Policy on Assessment and Feedback

Aims

1. The aim of the policy on assessment and feedback are to provide a framework for:

    a. Designing, writing and reviewing assessment and to ensure a common understanding of the purposes of assessment and feedback.

    b. Ensuring consistent and equitable arrangements for the submission and recording of summative assessment.

    c. Ensuring the provision of effective and timely feedback on assessed work.

    d. Ensuring the timely and efficient disclosure of marks and retention of all assessed work.

Scope

2. This policy applies to all assessed work which contributes to an undergraduate or postgraduate taught programme of study. Exemptions from the core requirements may only be granted by the relevant Faculty Dean.

Assessment Design Principles

3. Assessment and feedback are integral to supporting effective student learning.

    - Assessment is a tool for guiding learning and for judging performance and the level of attainment

    - Well thought out assessment and feedback can influence student learning through guiding study practices and developing skills, knowledge and ability.

    - Assessment and feedback should be appropriate to the level of the module and be designed to allow the student to demonstrate their performance against the assessment criteria.

4. Effective and efficient assessment and feedback must be central to the curriculum design process.

    - Assessment and feedback should relate clearly and directly to programme or module aims and learning outcomes. Assessment components should encourage effective learning and require students to engage with the subject material.

    - Effective assessment results where programmes ensure that proper consideration is given to assessment across the breadth of the programme.

    - Efficient assessment results where assessments are scheduled appropriately throughout the academic year to avoid bunching and overloading students and staff at any time.

5. Assessment must be valid, reliable and consistent.

    - Assessments should be designed to ensure that they assess the appropriate learning outcomes and for the information on the individual assessment components to be clear, explicit, accurate and timely. The standards expected of the student should reflect the level of the module.

    - Valid assessments are ones which measure all or part of the stated learning outcomes of the module or programme.

    - Reliable assessment will produce the same or very similar results with a student or cohort of students if they were retested, meaning it is consistent in its methods and criteria.

6. Opportunities for feedback and formative assessment will be included in all programmes.

- Students should have the opportunities to receive feedback on their progress to date and have the opportunity to use that feedback to close any gaps between current and desired performance in summative assessment.

- Feedback can be delivered by staff and student peers and which can be written, electronic and verbal and either to an individual student or group.

- Modules can have a mixture of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment.

7. Feedback must be high quality and timely.

- High quality feedback is constructive and encourages self-assessment, reflection and making judgements against criteria and standards.

- Feedback should reflect performance on the specific piece of work, and be forward looking to support on-going student learning.

8. Forms and methods of assessment and feedback must be varied and appropriate.

- Programmes should ensure a range of assessment and feedback methods are utilised across modules for both summative and formative assessment.

- Where new methods of assessment are introduced students should be given the opportunity to practice the form of assessment to ensure that any summative assessments are measuring their subject knowledge and skills rather than the proficiency in the assessment method.

9. The University will provide the appropriate environment and resources to ensure staff and students are supported adequately.

- Generic and tailored workshops and individual pedagogic support will be provided by the Learning and Teaching Development Service.

10. Roles and responsibilities for both staff and students will be communicated clearly.

- For assessment and feedback to work effectively both staff and students have clear roles and responsibilities which will be clearly communicated at the beginning of each semester.

Summary of Core Requirements

11. Academic units must set specific and firm deadlines, naming the date and time of submission, for all summative coursework assessments.

12. All assessments must be submitted and marked online. In instances where the assessment has a physical form and cannot be submitted online, an exception to this element of the policy can be granted by the relevant Taught Programme Dean on a case-by-case basis.

12. All deadlines must be clearly communicated to staff and students within or before the second week of teaching each academic term/semester. Academic units must maintain internal evidence of deadline dates and the means by which staff and students are notified of them.

13. Academic units must have reliable and consistent procedures in place to record the date and time of the submission of assessed work and to provide evidence of submission date and times if and when requested.

14. Requests for extensions must be managed through the University Personal Extenuating Circumstances process. A central record of PEC applications received and extensions granted must be kept for annual review by Boards of Studies.

15. The normal maximum allowable extension is two weeks for all full-time undergraduate and postgraduate students, with proportionate allowance for part-time students.

16. Academic units must record any summative assessment submitted after the published deadline as late (unless a PEC has been granted). **The policy on late submission was changed from the start of Semester 2 of 2020-21 onwards, to a sliding scale policy. For details of the policy up to an including**

Semester 1 of 2020-21 see paras 33-35 below. For details of the policy in place from Semester 2 of 2021-21 onwards see paras 36-43 below.

