

Edinburgh Napier University

Assessment Policy

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Edinburgh Napier University

Assessment Policy

1. Introduction

This Policy sets out our principles and operational expectations for student assessment and feedback at Edinburgh Napier University. The Policy complements current [Academic Regulations](#) for taught undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes at the University. In line with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (QAA, 2024), the Policy sets out expectations to ensure that assessments “test appropriate learning outcomes and are fair, reliable, accessible, authentic and inclusive” (2024, 14).

The Assessment and Feedback Policy is informed and underpinned by the [ENhance Curriculum Framework](#) with an emphasis upon Student Focus, which sits at the centre of the Framework and guides this policy. Assessment and feedback provides a key means for the ENhance themes to be embedded and articulated in every programme making the themes explicit for students through assessment and related learning and teaching activities.

The Policy acknowledges variations in student cohort sizes and the differences and challenges this can present to assessment practices and adhering to the principles and procedures detailed here. The Department of Learning and Teaching Enhancement (DLTE) can provide support to colleagues related to such challenges and in implementing the policy within programme assessment strategies. The Policy is supported by several assessment and feedback resources (including templates) which are available within the [DLTE intranet pages](#). Appendix A to the Policy provides a glossary of terms.

2. Principles of Assessment

All summative assessments at Edinburgh Napier University should adhere to the following principles to ensure assessment processes are designed to allow all students to effectively demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes:

Principle 1: Assessments are inclusive

Assessments will be explicit in their requirements and expectations of students with the learning outcomes being assessed and marking criteria included in assessment briefs. Equitable opportunities will be provided across programmes for students to develop and demonstrate their learning through alternative formats and optionality in assessment to promote student agency, wellbeing, motivation and developmental needs (Firth et al. 2023; QAA 2024).

Principle 2: Assessments are appropriate and valid

Assessment methods (and their length and weighting) will be appropriate for the SCQF level and valid for learning outcomes and the type of learning being assessed (QAA 2024). Programme assessment strategies will recognise that students experience assessment across modules and the need for balance in acknowledging expectations of workload, submission dates and assessment variety.

Principle 3: Assessments and feedback are student focussed

Assessments will reflect students' learning and development needs being designed with key stakeholders, including students, and informed by QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and where applicable Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) expectations. Each summative assessment will have a linked formative assessment (formal or informal, e.g. in class) that provides students with feedback or feedforward. Feedback provided (including formative) will be clear, constructive and supportive in evaluating assessment performance in relation to marking criteria and learning outcomes whilst identifying areas for development (QAA 2024).

Principle 4: Assessments are relevant and authentic

Assessments will be relevant to the diverse needs of our students using methods that are meaningful, applied and authentic to support their broader development of knowledge, skills and attributes by providing opportunities for students to apply their

learning in the different contexts in which they live and work, now and in the future (Nieminen et al. 2024).

Principle 5: Assessments foster student development

Assessments will enable and empower students to develop and demonstrate core employability skills such as communication, critical thinking and collaboration supported through active, collaborative learning approaches and assessment methods. Assessments will support student's development of digital capabilities and critical information literacies through tasks that utilise digital technologies including Generative AI.

Principle 6: Assessments engage and develop global perspectives

Assessments will connect to relevant social issues fostering students' engagement with global perspectives allowing for students' contextualisation in connecting with communities whether peer, local, national or global to develop their global outlook.

3. Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Assessment

Edinburgh Napier University's [Academic Integrity Regulations AI3.2](#) state that students' inappropriate use of Generative AI, such as the direct use of generated content presented in an assessment submission as their own work, constitutes a form of cheating and a breach of the Academic Integrity Regulations. The Student Community Code makes clear to students that they must follow university guidance on appropriate use of [Generative Artificial Intelligence](#).

The University encourages colleagues to incorporate Generative AI into their teaching and learning activities and assessments where appropriate, as per Principle 5 and the [University's Position Statement on Generative AI](#) (3.1 & 3.2). Programme and module leaders will engage in dialogue with their students on their use of generative AI, using the [AI Toolkit](#) and its traffic-light system to indicate what use of generative AI is appropriate in their modules and assessments. Staff will use the assessment brief to indicate what use of Generative AI is appropriate in any given assessment.

