Assessment and Feedback Policy

This version of the policy applies to all assessments delivered under the current academic framework (implemented in 2020/21). Please see the Manual of General Regulations for further clarification at https://www.uel.ac.uk/about/about-uel/governance/policies-regulations-corporate-documents/student-policies/manual-of-general-regulations.

September 2020

Assessment and Feedback Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Assessment and feedback are core parts of the student learning experience, whether on-campus, by distance or blended learning. The UEL Assessment and Feedback Policy seeks to:
- actively promote student success and academic achievement,
- provide clear, accurate, accessible information and guidelines to all staff and students on assessment and feedback,
- continue working towards consistency and fairness in assessment,
- locate assessment and feedback as an integral part of learning and teaching processes.

1.2 This Assessment and Feedback Policy applies to all taught courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level (including the taught element of Professional Doctorate courses).

2. Key Principles

2.1 In addition to providing assessments which are valid, reliable, fair and have a high utility, our proposed principles for assessment and feedback are:

2.1.1 Relevance
Assessment will be clearly aligned to the learning outcomes, content and discipline e.g. use of realistic, well designed rubrics (particularly for skills development), case studies linking skills as well as theory and assessing skills relevant to professional requirements.

2.1.2 Practical
Assessment will be practicable for every stakeholder. It should therefore be inclusive, accessible, and authentic (linked to future employment) where possible. Use of individual / group as appropriate, timely, well-structured for marking and feedback, accessible for external stakeholders, explained clearly in class etc. Teaching and marking in teams should be utilised to allow for timely turnaround of marking.

2.1.3 Inclusive
The assessment methods will enable inclusivity for all students as far as possible and should be designed to allow measurement of performance against the learning outcomes. Resources should be made available for students needing extra support.

2.1.4 Transparent
The marking criteria will be communicated clearly, marked as far as possible via rubric, the link between assessment criteria, learning outcomes and task should be explicit and easily understood.

2.1.5 Timely
The assessments will be distributed appropriately across each course so that learners and markers are not overloaded.

2.1.6 Varied

There should be a varied, interesting, challenging and relevant assessment diet that builds work-based skills as well as academic skills. This should be innovative and reflect innovations across the course. The assessment diet should be designed at course level.

2.1.7 Integrity

The assessment itself will have integrity, and students should be actively discouraged to participate in academic misconduct, for example, the assessment design should aim to minimise plagiarism.

2.1.8 Feedback

Feedback should be substantive, constructive, detailed and specific, feed forward as well as back and timely. Clear minimum standards of feedback to be identified and communicated.

2.1.9 Assessment for learning

Formative assessment should be incorporated to encourage reflection and development of both academic and work-based competences (knowledge, skills, and behaviours). Formative feedback should be detailed, constructive and support development at both individual and cohort level.

2.1.10 Weight

The burden of assessment will be appropriate to level, subject and topic. Whilst challenging it will not overstretch learners and will be linked to teaching. Over assessment should be avoided.

3. Assessment Design

3.1 Effective assessment design, within all modules, ensures that:

- assessment tasks enable students to demonstrate the learning outcomes detailed in the module specification;
- where possible different assessment types should be provided for assessing learning outcomes (unless otherwise mandated by professional bodies);
- Assessment tasks are efficient in terms of student and staff time and over-assessment is avoided.

3.2 Assessment Tariffs

3.2.1 Review of current practice in Higher Education suggests that a university-wide tariff for summative assessment promotes:
- comparability and fairness in assessment practice;
- transparency of process for students and academic colleagues;
- a reduction in assessment load,
- students to bring their best efforts to bear on assessment tasks.

3.2.2 UEL has adopted a university-wide tariff at both undergraduate (levels 3 to 6) and postgraduate (level 7 and taught modules at level 8) level.

Assessment and Feedback Policy

3.2.3 **Undergraduate Assessment:** undergraduate courses consist of standard modules whose value is 20 credits (equivalent to 200 student study hours), extending over one term. It is possible to approve modules with multiples of the standard size, such as 40 and 60 credits, if there is a sound rationale for doing so, and this is agreed during the approval process.

3.2.4 **Postgraduate Assessment:** Postgraduate courses consist of standard modules whose value is 30 credits (equivalent to 300 student study hours), extending over one term. Modules of 60 credits may extend over two terms where a rationale is demonstrated and approved at validation.