17. All feedback on coursework assessments must be returned to students within 20 working days of the submission date, this includes non-term/semester periods (i.e. student holidays) but excludes University closure periods and Bank Holidays.

18. Feedback on examinations and provisional marks should be returned to students within 20 working days from the end of the exam period.

19. Academic units should devise procedures to release provisional marks awarded on any summative assessment to students as soon as they are available and within the stated turnaround deadline. Provisional marks should be disclosed to students, whenever practicable, as an integer on the appropriate University common mark scale.

20. Academic units must maintain student confidentiality in the disclosure of marks, regardless of whether marks are distributed electronically (e.g. through the VLE, NESS or email) or physically (e.g. scripts or marks sheets, posted in a central location using student numbers).

21. Academic units must retain any summative examination scripts and coursework submissions which contribute 30% or more of a final module mark for a period of one year after the award of the degree.

22. Boards of Studies are responsible for reviewing records of submission and feedback turnaround to monitor the consistency and equitability of practice. Information on this will be provided in Annual Monitoring and Review reports and in Faculty Annual Strategic Plans.

23. Internal and external review processes will ensure that academic units have developed and are maintaining policies and practices that incorporate all the core requirements.

Assessment and Feedback Policies

General

24. Details of the core requirements must be published in Degree Programme Handbooks and the schedule for deadlines and return of feedback should be published on the virtual learning environment

Submission of Assessed Work

25. Academic units must set specific and firm deadlines which provide details on the date and time of submission for all summative assessed work.

26. All assessments should be submitted online. This could be through the appropriate VLE or directly to NESS, depending on the disciplinary requirements of the assessment. The only exceptions to this are assessments which are constituted of physical artefacts, for example models or artworks, and in such instances any written elements that make up part of the assessed work should be submitted online. In such cases an exception to this element of the policy can be granted by the relevant Taught Programme Dean on a case-by-case basis.

26. The schedule of deadlines and examination dates should be coordinated by the Academic Unit before the start of the academic year to prevent conflicts or bunching of deadlines.

- Academic units should not set a single deadline date in any single semester for the submission of assessed work. This is applicable from semester 2 2020/21.
- The finalised assessment deadlines should be communicated to all staff and students within or before the second week of teaching each semester.
- Submissions dates should not be scheduled for University closure days and normally not during student holiday periods.
- Academic units should ensure that students from other academic units who are registered for their module are made explicitly aware of the arrangements for submission of work of the academic unit that 'owns' the module.

- Academic units are recommended to have standardised submission times, and to avoid times that fall outside of core working hours or the end of the working day in case of any technical issues arising which prevent timely online submission.

27. Academic units must have reliable and consistent procedures to record the date of time of the submission of assessed work and to provide evidence of submission times/dates if requested.

- Electronic submission (e.g. through the VLE, Turnitin, NESS) should be set to contain a date/time stamp that can be recorded and a means put in place to provide evidence of the submission to students.

- The date of time of the limited number of physical submissions should be recorded, for example, by supervised sign-in sheets or time-stamped cover sheets and mechanisms put in place to provide evidence of the submission to students.

28. Academic units should compile a list of late or non-submissions against the list of those expected to submit.

- Stage co-ordinators and personal tutors of students who have a pattern of late or non-submission should be informed for monitoring purposes.

29. Anonymous marking for summative assessment should normally take place and submission procedures should be put in place which facilitate this practice.

30. The University acknowledges that anonymity is difficult to maintain for some types of assessment and for small cohorts; therefore Academic units may mark summative coursework non-anonymously for some pieces of assessment where it is considered that students would benefit from more appropriate personalised feedback.

- Academic Units should identify assessments for which they would wish to mark non-anonymously and provide a rationale which clearly articulates the benefits of the approach for students and staff.

- Proposals with the accompanying rationale will be considered by Student-Staff Committee. The documentation should be provided to the Chair and Secretary in advance to allow appropriate consultation with the student body.

- The Board of Studies will receive feedback and recommendations from the Student-Staff Committee. Both the SSC and Board of Studies have to be in agreement in order for the Board of Studies to approve requests.

- Details of which assessments are marked non-anonymously should be provided to students in Degree Programme Handbooks clearly explaining what this means in practice and how the approach is beneficial to them.

