

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

1. Introduction

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process in which aims, intended learning outcomes, teaching methods, assessment tasks and assessment criteria are aligned in order to ensure that the overall quality of the learning experience is maintained. This involves a variety of different assessment tasks set against the learning outcomes at modular level which together cover the programme's learning outcomes as described in the programme specifications.

Maintaining the College's assessment processes is vital in ensuring that the standards of the College are upheld for the sake of all our stakeholders (students, Leo Baeck College's sponsoring Movements), institutions of higher education in the UK and abroad, employers and other regulatory bodies. Furthermore, that there is confidence that those students who have been awarded degrees have shown that they have attained a level of achievement set by the College and validated by validating bodies, which conforms to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

Assessment is used to measure students' knowledge, understanding and/or skills and thereby form judgements about their achievements in order to:

- help in the learning process by providing both formative and summative feedback about achievements as well as areas requiring further learning;
- make decisions about progression and awards.

The College is committed to:

- ensuring that its assessment procedures are fair, transparent and ethical;
- that assessments do not discriminate against students on the basis of religion, gender, sexuality, ethnicity or disability;
- informing students in good time about assessment tasks and helping students understand the requirements and criteria by which they will be judged;
- providing feedback as fast as possible;
- using a wide range of assessments to provide as many opportunities as possible for students to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities;

- ensuring that the external examiner scrutinises the College's assessment practices, assessments, examination results, and standards with other institutions of higher education;
- providing an appeals procedure;
- periodically reviewing and quality-assuring its assessment procedures and policies through the Course Teams and the Academic Board.

2. The Type, Quantity and Scheduling of Assessments

2.1. It is the responsibility for each tutor to ensure that s/he has the right balance between formative and summative assessments, and that s/he has provided students with opportunities to learn, reflect and practice skills before being required to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in assessments. Furthermore, tutors must ensure that the assessment tasks set measure the extent to which students' learning and attainments meet the intended learning outcomes outlined in their module descriptions as well as any generic skills.

2.2. It is the responsibility of the Course Teams to ensure that the overall number, type and balance of assessments is appropriate throughout the programme of studies; that the assessments help measure students' learning and attainments measured against the learning outcomes at programme level; that assessments set by tutors at module level are appropriate and that the standard of the programme is maintained over time. The Course Teams are also responsible for analysing trends, collating information and monitoring standards.

2.3. Curriculum review is the responsibility of the Academic Board and requires the setting up of an ad hoc body with external members. This takes place in preparation for the validation and revalidation events as well as in the event that a programme is modified or developed in a substantial way. The overall purpose is to ensure that the College's practices in assessment reflect subject and educational needs and that it is developed to suit the evolution of the degrees and the changes in external circumstances such as changes in elements of the academic infrastructure, the QAA Quality Code and benchmark statements. It must also take into consideration the guidance and requirements of the collaborative partner in preparation for validation.

2.4. Deadlines for submission of assessed work and the dates of examinations are set by the Head of Academic Services. It is her/his responsibility to ensure that the dates set avoid any clashes in examinations, that no student has to sit more than two exams in any one day and that the College has sufficient time to enable marking by the internal examiners, including the scrutiny of marks by the external examiner before the meeting of the Examinations Board.

2.5. It is the responsibility of the Academic Co-ordinator to inform students and staff of the time table for assessments and examinations agreed upon. The dates are also in the course handbooks.

3. Assessment, Progression, Classifications and Marking Schemes

3.1. Assessment

3.1.1. Completion of a module or unit is demonstrated by the student when s/he has achieved the learning outcomes specified for the module or unit. A single or multiple method of assessment is set for each module/unit and it is the responsibility of the student to complete all requirements set out for that module/unit of study.

3.1.2. Assessments at the College may be non-numerical and numerical. The numerical assessment ranges from 0-100. The pass mark for HE Level 4,5,6, is 40% and for Level 7 is 50%. In modules or units in which a non-numeric assessment is given, the grade is marked as a pass or fail.

3.2. Progression

The Programme Specifications set out the number of credits students must achieve on each and every award.

