

Assessment and Feedback Policy 2022-2023

Policy Title:	
Assessment and Feedback Policy	
Purpose of Policy and to whom it applies (please specify cohorts):	
<p>The purpose of this policy is threefold:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) To inform students of the requirements and processes related to assessment, grading, feedback, and verification activities at the University of Northampton.2) To support academic staff in designing and facilitating assessment activities on taught programmes across the University of Northampton.3) To outline, for other relevant stakeholders, the assessment, grading, feedback, and verification principles of the University. <p>This policy applies to all staff, students and other stakeholders who are involved in assessment that leads to credit of the University of Northampton, including assessment delivered through collaborative partners.</p>	
Owner and Department:	
Learning and Teaching Enhancement, Library and Learning Services	
Principal contact:	
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Dissemination and implementation plan:	
Via AQSC prior to approval by Senate. Policy uploaded on to Tundra and circulated to Deputy Deans, Faculty Managers and Embedded Quality Officers for further dissemination. Storage on Tundra, linked to from main University website and included as part of the annual summary of policy updates provided online and shared via UNify.	
Date of initial committee approval	AQSC
Date of Senate approval:	4 May 2022
Date for implementation and cohorts to which it applies:	Academic year 2022-2023 for all students and staff
Proposed date of annual update:	June 2023
Date of last annual update:	June 2022
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Date of last full review:	July 2020
Version number and date:	v1.5

Policy Document:

1.0 Introduction and background

- 1.1 Assessment, grading and feedback are integral to learning. In a higher education context, assessment measures students' achievement of learning outcomes within a programme of study and allows the University, as the awarding body, to rigorously maintain and apply standards. Assessment also serves a developmental purpose by promoting students' use of feedback to improve learning and performance (QAA, 2018).
- 1.2 The University of Northampton is committed to the effective use of assessment, grading, feedback, and verification to promote academic standards and to enhance the student experience. To fulfil this commitment, the University aims to be responsive to the variety of stakeholders, such as students, academic staff, professional services staff and professional bodies, who are involved in the assessment and feedback process.
- 1.3 All assessment, grading, feedback, and verification practices take account of equality and diversity legislation and the differences brought about by student level, student profile, subject and mode of study.
- 1.4 The University's approach to learning and teaching calls for opportunities to check learning - through 'sense-making tasks' (i.e. formative assessment activities) - and to receive and apply feedback from others.
- 1.5 Key terminology used in this document can be found in the accompanying **Assessment and Feedback Process** document.

2.0 Purpose and scope

- 2.1 The purpose of the Assessment and Feedback Policy is threefold.
 - 2.1.1 To inform students of the requirements and processes relating to assessment, grading, feedback and verification activities at the University of Northampton.
 - 2.1.2 To support all academic staff in the design and facilitation of assessment activities and feedback approaches on taught programmes across the University.
 - 2.1.3 To outline, for other relevant staff and stakeholders, the assessment, grading, feedback and verification principles of the University.

- 2.2 The Assessment and Feedback Policy establishes a minimum level of acceptable assessment, grading, feedback and verification activity and helps to ensure that students achieve threshold academic standards (see UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Expectations for Standards). The policy promotes consistent management of assessment, grading and feedback across all provision leading to an award or award of credit of the University of Northampton.
- 2.3 Staff development opportunities, such as the [Assessment Workshops](#) in the C@N-DO framework, are available to help staff explore particular assessment topics, innovate assessment practices and share good practice with others.

3.0 Key principles

The QAA has outlined the following Guiding Principles for assessment design and practice.

- 3.1 The following principles from the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Advice and Guidance – Assessment* provide a framework for assessment design and practice:
1. Assessment methods and criteria are aligned to learning outcomes and teaching activities
 2. Assessment is reliable, consistent, fair and valid
 3. Assessment design is approached holistically
 4. Assessment is inclusive and equitable
 5. Assessment is explicit and transparent
 6. Assessment and feedback is purposeful and supports the learning process
 7. Assessment is timely
 8. Assessment is efficient and manageable
 9. Students are supported and prepared for assessment
 10. Assessment encourages academic integrity

The HEA (2004, 2013) proposes the following principles of feedback for formative and continuous summative assessment.

- 3.2 Feedback facilitates the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning.
- 3.3 Feedback encourages tutor and peer dialogue around learning
- 3.4 Feedback helps clarify what good performance is (e.g. goals, criteria, standards expected).
- 3.5 Feedback provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance.

- 3.6 Feedback delivers high-quality, realistic information to students about their learning, in a timely way
- 3.7 Feedback encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem.
- 3.8 Feedback provides information to tutors that can be used to help shape their teaching.
- 3.9 Feedback includes some clear, achievable targets for future development, to close the gap between current and desired performance.
- 3.10 Feedback focuses on the most important aspects of student work, as reflected in the University standard grading criteria

Feedback can benefit student learning by:

- 3.11 Raising students' consciousness of the strengths of their work
- 3.12 Boosting students' confidence and self-concept regarding personal strengths and weaknesses
- 3.13 Providing guidance on areas for further development of skills and enhancement of work
- 3.14 Enhancing students' own judgement, understanding of assessment criteria and ability to self-audit their own work

Source: [HEA Feedback Toolkit \(March 2013\)](#)

4.0 Key responsibilities

- 4.1 Assessment processes must conform to the University Assessment Regulations for the appropriate academic year and must reflect the principles of assessment and feedback outlined in Section 3 of this document.
- 4.2 Students must be given explicit guidance about the current University Assessment and Feedback Policy.
- 4.3 Students must have access to an assessment schedule for each module at the beginning of the academic year that includes submission dates for each piece of assessed work, dates for the respective 'resit' and anticipated return dates for grades and feedback.
- 4.4 All submission and feedback return dates for assessed work for modules must be agreed at the programme/subject level annually. These dates are published

and distributed to students and staff (section 4.3) so that any issues related to a balanced assessment load, with appropriate time for reflection between assessments, can be addressed.

- 4.5 In the rare case that there is a legitimate reason to change submission and feedback return dates once they are confirmed, an appropriate protocol must be followed to minimise any negative impact on students across the programme. This protocol involves the following steps:
 - 4.5.1 Initial discussion of the situation with the Assessments, Ceremonies and Examinations (ACE) Office
 - 4.5.2 Approval from the Programme/Subject Leader
 - 4.5.3 Clear communication with students and other module tutors on the programme in accordance with section 4.3.
- 4.6 A clear assessment brief (for each item of assessed work) must be distributed to students. This must contain the assessment criteria for the work including, where appropriate, the word count. Where different types of assessment are used (e.g. group work, *viva voce*), students must be given clear information on how the assessment will function and the grading criteria that will be used. All assessment information must be available on NILE.
- 4.7 There is an expectation that assessment questions within a module will differ from year to year, typically on a three-year cycle. This will help reduce opportunities for academic misconduct – including self-plagiarism where a student is repeating a module. This is not a requirement to change assessment type, but rather to change the focus of the assessment, provide an alternative case study etc.
- 4.8 It is required that all assessment items are separately identified in NILE, in the Student Records system and in the Module Specification. Project-style assessments with multiple deliverables (e.g. report, presentation and project plan) would be considered as one assessment item where all deliverables form part of a composite and related whole and where all deliverables are typically due on the same day.