



Assessment Policy

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Academic Assessment Policy

General Principles

Appropriate assessment at South London Academy will be accessible to all learners in line with the expectation of our partner awarding bodies. It will support their learning and encourage their success. The integrity and consistency of assessment processes and practices are essential in order that learners' qualifications are valued by the learners themselves, employers, other educational institutions, the public and other interested parties.

1. The Learners' Experience of Assessment

- 1.1 Initial assessment will form an accurate basis for identifying an appropriate programme of study, or additional study to address individual student needs.
- 1.2 Assessment tasks will be presented to learners clearly so that they may undertake them with confidence.
- 1.3 Learners will benefit from feedback which will inform them clearly of how they are performing and how they might develop further, including in their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- 1.4 Progress will be monitored and reported promptly and regularly to learners and to those with a legitimate interest such as employers, sponsors and parents.

2 The Management of Assessment

- 2.1 All aspects of the assessment process will comply with the requirements of the awarding body.
- 2.2 All entries for external assessment will be correct in terms of units and subjects and will be made within the required deadlines.
- 2.3 The types and levels of assessment used will be suitable for the learners and the programmes followed.
- 2.4 Assessment will be fair and accurate.
- 2.5 Assessment will be planned and scheduled so that it is manageable and coherent. The assessment plan will be recorded in the programme/course management file.
- 2.6 Achievement towards learning goals will be recorded and accredited (where appropriate).
- 2.7 Programme/course teams will review assessment outcomes in order to inform development.
- 2.8 The hand-in and referral procedures for learner work will be specified for each programme type and will be published in the programme/course handbook. In

exceptional circumstances an extension to the hand-in date may be granted providing the appropriate procedures are followed. The lecturer must record such agreements in writing.

2.9 Quality Assurance of assessment will ensure compliance with the above principles.

2.10 Assignments will be marked and returned within a reasonable time frame, usually in ten (10) days unless notified in advance by the lecturer.

2.11 Appropriate arrangements for the storage of assessment material will be specified according to awarding body requirements.

3 Quality Assurance of Assessment

3.1 The Academy will meet the quality assurance requirements of each awarding body.

3.2 There will be appropriate systems of internal moderation, verification and standardisation which will be monitored to ensure their effectiveness.

3.3 The Academy will monitor and act upon recommendations from EV and EM reports.

3.4 Assessment processes will be subject to the South London Academy Plagiarism Policy.

3.5 Learner appeals on assessment shall conform to the procedures of the Academy or awarding body as applicable.

3.6 Staff development should support high quality assessment processes.

3.7 The Academy is committed to ensuring that good practice in assessment and verification is disseminated throughout the organisation.

3.8 Assessment issues should be evaluated at all levels of performance review.

4 Assessment Principles and Procedure

Below are the principles and procedures which should be applied to all Academy assessments.

4.1 Assessment Principles

All assessments will be carried out according to the following principles:

4.1 **Fairness** – assessment requirements and criteria will be published in a form easily understood by the learner. Clear, written feedback to the learner will be provided on all main assessments completed. Learners will have the right to request a review of the assessment procedure and to appeal against any procedural errors in line with awarding body criteria.

4.2 **Validity** – assessments will measure what is intended.

4.3 **Reliability** – assessments will be rigorously applied, to ensure that assessment decisions on all occasions fulfil the standards of the relevant qualification and the requirements of the awarding body.

- 4.4 **Utility** – assessments will be easy to administer and easily understood by learners.
- 4.5 **Transparency** – assessment will perform a formative function in enabling learners to evaluate their progress and lecturers to provide feedback to support learners in their future learning and performance. Lecturers will ensure that learners understand clearly the requirements of the assessment process and the standards and specification of the qualification.

The above principles will be achieved by the application of quality assurance procedures.

5 Homework

- 5.1 It is important for the lecturer to hold up to date information on the progress of individual learners. One way of achieving this is to set regular homework tasks. In some instances the homework will be to complete coursework tasks. These tasks may be in the form of written work or may require no written work, such as research activities. The following guidelines should apply.
- 5.2 The lecturer should make clear to the learner exactly what the form of assessment will be for each homework task, including deadlines.
- 5.3 The lecturer should check all homework and the appropriate assessment recorded (this might be a mark or a record of completion) on the Academy approved mark recording system.
- 5.4 An appropriate record should be kept to show the assessment details for homework completed.
- 5.5 If learners are experiencing difficulty in completing homework tasks then the lecturer should discuss with the learner ways to improve or seek guidance and help.