Progression of students is normally reviewed by the Examinations Board at the end of each year and will result in a decision about the student's academic standing. In order to progress the student must have passed the required modules or be allowed to proceed with a credit deficit. This credit deficit can be made up by a reassessment or a deferred assessment.

3.3. Qualifications and Classifications

LBC will follow Middlesex University's regulations on the awarding of classifications - See Section E4 Assessment and Progression regulations for taught programmes. <https://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies/university-regulations>

3.4. Marking Schemes:

The Course Teams are responsible for developing, and reviewing the marking schemes used across programmes. Any changes to the marking schemes need to be reviewed by the External Examiner(s) and agreed with the collaborative partner.

3.5. Administrative Codes

LBC will follow Middlesex University's administrative codes as detailed in item E5 and items E7.7. of the Assessment and progression regulations for taught programmes. <https://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies/university-regulations>

4. Roles and Responsibilities in the Assessment and Progression of Students

4.1. For the responsibilities of the **first and second examiners** in assessing the work of students see Item 7 below.

4.2. The Course Team Leader and the Head of Academic Services are responsible for checking that all students have fulfilled the requirements for progression as detailed in the College's Handbooks, Codes of Practice and Regulations.

4.3. Examinations Board:

4.3.1. The authority of the Examinations Board is derived from the Academic Board. The Examinations Board receives and approves module grades, the progression of students and the confirmation of classification of awards.

4.3.2. Module grades and progression recommendations are subject to confirmation by the External Examiner at the Examinations Board. Decisions of the Examinations Board are final subject to formal ratification by the Collaborative Partner.

4.3.3. All efforts will be made to reach a decision by consensus taking into account the view of the relevant External Examiner. In the event that there is disagreement a vote will be taken and the matter at hand will be determined by a simple majority. Each member will have one vote. In case of equality the chair will have the casting vote.

4.3.4. Minutes of all meetings of the Board including any decisions taken are written down, circulated, approved and kept by the College.

4.3.5. **Declarations of Personal Interest:** Members who have a personal interest, involvement or relationship with a student being assessed must declare this at the outset and may be asked to abstain from a discussion or a decision taken at an Examinations Board.

4.3.6. For more details on membership, procedures, powers and accountability of the above mentioned bodies, see the relevant Terms of Reference. As an expert on the College's policies and regulations, the Head of Academic Services is a member of the Academic Board and the Examinations Board.

5. Accreditation of Prior Learning

5.1. Accreditation of prior learning is limited to one third of the total number of credits of the award the student is registered on.

5.2. Students who did not request APL during the admissions process may apply at the beginning of the academic year by approaching the Head of Academic Services. Students must continue to attend classes while waiting to hear the outcome of their request.

5.3 All requests for accreditation will be considered by the Collaborative Programme Accreditation Board. The Board will consider and were appropriate award credit in respect of claims for accreditation put forward by the student.

5.4. All applications for the accreditation of prior certificated learning must be made in writing.

5.5. In order to assess prior certificated learning against the learning outcomes of the award they wish to study, students will be asked to provide the certificate, the transcript with the grade achieved and a copy of the curriculum/ syllabus/specification of the prior programme. In some cases the student may be asked to provide additional information.

5.6 Students wishing to have experiential learning certified will have to prepare a portfolio of evidence. The contents of the portfolio will depend on the learning they can demonstrate. This will be derived from the context and type of experience and/ or work they have been engaged in. The student will have to show how the learning derived from the experience and/or work is related to and equivalent to the specific learning outcomes of the modules they wish to claim credit for.

5.7 The decisions of the Collaborative Programme Accreditation Board are reported to the Examination Board and are subject to scrutiny by external examiners appointed to the programme.

6. The Setting and Conduct of Assessments

6.1. General:

6.1.1. It is the responsibility of **each tutor** to set appropriate assessments for the modules s/he teaches (see 2.1. above). **Tutors** must include in their module information about the type of assessment(s) they intend to use, its (their) relative weight¹ and whether each component must be passed in order to pass the assessment. Furthermore, tutors are asked to include general assessment criteria for the module.

