

<b>Policy &amp; Procedure</b>	Policy on Assessment
<b>Policy Area</b>	Quality
<b>Version Number</b>	02
<b>Approving Committee</b>	ELT
<b>Date of Approval</b>	27 August 2019
<b>Date of Equality Impact Assessment</b>	October 2019
<b>Date of Review</b>	June 2022
<b>Responsible Senior Manager</b>	Assistant Principal Performance and Skills

## History of Amendments

Date	Version/Pages/Sections Affected	Summary of changes
June 2017	01	2.4 Clarification on contact details. 3.2 Added to reflect AB guidance concerning definitions of remediation and re-assessment. Updated to new template.
August 2019	02	Minor changes

## Policy Statement

Assessment is a vital part of the learning and teaching process. In addition to providing a measure of the learners' achievement on qualification-based courses, it also provides diagnostic information that assists both staff and learners in the on-going improvement of the learning and teaching process.

To contribute usefully to both of these functions, it is essential that assessment:

- Is fair and ensures parity of treatment and comparable assessment demands across subjects of equal level and credit;
- Is reliable, ensuring that assessment decisions are made consistently throughout the College;
- Is valid, by ensuring that each assessment relates to the intended outcomes of the subject(s) studied;
- Is transparent, in that it is clear to learners, staff and external auditors the criteria and methods by which learners' work is being judged.
- Recognises and respects equality and diversity.

## Equality Statement

The College is committed to providing equal opportunities to ensure its students, staff, customers and visitors are treated equally regardless of gender reassignment, race, religion or belief; disability; age; marriage and civil partnerships; pregnancy and maternity; sexual orientation; sex. The college is committed to providing equal access to assessment – internal assessments, online assessments, graded units, external examinations – and providing assessment support to candidates in line with awarding body regulations.

Please note this document is available in other formats, to request another format please email [quality@wcs.ac.uk](mailto:quality@wcs.ac.uk)

## **Contents**

<b>1. Scope.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Associated Procedures .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3. Principles of Assessment .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>4. Internal Assessment.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>5. Reassessment .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6. Retention of Assessment Evidence.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>7. Academic Appeals.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>8. Conflict of Interest.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment .....</b>	<b>8</b>

## **1. Scope**

This policy applies to all programmes offered by the College where all or part of the programme is formally assessed. This policy applies to all awarding bodies from which the college claims certification for candidates and also applies to college certification of assessed elements of locally devised programmes.

## **2. Associated Procedures**

Qualifications Verification Procedure

Academic Appeals Procedure

Dealing with Malpractice

Maladministration Procedure

Equality Audit Toolkit

## **3. Principles of Assessment**

**3.1.** All assessment must be conducted rigorously and accurately and in accordance with the awarding body's current and published criteria and standards. Assessors and Internal Verifiers are responsible for ensuring that they are up to date with assessment requirements for any certified unit/ award they are responsible for.

**3.2.** Assessments/coursework developed and delivered by College staff must be conducted by reference to open and defined standards described in marking/assessments schemes, covering the required skills, knowledge and understanding. It is college policy to use assessment instruments devised by awarding bodies where these are available. All assessment instruments – regardless of origin – should be prior verified prior to use to determine suitability.

**3.3.** Before being administered to candidates all college devised assessment instruments must be internally verified, and we strongly recommend that assessments are prior verified where this service is available by an awarding body.

**3.4.** Assessment development should maximise expertise and efficiency in the use of

college resources by sharing expertise and creating standardised assessment practices to facilitate cross college collaboration where suitable.

**3.5.** The chosen format and method of assessment must be appropriate to the qualification and any conditions specified by the awarding body. Online assessments should be considered and used where they are available and where college resources allow. Any decision to use paper based assessments when an online alternative exists should be reviewed at course team meetings and evidenced in self-evaluation documentation.

**3.6.** The responsibility to promote equality in assessment lies with all staff, therefore assessment materials must be presented in clear and unambiguous language and must differentiate only on the basis of a student's knowledge, skills and understanding. Such materials must be free from any overt or covert discrimination against an individual either in wording or content. This applies to assessment instruments developed internally and equally to those made available on secure access sites by awarding bodies, which should be periodically reviewed, updated and evaluated by course teams, internal verifiers and teaching staff.