- Requests for non-anonymously marked assessments should be considered by SSCs and Board of Studies in the year prior to implementation.

Extension requests

31. Requests for extensions must be managed through the University's Personal Extenuating Circumstances application process (https://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/Procedures/change/PEC.htm)

- Academic units must put in place consistent and transparent arrangements for the submission and management of PEC extension requests.

- Students should be made aware of the application process in advance of any submission deadline. It is recommended that students are reminded of the process at the beginning of modules and when assignments are circulated.

- PEC decisions are made in the home academic unit of the student rather than the owning academic unit of the module where an extension is being requested. The home academic unit should liaise with the module owning academic unit in decision making.

- Academic units must maintain a central record of all PEC applications received and applications granted. Boards of Studies are responsible for reviewing records annually to ensure a consistent and effective approach is taken.

32. The normal maximum allowable extensions is two weeks for all full-time undergraduate and postgraduate taught students, with proportionate allowance for part-time taught students.

- The length of the extension granted will vary according to the individual circumstances submitted in the PEC application.

- PEC Committees can approve extensions beyond these guidelines in exceptional circumstances.

- Extension deadlines may fall within closure or holiday periods as long as there are appropriate arrangements in place to record and confirm the submission date and time.

Late Submissions

The following (paragraphs 33-35) apply to Semester 1 2020/21 only.

33. Academic units must record any summative assessment submitted after the published deadline as late.

- Distance learners must submit by the UK date and time published not their local time zone.

- If a student fails to submit work by an agreed extension deadline the work will recorded as late and the penalties for late submission be applied.

- If a student fails to submit a re-sit assessment by an established re-sit deadline a mark of zero must be applied.

34. Group coursework is subject to the policy on late submissions and any late submissions will receive a capped mark unless a prior extension is granted.

- PEC applications from groups of students are not permissible but individual students may make reference to related PEC applications from other students if appropriate.

35. In marking late submissions, the mark which would have been received had the work been submitted on time should be recorded alongside the capped mark.

- In borderline cases the Board of Examiners may wish to take account of the mark which would have been received, in addition to other factors to consider the support of the award of a higher classification.

- Feedback to the student should be provided as normal and include information on the grade the student would have achieved if the work had been submitted on time.

- In the case of submissions that are more than seven days late and received a mark of zero, Academic units should exercise discretion as to the amount and type of feedback given.

The following (paragraphs 36-42) apply from Semester 2 of 2020/21 onwards, and constitute a change in policy for late submissions.

36. The normal expectation is that students will hand their work in on time. Any summative assessment submitted after the published deadline will be marked as late (unless a PEC has been granted). If a student fails to submit work by an agreed extension deadline the work will recorded as late and the penalties for late submission be applied.[*]

---

[*] Note: for 2020-21 UEC agreed an amend to the PEC policy which allows a submission of up to 30 minutes late for 24hr take-away papers, without penalty or requiring a PEC application, due to the challenge of remote assessment/IT difficulties.

37. Where a student is permitted to submit a piece of work on more than one occasion prior to the published deadline, the final submission prior to the deadline will be the version that is marked. Where a student submits a piece of work prior to the published deadline, and subsequently submits a further version after the published deadline, the final version of the piece of work that has been submitted prior to the published deadline will be the version that is marked (this may only be varied in exceptional cases, and only on the basis of a PEC submitted by a student setting out these circumstances).

38. For students studying remotely in a different time zone to that of where their programme is delivered, the deadline refers to the time in the location of the programme's delivery (GMT/BST for the UK, or the relevant Malaysian and Singapore time zone for the branch campuses) not the local time zone of where the student is studying or completing the assessment.

39. A sliding scale of late penalties will be applied to **all** summative assessment, regardless of the format or type of submission. The majority of submissions will be online submissions. For the small number of submissions which due to their format (e.g. sculpture) require a hard-copy submission, academic units should bear this in mind when setting deadlines for hard-copy hand in dates, where a deadlines at 4pm on Friday would have a disproportionate impact if a student was slightly late but not physically able to submit until the following Monday or (in the case of bank holidays) the Tuesday. For this reason, it is recommended that any hard copy or physical submissions are scheduled for earlier in the working week.