6 Main Assignments and Coursework

- 6.1 These are pieces of work completed by learners as portfolio evidence for grading purposes and contributing to the achievement of the qualification (dependant on awarding body).

7 Procedures for Main Assignment Assessment

7.1 Planning

- a) Staff should ensure that they have an assessment schedule at the beginning of the course/programme. This is to be placed in the programme/course handbook for learner reference.
- b) All learners should complete an appropriate initial assessment according to approved Academy guidelines. This initial assessment shall be used by the lecturer to inform him/her of:
- any additional learning support needs,
 - appropriate teaching and learning strategies required,
 - any literacy and numeracy requirements.

- c) When the learner starts the course/programme they should be given a 'Programme/course Handbook' containing all the arrangements for assignments, including:

- how many assignments have to be completed,
- when they are to be completed and submitted – the deadline,
- any circumstances in which deadlines can be extended,
- rules and procedures for applying for extensions to deadlines,
- a section on how the final grade for the qualification is calculated,
- the name of the internal verifier (if appropriate).

The responsibility for managing the production of the Programme/course Handbook rests with the appropriate Programme Leader.

- d) It will also tell the learner about:

- what is considered to be malpractice in completion of an assignment and penalties for any offences,
- how a learner can appeal for a review of an assessment decision.

7.2 Assignment Briefs

- a) All assignments will be issued with a cover sheet, which is to be submitted with the assignment. This cover sheet will identify the assignment task(s) and give the assessment criteria against which the work will be judged. The cover sheet should always include the elements below, but can include other elements as required. If required, verification and standardisation should be included on the cover sheet.

The cover sheet should include a note stating that learners must keep a back up copy of all work in progress, and final assignments, in case of IT failure or work being lost.

- b) The following dates should be evident on every assignment given to learners:

- date when issued,
- date for any formative assessment or feedback,
- date when assignment is to be handed in,
- date when the assignment will be returned with written feedback.

- c) All assignments should be issued with clear assessment criteria, which inform the learner of what is required to achieve the highest grade (in line with awarding body procedures). The criteria to distinguish pass/fail should also be issued. Learners should be told that all marks or grades are provisional when awarding body moderation is required.

The assignment should be:

- challenging to learners,
- varied in approach,

- contribute to the development of learners' skills,
 - reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of learners.
- d) Assignment cover sheets should give the learner the opportunity to comment on their own performance in completing the task(s) (if appropriate). Learners should be encouraged to comment on their own performance.
- e) Learners must be given a clear procedure of how and to whom the assessment is to be submitted. Assignments must be submitted to the designated lecturer who is to assess the work.
- f) The assignment must be manageable for learners, especially in the spread of deadlines.
- g) Assignments must be manageable for learners in that whole unit assessments are broken down into smaller elements, with deadlines for each element.
- h) There must be some formative assessment of learner performance (in line with awarding body guidelines), which may be written or oral, to improve the final performance. Learners must be advised to keep a copy of all assignments, even as work in progress, in case learners or lecturers lose assignments.

7.3 Submission and return of work

- a) Learners who are unable to complete their assessment by the hand-in date must contact their lecturer to discuss. This must be done before the hand-in date.
- b) Lecturers may grant an extension if they feel the request is reasonable and appropriate and meets the agreed criteria below:
- medical condition/illness (with documentary evidence),
 - bereavement,
 - Academy IT failure,
 - absence from Academy on approved business,
 - Academy staffing problems.

The decision to grant an extension must be recorded by the lecturer in writing and a copy stored should there be any challenge by the learner.

If the learner claims that the work is lost (e.g. left on the bus) this will not be accepted. Learners should ensure that they have a back up copy.

If the assignment is handed in by the extension date then the full mark range will be applied.

- c) If, due to special circumstances, a learner cannot hand work in on time, and a lecturer does not feel it fits the agreed criteria, then an extension must be requested.
- d) If the assignment is not handed-in by the original or re-negotiated deadline, then the work will not be marked. The learner should be informed that the work should be produced to meet the pass criteria only.