The [Assessment Declaration Cover Sheet](#) will be used in every assessment for students to declare that their submission is their own work and that any contributions from other sources have been acknowledged, including any use of Generative AI.

4. Assessment Design Process

Academic staff will engage with the principles of this Policy to guide and support assessment design or redesign. Assessment design always begins with learning outcomes, identifying what learning will be assessed, considering how this needs to be taught to enable students to achieve the learning outcomes and what method of assessment or task allows this learning to be demonstrated by students (QAA 2024). All assessment strategies are detailed in module records within the Curriculum Management Environment (CME) and approved, monitored and reviewed through the procedures set out within the University's [Quality Framework](#).

Colleagues will find it helpful to consult key [guidance related to assessment design](#) including, the [assessment taxonomy](#), [programmatic assessment resources](#) and the relevant [QAA Subject Benchmark Statement](#).

5. Formative and Summative Assessment

All modules will have an assessment strategy that articulates how formative assessment supports students towards each item of summative assessment.

5.1 Formative Assessment

Module leaders will engage students in a formative assessment or learning activity related to each summative assessment they undertake. As per [Academic Regulation A3.1](#), formative assessment should be used to provide timely and constructive high-quality feedback from which students can learn to identify their own strengths and development needs, this may also include feedback from peer assessment activity supported by academic colleagues. Formative assessment tasks should be planned in a systematic way to provide 'feedforward' so that students' current knowledge, skills and understanding can be developed and demonstrated in subsequent summative assessments.

Students will receive formative feedback (or feedforward) whether through feedback on a specific formative assessment submission or general feedback on related learning activities, as per Principle 3. It is important that the role of feedback is considered in assessment design and applied across formative and summative assessments within modules.

5.2 Assessment Briefs

All modules will have an **assessment brief for each summative assessment** students are required to undertake, including exams. Module leaders are required to use the Assessment Brief template linked within this Policy.

Assessment briefs will be provided **no later than the first week of teaching** to provide the maximum time for students to plan and to prepare for their assessments within and across modules. Assessment briefs will be available to students to access in Moodle.

5.3 Summative Assessment

Summative assessment will be used to evaluate students' learning and measure their achievement of module learning outcomes. As per [Academic Regulation A3.1](#), a module may have one or two components of summative assessment.

As per Principle 3, colleagues will provide clear, constructive and supportive feedback to students in relation to the marking criteria and learning outcomes for the assessment whilst identifying areas for development – this applies to feedback for summative and formative assessment. Colleagues can find support on providing effective [formative](#) and [summative](#) feedback in DLTE Quick Guides.

Colleagues will provide feedback on **summative assessment** submissions to students within **15 working days** along with provisional marks to prior to their ratification at Programme Assessment Boards. However, there may be times when it is not possible within this time period, for example, due to staff illness. If this happens colleagues must contact students as soon as possible specifying a revised timescale for feedback to be returned.

6. Marking & Moderation

Marking of assessments will be undertaken by academic staff with appropriate subject knowledge. Academic staff engaging in the marking of student assessments will follow the marking and moderation practices set out below.

6.1 Moderation of Assessment Instruments

All newly approved summative assessments will be internally moderated **before the module commences**. This requires subjecting all assessment tasks and related documentation (e.g., assessment briefs, marking criteria and feedback templates) to an acceptable level of scrutiny to ensure that they comply with the University's underpinning assessment principles in Section 2. This is a requirement for **all new assessments and assessments with changes made requiring approval via quality processes**. Appendix A in the [Marking & Moderation Guidance](#) provides prompts to guide this process.

6.2 Marking Criteria

Marking criteria for every assessment will be developed from and directly mapped to the learning outcomes for the module.

As marking criteria derive directly from and assess specific learning outcomes, **spelling, grammar, and referencing¹ must not be marked or graded** unless this is core to the module, programme, subject or the assessment itself and is stated in a module learning outcome. This also applies to marking criteria for exams.