**3.7.** The College will appoint assessment staff whose knowledge, skills and understanding are appropriate for the units they assess. All staff involved in the assessment process will maintain their competence through regular staff development in both subject knowledge and in pedagogical updates. Regular training and updates will be facilitated by the Quality, Learning and Teaching Directorate to ensure staff are kept up to date with any changes. CPD records should be maintained to reflect quality assurance in assessment practices on an annual basis.

## **4. Internal Assessment**

Internal assessment must be conducted in line with the principles outlined in section 3.

**4.1.** The responsibility for ensuring that assessment materials meet the requirements of

the unit specification rests with the relevant Curriculum and Quality Leader and/or other staff allocated the responsibility for verifying the suitability of an assessment for a given unit.

- 4.2.** Where assessment materials have been developed for use nationally e.g. ASP or NAB materials, these should be used as standard, except in cases where the course teams agree that alternative material is more appropriate to the particular group or circumstances. Assessment material developed by the college must not be used to assess candidates until it has been verified by either the internal verifier and/or staff allocated the responsibility for managing the assessment of the unit. Where awarding bodies (SQA for example) offer a free of charge service for prior verification of college devised assessments, we strongly advise that the service is used.
- 4.3.** All staff involved in the assessment process have a duty to ensure assessment instruments are valid, reliable, current and fit for purpose. Staff should immediately highlight to their Curriculum and Quality Leader or specialist internal verifier, any assessment in practice which does not meet this criteria. Staff may also direct such requests to the Quality Department; [quality@wcs.ac.uk](mailto:quality@wcs.ac.uk)
- 4.4.** All students should have access to an assessment schedule which covers the full duration and assessed content of the programme of study on which they have enrolled. It is recognised as good practice that all teaching team members are aware of assessment scheduling for all units on a course of study as efficient scheduling of assessments can have a positive impact on the student learning experience.
- 4.5.** Documented feedback must be given to learners as soon as possible after assessment. In the case of written or other project work submitted, the feedback must be given as soon as practically possible and at least within 3 working weeks of the official submission date. Feedback should be as helpful as possible to the learner, i.e. confirming what has gone well and giving clear guidance on what the student needs to do in order to improve on their performance.

**4.6.** A standardised assessment front cover is available (SharePoint Forms) for generic use where awarding bodies do not provide mandatory front pages for their assessments. Students must be encouraged to comment on their assessment outcome and on the standard of the assessment instrument itself. This feedback should then inform documented self- evaluation of learning and teaching process.

## **5. Reassessment**

**5.1.** Students should be assessed on a continuous basis and at stages appropriate to their individual needs and within the timescales and rigours of the award. At each stage re-assessment may be permitted dependent on awarding body regulations.

**5.2.** Where awarding body regulations permit, students will be allowed a first opportunity to attempt an assessment. This may be followed by a further opportunity after a reasonable period of time for remediation has passed. Students who fail to undertake set assessment opportunities without prior agreement from their lecturer will be deemed to have forfeited that assessment opportunity (provided they were given sufficient notification of the assessment date).

**5.3.** Remediation applies when the candidate requires only minor changes to their work to achieve a pass. Re-assessment will be required if the changes are significant. Either of the above constitutes a further assessment opportunity. If, on completing the remediation or re-assessment activity, the requisite standard has not been achieved, the student will have failed the assessment for that unit, subject to any decision reached in 5.4 below.

**5.4.** Students with extenuating circumstances may be afforded a third opportunity within the same academic session. Lecturers and IVs together must agree that any such third attempt is appropriate to the assessment strategy and record the decision to award this. All records to this effect should be retained by the IV and made available on request for audit.

- 5.5.** Students who have failed to achieve the assessment standard after two opportunities (or three opportunities in cases related to point 5.4 above) should be regarded as having failed that unit.
- 5.6.** Where the assessment is an assignment/case study/project, which has to be submitted by a certain date, late submissions will count as the second or subsequent attempt/opportunity unless evidence is provided and accepted to justify late submission.
- 5.7.** All evidence of previous attempts at assessment must be retained – notably where a student is permitted to modify a piece of course work and resubmit it, a copy of the original submission and feedback should be retained.
- 5.8.** Students will have until the end date of the unit as stipulated on the Course Plan submitted/ amended and updated to MIS to complete assessments for individual units. All assessments for all units must be completed and resulted by the end date of their programme.