3.2.5 The **maximum** number of components permitted in one 20-credit module is two, with a minimum of one.

3.2.6 A standard 30 credit module may be composed of **up to** two assessment components. Double and triple modules have a maximum of four and six components respectively. Please refer to the academic regulations for further details.

3.2.7 The balance of the weighting applied to each component with the tariff will be consistent. e.g. for a 20-credit module with two components (coursework and written examination) each worth 50% = coursework up to 2000 words, written examination up to 60-70 minutes i.e. each are reduced to achieve the total tariff. The same will apply to equivalent assessment types (please refer to 3.2.8).

3.2.8 Table of assessment **options** at 20 credits (UG). Please note, this list is not exhaustive:

20 credits	Summative essay	Group presentation	Reflective journal	e-photo journal/ video diary and presentation	Written exam
	Up to 4000-word research essay evidencing knowledge, critical/ analytical skills and in-depth discussion.	Up to 30-minute group presentation 2000-word reflective writing based on experience of working and learning as a group.	Up to 5000-word reflection including relating theory to practice.	Develop a photo project. Each photo must be accompanied by an audio/ video or written reflection relating theory to practice, up to 20-minute video diary of the experience, 20-minute individual presentation.	120 minutes.

3.2.9 Table of assessment **tariffs** at 30 credits (PG). Please note this list is not exhaustive:

SUMMATIVE TARIFF for PG 30 credit modules: Maximum Assessment loads per module				
30 credits	*Coursework (Please see the above list for different types of coursework that can be used).	Written Examination	Practical (face-to-face) examination, viva, presentation or practical skills demonstration	Dissertation
	Up to 6000 words	Up to 270 minutes (with no one component exceeding 180 minutes)	Up to 90 minutes	Dissertation

3.3 Assessment Approaches

3.3.1 A diverse menu of assessment approaches, flexibility and innovation are integral to good assessment practice and authentic assessments are encouraged.

3.3.2 Online assessments can only be delivered using the virtual learning environment supported by the institution. Other delivery formats cannot be supported. The supported lockdown browser tool should be used to avoid academic misconduct.

3.3.3 There will be no written examinations at Level 3 or 4 for all modules, though students may be given assessed tasks (e.g. mock examinations) in preparation for formal examinations at Levels 5 and 6. However, if Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements state otherwise, then PSRB requirements will be adhered to (see Section 9).

3.3.4 For **all** placements (e.g. non-credit rated placements, year-long placements, module-based placements etc) there will be an authentic assessment or reflective piece of work as evidence of engagement in the placement, unless mandated otherwise by PSRB. This assessment will not be burdensome for the student.

3.3.5 Module teams must consider the task (whether as a word count or equivalent) which should reflect the time that students need to achieve the learning outcomes, acknowledging that sometimes the skill is in the ability to be concise. For example, in a 20-credit module, where 200 hours of time-investment is stipulated, the time allocated to the assessment portion of the module may be in the range of 36-72 hours, once class contact time and related homework is taken into account.

3.3.6 UEL operates a continuous assessment practice to enable students to act directly on feedback in later iterations of their work, reduce workloads at the end of the academic year to avoid undue pressure on students as well as enable the institution to make earlier and more effective interventions where necessary. Further details are provided in Section 7.

3.4 Portfolios

Assessment and Feedback Policy

3.4.1 Portfolios can include a maximum of 3 tasks. The tasks can be of varied assessment type but must, when added together adhere to the assessment tariff (3.2.8 and 3.2.9). The portfolio must not have hand in dates within it; the only hand in date specified will be the final deadline. Where portfolios are included, it is usual practice to not include more than one portfolio as part of the module assessment.

3.4.2 The tasks must be included in the assessment section of the module specification e.g. Component 1. Portfolio (coursework 1: 1000 words, Presentation 15 mins, MCQ 30 mins). Written exams cannot be considered as part of portfolio.

3.4.3 A portfolio can consist of a collection of tasks that assess relevant learning outcomes, ultimately a folder of evidence. It is best to consider the word limits combined for all tasks or the combined hours.

3.4.4 Tasks can include (not exhaustive, other forms of assessments may be appropriate): case studies, MCQs, reflective writing, exhibition pieces, presentations, reports, photo or video essays. The tasks can vary in types but should not overload students with multiple assessments. Portfolios can be on online or paper-based format.

