.4.3 MARKING REQUISITES

B6.4.3.1 WORD COUNT REQUIREMENTS

All modules validated by Blackpool and The Fylde College stipulate, for each assessment, its type and scope; this detail is recorded in the relevant module specification. Where an assessment is defined as coursework the scope of the assessment is defined in terms of a word count, this being the maximum number of words permitted for the assessment.

In designing an assessment strategy, word counts are included to provide students and apprentices with an indication of the depth and criticality required to demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes. Similarly, word counts are also stipulated to encourage students and apprentices to write accurately and succinctly, a key skill developed during higher education studies. When considering an assessment submission, markers may only mark up to the permitted word count plus an additional allowance of 10 percent. Any content submitted more than the word count plus 10 percent will not be marked and will therefore not influence the mark awarded for the particular assessment. The references list and appendices are not included in the word count for any assessment submission. It should however be noted that appendices are supplementary to the core content and should not be used for substantive material. Anything which is essential to the assessment should be included in the body of the assessment submission.

B6.4.3.2 REFERENCING REQUIREMENTS

Markers are not permitted to impart a penalty on an assessment because a reference is not presented in the format stipulated in the College's Referencing Guide. Feedback should however be provided to students and apprentices to assist them in developing sound academic practices. If however a reference, or lack of, is in such a form that it is impossible for a marker to associate the text or reference with any meaningful piece of work, then the mark awarded for such an assessment will almost certainly be negatively impacted and may result in a student or apprentice being referred to an Academic Malpractice and Misconduct Panel where the they may be penalised. Any such a penalty will be recorded on a student's or apprentice's record and may negatively affect their academic success.

B6.4.3.3 SPELLING, PUNCTUATION AND GRAMMAR

Blackpool and The Fylde College provides support for all its students and apprentices to assist them in being appropriately prepared for employment. To that end, where required, they are provided with feedback relating to spelling, punctuation and grammar that is supportive and developmental.

Any work highlighted by a marker as being misspelt, incorrectly punctuated or grammatically incorrect will, normally, not adversely affect the mark awarded for a particular assessment unless a learning outcome assessed within the assignment specifically refers to spelling, punctuation and grammar; however, where such errors prevent the marker from being able to extract meaning from the work, the error will almost certainly negatively impact the mark awarded.

B6.4.3.4 AUTHENTICITY

Authentic assessment involves students or apprentices employing newly acquired knowledge and skills against real world case studies or in their own employment settings and is defined by Wiggins (1990)[1] being authentic if it is realistic, requires judgement, simulates real life contexts and assesses the students' or apprentices' judgement in negotiating a complex task.

Tutors marking work should use the tools available to them to protect the academic integrity of all Blackpool and The Fylde College awards. These tools can take many forms but include, providing detailed information to students or apprentices, good assessment design, similarity checks and robust moderation processes.

Viva Voce Examination

Evidence of authenticity can be established in many ways; viva voce examination is one such mechanism. Tutors should consider including such assessments in their validations but should also, through negotiated agreement with students and apprentices introduced early in the delivery of a module, check the knowledge of students and apprentices routinely; obviously this also provides opportunity for formative assessment. This could be an informal assessment, where it is not defined in a programme's validation, including informal discussions with individuals or seminars with groups of students or apprentices. This informal mechanism can be used as one of the many tools available to markers; tutors must always ensure that any assessment is unbiased, fair and reliable.

B6.4.4 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Where a marker has a personal interest in, or relationship with a particular student or apprentice they must declare their interest to the relevant Head of Curriculum who will ensure that, wherever possible, other members of the team mark and moderate the relevant work. Any conflict of interest must also be recorded on the Moderation Form. Where it is not possible to select an alternative marker, the assessed work must always be included in the moderation sample for each assessment. Where the assessment contributes to the final award it must always be moderated by the External Examiner.

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[1] https://scholarworks.umass.edu/pare/vol2/iss1/2/

B6.5 MODERATION

B6.5.1 MODERATION DEFINITION

To ensure the safeguarding of academic standards and to guarantee the assessment of students and apprentices is of the highest quality and comparable with the expectations of the sector, a sample of student's or apprentice's submissions for each assessment will be second marked to ensure that the mark or grade awarded is accurate and reliable. This mitigates against any subjectivity on the part of the first marker.

Moderation ensures that assessment outcomes (e.g., mark and / or grade) are fair, that the grading criteria have been applied consistently, and that any differences in academic judgement between individual markers can be acknowledged and addressed.

The moderation process also provides a checking mechanism that verifies whether a student or apprentice has met the specified learning outcomes, or otherwise.

B6.5.1.1 MARK OR GRADE MEETING

Once the prescribed sample, as defined at the start of the academic year, has been second marked the outcome must be recorded using the Moderation Form. The first marker and second marker must discuss the assessment of the sample. If there is a discrepancy between most of the sample marks, one of the following actions must be recorded and where appropriate actioned:

- No further action necessary.
- The first marker must reconsider the marks awarded for the entire cohort and, consequently, make changes to all marks, for example by scaling up or down the whole cohort.
- The second marker reviews all work for an assessment. Following this review, discussion takes place between the first and second marker. As a result, and with the agreement of both, no further action may be necessary, or changes may be made to some, or all marks awarded.