- e) If a learner fails to hand in main assignment material by the agreed date, action will be taken by the programme/course team leader.
- If a learner fails to hand in part or all of an assignment by the agreed date the course team leader should be promptly informed, to enable further action.
 - The course team leader will then determine, the appropriate action, which will include an interview with the learner to investigate the reasons for non-submission.
 - If this final date is not met, options and actions will be reviewed/agreed and confirmed in writing.
- f) Completed assignments must be handed in to the relevant lecturer or delegate at the agreed date, place and time. For main assignment work a receipt will be issued to the learner.
- g) All assignments must be marked within the agreed time of the hand in date. All marked work should be returned to the learner with the following:
- clear mark or grade as required by the awarding body,
 - written feedback which clearly shows the reasons for success/failure against each of the criteria for assessment,
 - where the learner has the opportunity to improve clear guidance should be given (in line with awarding body requirements) on actions required to effect improvement,
 - comment/correction of spelling and punctuation where errors are made by the learner,
- h) If the member of staff cannot return the work within the required time then the learners should be informed and the learners should then be informed of the new deadline.
- i) If the learner has work referred then the subject team will agree and make a written record of a resubmission date. The assignment should be assessed against the full range of the marking criteria.
- j) In the event that there is a Academy closure, the loss of buildings or an emergency relating to disease or pollution, then:

Copies of all essential coursework and examination marks should be held in a fireproof room or cabinets.

It is crucial that all coursework and examination marks are logged and backed up. All marks stored on the Academy network will be appropriately backed up.

Programme/course Leaders must convene meetings as soon as possible to consider the effect of the emergency on learner coursework, assessments and examination entries and compensate learners as appropriate.

7.4 Storage of work

- a) Assignments will be stored in designated areas and not returned to learners until the awarding body moderation process is complete (unless the work is required for revision purposes).

- b) Learners' assignment work should be returned to them after the Awarding Body has externally moderated it.
- c) All main assignment marks should be appropriately recorded and copies kept in the programme/course management file.

8 External Assessment

- 8.1 External assessments are carried out in accordance with the awarding body's requirements e.g. Assessor in work-place Observation – giving Expert Witness assessments on practical skills. All learners are required to follow the instructions laid down by the awarding bodies. Failure to do so may result in disqualification from the examination.
- 8.2 Any learner with a learning difficulty and or disability is entitled on request special consideration in accordance with the awarding body guidelines.
- 8.3 All learners are notified of the time and location of their external assessment.
- 8.4 The cost of initial registration with the awarding body and each examination and/or submission of coursework is the responsibility of the learner.

9 Plagiarism and derivative work

- 9.1 Where it is suspected that main assignments may be subject to plagiarism or contain derivative work then lecturers should refer to the Academy 'Guidelines (policy) on Plagiarism' for appropriate guidance.
- 9.2 Lecturers should always follow awarding body guidance.

10 Appeals Procedure

- 10.1 If a learner is unhappy about a mark or grade awarded then s/he should speak to the lecturer in the first instance and ask for further clarification of the assessment decision. The lecturer will provide this clarification using the assessment criteria for the assignment.
- 10.2 No appeal can be made against the academic judgement of the lecturer in awarding the mark or grade.
- 10.3 If the learner believes there has been maladministration of the assessment process, resulting in an unfair assessment, s/he should appeal in writing to the internal verifier and/or programme/course team leader. This statement must make clear the grounds for the appeal and the nature of the alleged maladministration.
- 10.4 There will be a full investigation of the alleged maladministration. Subsequently, the appeal may be:

dismissed;

or

upheld and this may require the assignment to be re-submitted and/or re-assessed; or

upheld and require a new assignment to be set where it would be inappropriate to re-submit and/or re-assess the original assignment.

10.5 If the learner is not satisfied with the decision, s/he may appeal to the Principal. The Principal will investigate the circumstances of the appeal and may:

dismiss the appeal; or

uphold the appeal and require the assignment to be re-submitted and/or re-assessed; or

uphold the appeal and require a new assignment to be set where it would be inappropriate to re-submit and/or re-access the original assignment.

10.6 The Principal's decision will be final, however final and fair opportunity to the awarding body is still open to the learner if the learner still remains unhappy..

10.7 If the learner is unhappy with the outcome of the Academy's internal appeals procedure detailed above, s/he should follow the appeals procedure laid down by the awarding body.

11 Internal Verification and Standards Moderation

11.1 Internal verifier(s)/moderators must be appointed at the start of the course/ programme

11.2 Internal verification/moderation must be planned, on-going and not end loaded.

11.3 The internal verifier/moderator monitors different aspects of the programme.

11.4 An assessment plan will include dates for internal verification to take place.

11.5 All teams should carry out standardisation activities in order to ensure consistency.

11.6 All main assignments must be internally verified before being given to learners to complete.

11.7 Team meetings before, during and at the end of the semester should also be used for internal verification.

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