Where possible and appropriate, lecturers are encouraged to include a detailed description of essay titles, presentation requirements, etc. for

¹ When designing the module specifications, lecturers should be aware of the possibility of weighting the various components of the assessment in order to give more/different value to those components deemed essential. Furthermore, they can specify the minimum passing grade required for each component part of the assessment.

inclusion in the Course Handbooks. Such details enable students to plan their workload for each semester.

6.1.2. All draft examination papers require approval by the relevant External Examiner.

6.1.3. The Head of Academic Services will determine the date by which detailed information about assessments must be conveyed to the students.

6.2. Conduct of Examinations:

6.2.1. The Head of Academic Services or his/her representative is responsible for all the technical arrangements for conducting examinations. This includes preparing the examinations papers, examination booklets, informing staff and students of the date, time and location of the exam, arranging and setting up the examinations room, ensuring that the exam is held under proper examination conditions, preparing a list of students, hiring, guiding and briefing the invigilators, collection of scripts, etc.

6.2.2. The Head of Academic Services or his/her representative has the right to remove a student from an examination if there has been an examination irregularity.

6.3. Conduct of other assessments:

6.3.1. It is the responsibility of the Academic Co-ordinator:

- to record when written papers are handed in
- to ensure that the scripts are delivered and collected from the first and second examiners

6.3.2. It is the responsibility of the Head of Academic Services to arrange for the scrutiny of the scripts by the External Examiner.

6.4. Student Conduct under Examination Conditions

6.4.1. It is the responsibility of the **students**:

- to inform themselves of the dates of examinations and submission of assignments.
- to arrange in good time (at the beginning of the academic year) approval for any form of concessions due to long term illness, disability, language difficulties etc.
- to inform the Examinations Officer if they are unable to sit an exam or hand in an assignment at the earliest possible moment.

6.4.2. Students should behave in a manner appropriate to an examination. Students should observe silence, must not converse with other students, should not smoke, should not take into the exam materials not sanctioned by the examiner (e.g. papers, books) or any personal effects such as handbags, cases, mobile phones.

6.4.3. Laptops and dictionaries are not permitted in the examinations room unless special authorisation has been given.

6.4.4. Students must not be involved in any form of cheating or plagiarism.

6.4.5. Students may not remove their answer sheets from the examination room.

6.4.6. Students may not leave their seats without permission of an invigilator.

6.4.7. Students arriving an hour after the exam has begun will not be allowed to sit the exam. No extra time will be given to students arriving late.

7. Assessment Regulations

7.1. Responsibilities of first and second examiners

7.1.1. First examiner: S/he is the tutor of the module. S/he must determine the learning outcomes, assessment criteria, marking criteria, the assignment(s) and their weighting². It is the responsibility of the first examiner to provide detailed written feedback when marking. This can include annotations in the body of the essay/exam. However, it is the final summation explaining in detail how the mark was assigned written on the marking sheet which is essential. The annotation involves both feedback to the student and evidence of the mark reached. The feedback as well as the marking sheet should include reference to the assignment title, learning outcomes and assessment criteria. This is for the benefit of the student, the second examiner, the external examiner, and anybody else who subsequently reads the scripts and the marking sheets. The marking must be done within seven to ten days at the most. The final mark should have been determined and the results conveyed to the Head of Academic Services or her/his representative within three weeks at the most. Any confidential comments not given to students are to be written on the confidential marking sheet, if necessary.

7.1.2. Second examiner: S/he knows the subject but is not always part of the (full time) faculty. S/he must be aware of the learning outcomes and the marking criteria determined by the first examiner and ensure familiarity with the bibliography of the module. The second examiner can provide annotation of the script and must provide a summary on the marking sheet but does not have to reiterate comments already made by the first examiner. The marking must be done within a week from the moment the examiner receives the scripts, and this includes moderation.