40. This sliding scale will come into effect from Semester 2 of the 2020-21 academic year. It will not be applied retrospectively to Semester 1 of 2020-21, but does apply to any assessment submissions in Semester 2, including Semester 2 assessments in 'long thin' modules that ran throughout the academic year 2020-21.

    The sliding scale for late submission works on the following basis:

    - A fixed penalty of a 5% deduction of the final agreed mark, for every calendar day that the work is submitted late.

    - Deductions will accrue daily for either a 7 day period, or until the mark reaches the pass mark (40 for undergraduate modules, 50 for integrated masters and PGT modules, and the relevant pass grade for non-modular programmes). Therefore it works on the following basis:
        - Submission by the deadline: final agreed mark
        - < 1 day late: (final agreed mark) *0.95
        - < 2 days late: (final agreed mark) *0.90
        - < 3 days late: (final agreed mark) *0.85
        - < 4 days late: (final agreed mark) *0.80
        - < 5 days late: (final agreed mark) *0.75
        - < 6 days late: (final agreed mark) *0.70
        - < 7 days late: (final agreed mark) *0.65
        - After 7 days = mark of zero.

        The relevant pass mark for the module is a 'floor' below which the mark cannot fall due to the daily penalties, within the 7 day period following the deadline.

    - Work submitted after 7 calendar days should be given a mark of zero.

    - For the purposes of the definition of a 'day' under the late submission policy, this means calendar days and it should be read as 24 hours. For example, if an assessment deadline has been set for 12 noon on Tuesday 23 Feb. 2021 a piece of work submitted at 12:00:00 on Wednesday 24 Feb. 2021 will be deemed to be one day late; a piece of work submitted at 12:00:01 pm on Wednesday 24 Feb. 2021 should be deemed to be two days late.

41. Group coursework is subject to the policy on late submissions and any late submissions will receive a mark with the applicable penalty applied unless a prior extension is granted. PEC applications from

groups of students are not permissible but individual students may make reference to related PEC applications from other students if appropriate.

42. In marking late submissions, the mark which would have been received had the work been submitted on time should be recorded:

- Feedback to the student should be provided as normal and include information on the grade the student would have achieved if the work had been submitted on time.

- In the case of submissions that are more than seven days late and received a mark of zero, Academic units should exercise discretion as to the amount and type of feedback given.

43. Where a student has been given a PEC extension, penalties for late submission will only apply after the extended deadline granted by the PEC has passed – and then on the same sliding scale basis detailed above, according to the exact submission time relative to the extended deadline.

44. If the piece of work is marked on a non-discriminatory marking scale or given a categorical grade (i.e. pass/fail or merit/pass/fail), then work submitted past the set deadline will receive a mark of zero. If student fails to submit a re-sit assessment by the established deadline, academic units must record the mark as zero.

Feedback on Assessed Work

45. Academic units are responsible for maintaining and publicising to students a clear statement on the delivery of feedback to cover the following:

- The various ways in which students will receive feedback on their assessed work.

- The schedule for the return of feedback on assorted types of assessment.

- Guidance on how student should make effective use of feedback.

This statement should be included in degree programme handbooks and posted on the virtual learning environment.

46. Feedback must be provided to students for all assessments both summative and formative, including written and practical examinations.

- Feedback should be appropriate to the type of assessment and should explicitly address the assessment criteria in order to justify the mark awarded and to demonstrate how to improve in future assessments.

- When whole cohort feedback is provided students should be made aware of the opportunity to receive individual feedback on request.

- In the case of formative assessments, feedback can be provided on a sample of the work submitted by a student.

47. Feedback must be provided in a timely manner to ensure that it is received by students early enough to influence their future assessment tasks.

- All feedback on coursework must be returned to students within 20 working days of the submission date, including non-term/semester periods.

- In cases of official University closures turnaround deadlines should be extended for the same number of days as the closure days.

- Feedback should be provided to those students who had late submissions at the same time feedback is provided to the rest of the cohort. Where this is not possible feedback to those students with late submissions should receive feedback within 20 working days of their actual submission.

- Students who submit work early will receive feedback within 20 working days from the date of submission alongside the rest of the cohort.

48. Undergraduate and Postgraduate dissertations and final stage projects constituting 40 or more credits are exceptions to the 20 day return of feedback requirement, as long as students receive timely feedback on earlier drafts.

49. Feedback and provisional marks examinations should be returned to students within 20 working days from the end of the exam period. For semester 2 examinations feedback should be provided by the start of the next semester.