Further guidance on marking criteria and processes is available in the [Marking & Moderation Guidance](#) document.

6.3 Inclusive Marking

Academic colleagues will assess students fairly and transparently in line with the learning outcomes and marking criteria free from any bias or prejudice towards, for example, disability, learning difficulty, gender, ethnicity or language ability.

¹ The non-marking of referencing refers to the formatting of referencing within students' work, this does not mean referencing as an academic practice or convention. Referencing is still an expectation in relation to students' use of evidence or citation of their sources used to construct an argument or support a claim within their work.

Inclusive marking is **non-anonymised allowing for consideration of learner profiles** in marking and the **creation of personalised, developmental feedback** for students. This allows staff to maximise the role of dialogue in the feedback process and provides the ability to comment on student's learning and development referencing previous performance, thereby increasing the learning potential of feedback in the assessment process.

6.4 The Role of First and Second Markers

The role of first markers is to make a **judgement on students' assessment submissions against the specific learning outcomes** and marking criteria for that assessment. This process results in the award of a provisional mark and individual feedback. First markers will have suitable knowledge of the module and its assessment strategy.

There is no university requirement for second - seen or unseen - marking except for dissertations and other undergraduate and taught postgraduate final year projects or where there are Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Body (PRSB) requirements. If other second - seen or unseen - marking is being conducted, this may be done on a **square root sample** of all submissions viewed to have met the threshold for a pass, rather than all submissions. It is a School-based decision whether a sample is second marked, seen or unseen, or if the whole set of submissions is subject to the process.

6.5 Post Assessment Moderation

Post-moderation will take place after students have submitted the assessment and it has been marked by at least one marker. Moderation requires a review of a **square root sample** of assessment submissions that have met the threshold for a pass. **All submissions** which have been judged to have **not met the threshold** for a pass **must also** be moderated.

Colleagues should consult the [Marking & Moderation Guidance](#) document for further information on the processes involved.

6.6 External Examination

External examiners are **required to review a square root sample** of completed assessment assignments following completion of internal marking and moderation

processes. External examiners are asked to comment on the application of marking criteria, appropriateness of the standard of student performance judged against the relevant SCQF level, the assessment process itself and the comparability of the level and standard of student performance and achievement benchmarked across the tertiary sector.

External examiners are required to submit an annual report and are invited to attend Programme Assessment Boards where they may share their perspectives on assessment performance and processes.

6.7 Applying Penalties

Unless approved otherwise via the University's module approval process, **all coursework, both at first attempt and reassessment, submitted after the agreed deadline will be marked at a maximum of 40 per cent for undergraduate programmes and 50 per cent for taught postgraduate programmes. Coursework submitted over five working days after the agreed deadline will be given a mark of zero per cent**, although formative feedback will be offered to the student where requested, as per [Academic Regulations](#) Sections B and C.

7. Reassessment

When determining the assessment instruments to be used for students engaging in reassessment it is important that colleagues follow the guidance in [Academic Regulations A7.10](#) so that students are not unfairly disadvantaged.

Academic colleagues must also follow the guidance for [Early Re-assessment](#). Early reassessment is where students are provided with an opportunity to 'make good' on a failed assessment element or component prior to the formal reassessment diet. Module leaders can find [guidance for Early Reassessment in this Quick Guide](#), and can contact their School Support administrator for further support with setting up early re-assessments.

8. Fit to Sit

The Fit to Sit regulations apply to all students registered at Edinburgh Napier University on taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes whose ability to complete an assessment of any type on the due date has been adversely affected by circumstances they cannot control and that have had a detrimental effect on their academic studies. More details can be found in the [Fit to Sit Regulations](#) and the [Academic Appeal Regulations](#).

9. Programme Assessment Boards

Student marks for all summative assessments are formally ratified at Programme Assessment Boards subject to confirmation that the pre-board processes identified in the Programme Assessment Board Guidance have been satisfactorily completed.

Complete guidance on Programme Assessment Boards is provided in [Academic Regulation A11](#).

10. End Matter

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11. References

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