3.4.5 Further guidance can be found on the Assessment Toolkit via the CELT Staff Dev Hub on Moodle.

3.5 In-Class Assessments (ICA)

3.5.1 In-class assessments take place during seminar or lecture periods (not during the standard exam period) and tend to be formative, however can include summative assessments. This assessment format is best suited for MCQ's, objective tests, oral presentations, OSCE's and problem sets. Students should be given enough notice and the length of time should ideally be short. Careful consideration must be given to the scheduling, invigilation and logistics of space, especially for summative assessments.

3.5.2 The School is responsible for making arrangements (including room booking, invigilation and arrangements for students with additional needs).

4. Marking, Moderation and External Examiner Approval

4.1 Each School will have effective systems and procedures in place for the internal marking (first and second marking, sample sizes, anonymous marking and how disputes will be resolved) and moderation of all methods of assessment for all modules. These procedures will be specified in the Assessment Toolkit.

4.2 Every component of assessment that contributes to an award, at all levels, is subject to External Examiner moderation. All assessment task(s) for each module will be proof-read and checked for fairness and consistency prior to being sent to External Examiners.

4.3 Once finalised, assessment tasks will be forwarded to the relevant External Examiner for comment and approval, prior to being published to students. Any changes required by an External Examiner must be approved by them prior to release to students.

4.4 For each module, relevant teaching teams agree a marking plan at the beginning of each academic year. This plan will identify:

- Plan for invigilation for exams
- first and second (and third, if subsequently needed) markers, and timetables;
- indicative content of answers to coursework and/or examination questions/tasks;
- provision in relation to e-Submission;
- assessment (marking and grading) criteria, which will ensure appropriate use of the full spread of marks.

4.5 Rubrics are the recommended method for marking.

4.6 As part of the external moderation of marking, External Examiners must be provided with the following for each module:

- Module specification

- Details of assessment task(s)

- Assessment criteria

- Any assessment guidance

- Sample of assessed work (10% or 10 individual pieces of each assessment task – whichever is greater – taken from the full range of marks and including some work that has been second marked)

- The record of marks and comments from 1st, 2nd (and 3rd) markers

- Schedule of all marks agreed for all candidates assessed in the module following internal moderation

- A brief report from the Module Leader commenting on the outcomes, delivery, and management of the module.

4.7 All marks for summatively assessed work are subject to approval of the relevant Assessment Board. External Examiners will always be asked to provide confirmation that they approve the marks.

5. Submissions

5.1 e-Submission, marking and feedback must be used wherever possible for all single pieces of text-based coursework. Tutors must seek agreement from their Head of Department if they would like an exception to this for any of their text-based coursework.

5.2 Submission dates and times must correspond with days/ times when the University is open and technical support is available in case of problems with submission. **Specifically, this means that all Turnitin assessment links should be set up during the times of Monday –Thursday 9:30-4:00,** and not during any national holidays or university closures.

5.3 For details regarding late submissions and extenuation please refer to the Extenuation Policy and Manual of General Regulations.

6. Feedback

6.1 Feedback to Students

6.1.1   Feedback is central to learning and is provided to students to develop their knowledge, understanding, skills and to help promote learning and facilitate improvement.

All feedback will be:
- timely (provided within 15 working days) of the submission deadline;
- given in relation to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria;
- provided on all summative assessments;
- offered in a range of formats appropriate to the module e.g. electronically or other e-Submission tools where used, Audio file, Video file, or Screencast.

6.1.2   The nature and extent of feedback the student may expect will be indicated for each assessment task at the time it is set.

When feedback (including marks) is provided to a student before an Assessment Board, all marks will be clearly identified as:
- being provisional;
- available for External Examiner scrutiny;
- subject to change and approval by the Assessment Board.

6.1.3   All students will be actively encouraged to collect feedback, review and consider its recommendations and implications, and seek further advice and guidance from academic staff when required.

6.1.4   Further guidance on using and providing assessment feedback is provided in the Assessment Toolkit (for staff) and course/module handbook (for students).

6.2 Modes of Feedback

6.2.1   Feedback may be:

- Individual – identifying specific issues relating to one student's work.
- Generic – referring to general points about the assessment as a whole, arising from an overview of the work produced by the student group.

6.2.2   Feedback should be explicit. It should be identified as feedback to ensure students are aware of its purpose. The student should understand its purpose as a mechanism to feed forward to support future assignments.

7. Continuous Assessment

7.1.1   At UEL continuous assessment is a flexible framework designed to provide students the opportunity to act directly on initial feedback to improve in subsequent iterations of their work, reduce workloads at the end of the academic year to avoid undue pressure on students as well as enable the institution to make earlier and more effective interventions where necessary.   It is anticipated that this will occur in teaching and learning methods however, assessments and re-assessments can be designed to incorporate this more formally.