## **6. Retention of Assessment Evidence**

- 6.1.** Material relating to internal assessment, including the assessments used, checklists, marking schemes and the students assessed work with assessor and IV feedback (where appropriate) must be retained until:
- after the end of the relevant assessment period as set by the awarding body
  - any retention/disposal date set by awarding body; further details can be obtained from [quality@wcs.ac.uk](mailto:quality@wcs.ac.uk)
  - the completion of all qualification verification/standardisation processes for the whole module/unit/subject – based on the submission of results to the relevant awarding body. If the submission of results is after the end of the MIS unit record date it is the latter date that counts towards retention of evidence.

- 6.2.** At the start of each academic session the Quality Department will issue a calendar of dates relating to assessment evidence retention.
- 6.3.** For the avoidance of doubt, where a unit continues beyond the original completion date as recorded in MIS, an amendment to Course Plan form must be completed and assessment evidence must be retained until the next relevant disposal date after the revised completion date.
- 6.4.** In the case of Scottish Vocational Qualifications and National Vocational Qualifications, the assessed work may need to be retained until the appropriate disposal date following the finish date for the assessment of the whole level of that VQ. In the case of any doubt, N/SVQ assessment evidence must be retained rather than disposed of.
- 6.5.** For units where the course assessment and/or project work is subject to external central moderation, materials must be retained until after the central verification or until the start of the next academic session.
- 6.6.** Curriculum for Excellence National awards (SQA) are subject to different quality assurance procedures and notification on retention of evidence for these awards will be notified by Quality to assessors and internal verifiers at the start of each academic session.

## **7. Academic Appeals**

- 7.1.** All candidates have the right of appeal against an internal assessment decision. The college Academic Appeals Procedure outlines the circumstances and timescales in which appeals can be made and process to be followed.
- 7.2.** College staff will positively support candidates who wish to make an appeal.
- 7.3.** All candidates have a right to appeal to an awarding body once they have exhausted

the college appeals process.

## **8. Conflict of Interest**

**8.1.** It is college policy to retain a register of actual or potential conflict of interests in assessment practices. In particular any staff member involved in the assessment process must immediately disclose to the Head of Quality and Professional Standards where they are, or may be:

- Involved in the design, development, vetting or otherwise, of a national assessment;
- Assessing or internally verifying assessment evidence of candidates with whom they have a personal relationship or interest in;
- Employers of any candidates who they are assessing or internally verifying assessment evidence.

**8.2.** Staff should notify the Head of Quality and Professional Standards by email stating the nature of the perceived conflict, the name of the candidate(s) involved, and the course/units and dates of delivery.

**8.3.** The Head of Quality and Professional Standards will retain such information as confidential other than as requested by external auditors for review.

**8.4.** The register will be updated at the start of each academic session and retained for the duration of that academic session or the duration of the course/programme to which the conflict relates, whichever is the longest.

## Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment

**Name of policy/procedure/decision:** Policy on Assessment

**Responsible Person:** Assistant Principal Performance & Skills      **Date:** 11 October 2019

**1. What information is readily available to measure the effect this policy/procedure/decision has on people who share protected characteristics? What data is not available or not reliable?**

Information Information regarding assessment outcomes is readily available, and can be cross- referenced by protected characteristics. The Policy on Assessment focuses on the integrity of the assessment process, opportunities to be assessed and decisions made.

Monitoring activities ensure that the assessment policy and associated procedures support consistent practice in relation to people with protected characteristics.

**2. What does this information indicate about positive, neutral and negative impacts on people who share protected characteristics? Please detail below.**

Protected Characteristic	Description of Impact
Age	Decisions taken in accordance with this policy should be protected characteristic neutral, providing that any agreed assessment arrangements have been complied with.
Disability	As above
Sex	As above
Gender Re-assignment	As above
Sexual Orientation	As above
Race	As above
Religion or belief	As above
Pregnancy Maternity	As above

**3. What arrangements could be implemented to reduce or mitigate any potential adverse or negative impacts identified above?**

Accessibility to assessment is considered at team meetings/IV standardisation events and includes a review of assessment instruments being available in a variety of formats including electronic.

**4. Has there been consultation/is consultation planned with stakeholders/ learners/ staff who will be affected by this policy/project/decision? Please detail below how this has affected your decision making.**

Consultation on the policy has involved college staff, teaching unions and the Student Association at all stages in this policy development.

**5. How will the policy/project/decision be monitored and evaluated?**

Student outcomes will be monitored among others by the Equality and Diversity Committee, part of whose focus will be on students with protected characteristics.

Deviations from the norm will be subject to further scrutiny.