50. If feedback will, because of unforeseen circumstances be returned after the 20 working day deadline, students should be notified as soon as possible and be informed on when to expect their feedback.

- If feedback is late only on a small sub-set of the cohort for a given assessment Academic units should use discretion in deciding whether or not to delay the return of feedback to all students.

Feedback on Written and Practical Examinations

51. In cases of large cohorts taking written or PC examinations academic units may choose to provide group feedback. Potential methods of providing group feedback are:

- Designated times to provide oral feedback to a cohort, highlighting general strengths and weaknesses as well as strategies for improvement

- Personal Capture videos which provide oral feedback to the cohort posted on the VLE

- Written feedback posted to all students in the cohort via the VLE

Where group feedback is provided students can request individual feedback. Potential methods of providing individual feedback are:

- Designated times when module leaders are available to provide feedback in their offices or a suitable room

- Designated feedback sheets that can be removed from an examination script and returned to students

- Designated times when students may under the direction of a marker or module leader, see their examination script and any comments provided.

Feedback on non-written/PC examination can take the following potential methods:

- Oral feedback on presentations and oral examinations to demonstrate potential responses and provide suggestions for improvement.

- Visual and /or physical hands-on feedback on practical examinations, performances and observations of professional practice to provide guidance and demonstrate suggestions for improvement.

52. Academic units may use discretion in deciding whether or not to return copies of examination scripts to students. Under the Data Protection Act Academic Units are not obliged to provide students with access to original exam scripts or copies of those script.

- Students have a legal right to request access to the breakdown of marks and to marker's comments.

- If students are given the opportunity to view examination scripts or receive copies of scripts it should be explained that the aim is to provide feedback and not to challenge marks or examiner's comments.

Disclosure of marks and return of assessed work

53. Academic units should devise procedures to release provisional marks awarded on any summative assessment to students as soon as they are available and within the deadline of 20 working days.

- It is good practice to disclose provisional marks at the same time as feedback to encourage students to value both and to use feedback effectively.

- Student confidentiality in the disclosure of marks should be maintained regardless of whether marks are distributed electronically (e.g. the VLE, NESS, email) or physically (e.g. on scripts or mark sheets, posted in a central location according to student numbers).

- Students must be informed that provisional marks on summative assessments are subject to review and potential moderation prior to Board of Examiners.

- Where a case of plagiarism is currently being investigated the Academic unit should not enter a mark for that student but should return marks as usual to the rest of the cohort.

- Information on the disclosure of provisional marks must be published in degree programme handbooks and reiterated when feedback and provisional marks are returned to students.

54. Academic units should retain copies of assessments as follows:

- Summative examinations and coursework which contribute 30% or more of a final module mark for a period of one year after the award of the degree

- Representative samples of formative coursework from each cohort for one year.   Samples can be photocopies or scans and should include the assessment and the feedback provided.

Monitoring and Review

55. Academic Units are responsible for keeping central records of all PEC applications received and extensions granted. Boards of Studies are responsible for reviewing these records annually to monitor consistency and develop effective practice.

56. Academic Units must maintain evidence of the deadlines dates and times for coursework submissions and of the means by which staff and students are notified of them and of the individual submission times.

57. Academic Units must devise and implement procedures for documenting the date of return of feedback to students for each assessment and, when practicable, for retaining a copy of the feedback in accordance with the University Retention Schedule.   Board of Studies are responsible for reviewing these records annually and monitoring adherence to core requirements for equitability and consistency.

58. Academic Units on an annual basis through Student-Staff Committees and Board of Studies should review the existing approved non-anonymous assessments to ensure that these remain appropriate for the following academic year.

59. Academic Units must keep a record of assessments which have been approved for non-anonymous marking and report this in Annual Monitoring and Review reports.

60. Internal and external review processes will ensure that academic units have developed and are maintaining policies and practices that incorporate all applicable core requirements.   Annual Monitoring and Review (AMR) will review adherence to the core requirements and Learning and Teaching Reviews (LTR) will include random module checks to ensure implementation at the module level.

61. Faculty Annual Strategic Reports should include consideration of performance against the 20 working day turnaround requirements for feedback on assessed work.

Last Approved by UEC, February 2021	
Last modified by LTDS, February 2021	
Intended for use by	All academic staff
	School Administrators
	Faculty Learning and Teaching Teams
Contact	ltds@ncl.ac.uk 0191 208 3978