If the first marker and second marker cannot agree, an adjudicator, usually the Programme Leader[2], will consider the decisions, making a judgement based on all evidence available to them. It is expected that in the event of a discrepancy in the marks or marks being agreed by adjudication that the External Examiner will normally be informed of the judgement.

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[2] Where the Programme Leader is either the first or second marker an independent adjudicator must be found.

B6.5.2 TIMING

Assessments should normally be first and second marked as close to the submission deadline as is possible and in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Inclusive Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. This will ensure the quality of process and not disadvantage students or apprentices.

B6.5.2.1 STUDENT FEEDBACK

Students and apprentices should be provided with assessment feedback only after second marking has occurred, this ensures that assessment decisions have been endorsed prior to them receiving feedback. In providing feedback, first markers are to follow the guidance provided in the Inclusive Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

B6.5.3 SAMPLE CONSTRUCTION AND SIZE

B6.5.3.1 CONSTRUCTION

Any sample should be constructed using a risk-based approach to identify the collection to be second marked. The sample must be constructed to ensure that every module assessment, first marker and student or apprentice is sampled within any given stage of programme delivery.

B6.5.3.2 SIZE

The number of submissions sampled per module should vary depending upon the contextual factors which influence the module delivery. These should, wherever possible, be agreed at the start of the academic year by the academic programme team and may include:

- Cohort size
- A range of classifications
- Borderline decisions
- How recently the programme was validated (i.e., a new programme/module delivered for the first time may be subjected to a greater level of moderation to ensure the accuracy and validity of assessment decisions)
- Experience of the academic colleague delivering the module (i.e., colleague is new to Higher Education or new to the module in question)
- Historic feedback from students or apprentices in relation to previous satisfaction of assessment, feedback, learning and teaching.
- Feedback and comments from the External Examiner

Cohort size should typically be used as the initial factor to determine the minimum sample size. As a rule of thumb, the second marking sample size should reflect at least

the square root of the size of the cohort, with a minimum of five submissions per assessment considered.

B6.5.4 DISSERTATIONS AND MAJOR PROJECTS

Whenever possible, dissertations and major projects, as defined in the validation document, should be subject to unseen double marking, that is, each student or apprentice submission will be both first and second marked with the second marker not having available to them the marks and comments of the first marker.

B6.5.5 PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT MODERATION

Where a summative assessment is practical in nature, for example, a presentation, live performance, or demonstration, arrangements should be made for the second marker to access a recording of the moderation sample.

If it is not possible to review a recording, consideration should be given to involving a second marker in assessment of students' or apprentices work. For example, two markers can be present during presentations, following which, the two markers agree a single mark.

Please note that External Examiners should also be afforded the same access to summative practical moderation.

B6.6 STANDARDISATION

Standardisation is the process of ensuring that all tutors are familiar with, and have a common understanding of, the marking standards and conventions in relation to the provision of feedback. This process is carried out prior to moderation.

Where a module and/or assessment is delivered and assessed by more than one person, standardisation should be carried out after summative assessment has taken place. All discussions should be captured on the Standardisation Form.

PROCESS DETAILS

Standardisation involves all markers assessing students or apprentices for a particular assessment independently, marking a sample of work and assigning grades using the secondary grade descriptors.

Following individual grading of the sample, the tutors meet to discuss and agree grades for the sample, this serves as a benchmark for the module run. The meeting should also confirm and clarify other issues concerning marking and feedback, for example outcomes for omitting key items. Arrangements for moderation and method and quality of feedback should also be discussed so that it is as consistent as possible.

Where a tutor cannot attend a meeting, alternative means of communicating should be used. At the minimum, all tutors should grade the piece(s) of work and be informed of the result of the exercise prior to grading submitted work.

Please note that External Examiners should be informed of the outcome of the standardisation exercise, and the pieces of work must be made available to them.

B6.7 COPYRIGHT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Students and apprentices are responsible for treating assessment materials as strictly confidential and as such are not allowed to take with them (or parts of) the assessment materials, or to copy, photograph or in any way reproduce these, inform third parties of the contents of assessment materials, or provide these to third parties in any way. Students and apprentices may only use the assessment materials as far as this is necessary for taking the assessment.

All rights, including the copyrights and other intellectual property rights that can be exercised regarding assessment materials remain exclusively with the College.

Assessment and Feedback Indicative Process

Process Start

Year Planning

Create an Assessment Schedule & Sampling Grid

Coursework/Practical

First marker writes assessment

Potential re-draft

Peer subject specific review

Peer checks assessment and completes/amends the Stage 1 Verification Form

First marker amends assessment

External Examiner views sample of assessments (Not Lancaster Programmes)

Assessment suitable for distribution

No

Yes

Assessment distributed to students

Assignments submitted and marked by first marker

Examinations

First marker writes examination

Potential re-draft

Peer subject specific review

External Examiner views examinations

Peer checks amendments

First marker amends examination

Examination suitable

Yes

No

Examination front sheeted and sent to Achievements

Examinations marker by first marker

Moderation

Sample second marked, followed by moderation meeting

Potential adjudication

Assessment Decisions Agreed

No

First & second marker meet to discuss moderation, sample widened

Yes

Process complete