7.1.2   Where a student has failed a component at the first sit, they will be permitted to complete their reassessment as part of the continuous assessment practice. This is likely to take one of the following formats:-

- 'Improve and resubmit': following the failure of an assessment task at the first attempt, students are able to utilise feedback given to improve the work submitted. The work is then submitted again via Turnitin as a reassessment opportunity no later than 30 working days from the release of the confirmed marks for the first sit. Marks for the resubmitted work will be capped at 40% (see Manual of General Regulations, Part 3 for further information on assessment capping). Practically, it is most likely that this form of continuous assessment will be applied to coursework-based assessment tasks.

- 'Improve through reflection and practice': following failure of an assessment the student will be given feedback that allows them to reflect on their learning and further develop their knowledge and understanding, with a view to this being applied to the subsequent reassessment. It is anticipated that a new assessment task will be developed for the reassessment. Where this is the case, the new assessment task must be provided to the External Examiner for approval. The reassessment should take place no later than 30 working days from the release of the confirmed marks for the first sit. Marks will be capped at 40% (see Manual of General Regulations, Part 3 for further information on assessment capping). Practically, it is most likely that this form of continuous assessment will be applied to practical and time-based assessment tasks such as exams, practical exams and presentations.

7.1.3   If PSRB requirements state otherwise, then PSRB requirements will be adhered to (see Section 9).

7.1.4   Where implementation of continuous assessment outlined in 7.1.2 is not possible due to the nature of the assessment, continuous assessment can be achieved through assessment design or learning and teaching methods :

- 'Improve through continued learning' : The ethos of continuous assessment is providing the student an opportunity to learn through continual assessment and feedback. As such, this could also include providing a portfolio assessment with feedback provided on each element. This would then allow the student to develop their learning as they progress through the assessment. The deadline and submission requirements should be noted in the Module Guide for both first attempt and reassessment. If the student does not pass the first attempt the work is then submitted again via Turnitin as a reassessment opportunity in line with above. Marks for the resubmitted work will be capped at 40% (see Manual of General Regulations, Part 3 for further information on assessment capping).

- 'Formative assessment and feedback' : the use of formative assessment and feedback provides students with the opportunity to learn through practice without impacting on summative assessment. Such assessments should be managed locally by the Module Leader.

8. Disability

8.1 UEL has a Student Disability policy which:

Assessment and Feedback Policy

- Sets out a framework to ensure students with disabilities can fully participate, where practicable, in all aspects of University life.
- Ensure that the University complies with its legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

8.2 Inclusive Approach

8.2.1 UEL aims to practice an inclusive approach in supporting students with disabilities/specific learning differences. This approach focuses on the capacity of the University to understand and respond to the requirements of all students with disabilities and try to use the 'Social' rather than the 'Medical' model of disability. The 'Social' model of disability aims to dismantle the barriers individuals face as a result of environmental and attitudinal factors rather than situating the problem with the individual. This is distinct from the 'Medical model', which suggested that the 'problem' of disability resides with the disabled person rather than with society as a whole.

8.2.2 In the context of extra time for coursework submissions, UEL provides all students with extra time automatically factored in by setting coursework earlier than at other institutions. Essentially we front load the additional time allowing all students, including those with disabilities, to submit coursework at the same time whilst still providing appropriate support; essentially a reasonable anticipatory adjustment in line with the Equalities Act.

8.2.3 Where necessary, and in consultation between the student and the Disability and Dyslexia Team (DDT), a Teaching and Learning Support Record (TLSR) will be drawn up and shared with Schools (with the express written consent of the student), which will outline any reasonable adjustments that need to be made, e.g. an alternative assessment may be provided, that still meets the learning outcomes.

9. Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body and Exemptions

Should any module/course be unable to comply with any aspect of this Assessment and Feedback Policy as a result of requirements from a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body or partner collaborations, a written request for relevant exemption(s), together with associated evidence from the Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body, will be made to the Head of the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching. Exemption(s) will only be valid upon receipt of written approval from the relevant Director of Education and Experience and the University Education and Experience Committee.

10. Apprenticeship End Point Assessment

The assessment design needs to prepare students for end-point assessment as outlined by the end point assessment organisation. If further clarification is needed around this, please contact the Academic and Employer Partnerships Office via degreeapprenticeships@uel.ac.uk