7.1.3. When marking, **both examiners** must grade using the appropriate marking scheme. We should avoid using marks ending in 9, e.g. borderline

² Methods to prevent bias can include: not awarding grades until all the scripts are read and annotated; dividing them into degree classifications; rereading the first scripts after the last ones have been read, etc...

cases. It is important for both examiners to look at the whole cohort to ensure that the same standard is being used to evaluate every student.

7.1.4. It is the **joint responsibility** of both examiners to moderate the final mark. The purpose of moderation is to guarantee that the final mark is fair and equitable, ensuring that standards are set at the right level and maintained both through the cohort as well as in comparison with past years. Once each examiner has reached his/her mark they are to discuss the scripts until they reach an agreement about the final mark. If there is a large discrepancy between the two marks originally set the examiners must explain how they resolved their differences and agreed the final mark on the marking sheet. They must then hand in the results to the Head of Academic Services or his/her representative.

7.1.5. **Oral pieces** of work are hard to second mark, so they are only second marked in those cases where they represent more than 20% of the final mark. In those cases a second examiner must be present, and the presentation must be recorded or filmed. The tutor has to provide the second examiner with assessment criteria against which to judge the presentation and a record of how the grades were awarded is required.

7.2. Anonymous marking

Students are asked to write their names on their assessments and examinations. Due to the size of the College it is impractical to use anonymous marking.

7.3. Double marking (not blind)

The College's policy is to double mark all examinations and assessments whose value exceeds 20% of the total mark, both written and oral.

7.4. Internal moderation disagreements

All efforts should be made by the first and the second examiner to agree on the final mark. In the rare case that there are discrepancies between the marks being awarded and these differences cannot be resolved, the script is presented for moderation to the Examinations Officer. If moderation fails the Examinations Officer or another tutor appointed for that purpose by the Dean will mark the paper. The Examinations Officer cannot moderate his/her own modules. In such an event another tutor will be appointed.

7.5. **External examining** External Examiner(s) check for overall consistency of marking as well as comparing it to the marking of other institutions. For further details about the role of the external examiner in overseeing assessments see the Code of Practice on External Examining.

8. Final Mark and Release of Marks

8.1. Calculating and ascertaining final marks is the responsibility of the Head of Academic Services. In the event that this task is delegated by

him/her to another person s/he retains the overall responsibility for the process. This responsibility includes the weighting of marks and calculating the final grade for the module, based on the guidelines provided by the module's lecturer and the College's regulations.

8.2. Provisional grades may be released to students following agreement between the first and second examiner, with the proviso that the grades are not deemed final and are subject to the approval of the Examinations Board and the ratification by the Collaborative Partner. The purpose of this measure is to provide students with early feedback on their examinations and assignments. It is the responsibility of the Head of Academic Services to ensure that the results are free of errors and to ensure that they are transmitted to the students at the earliest possible time.

9. Release of Final Awards

9.1. Final awards are released to the students by the Academic Co-ordinator only after they have been signed off by the External Examiner and approved by the Examinations Board and ratified by the Collaborative Partner

9.2. Meetings of the Examinations Board take place at least twice a year. The meeting at the end of the first semester is there to process the module grade results of studies completed in the Autumn semester. This is done for administrative purposes. These results are submitted to the collaborative partner for ratification at the end of year together with all the remaining module grade results from the Spring semester and the year-long modules.

9.3. The schedule of meetings is made known to staff and students at the beginning of the Academic Year.

10. Confidentiality

10.1 All assignments (papers and exams scripts) must be treated as strictly confidential. The final mark must be disclosed to students in a way which protects the confidential nature of the mark.

11. Non-Native Speakers of English

11.1. When marking the assessments of non-native speakers, examiners can ignore minor slips in grammar and spelling mistakes particularly during the student's the first year of the student at the College.

12. Assessment Regulations Applying to Students with Disabilities

12.1. See Code of Conduct for students with Disabilities.

13. Concessions

13.1. Concessions may be granted by the Examinations Officer in cases of mitigating circumstances. See the document entitled 'Mitigating Circumstances/Concessions Procedures'.

14. Irregularities

14.1. **Illegible scripts:** All assessments apart from examinations must be typed. All examination scripts must be written in ink, unless explicitly stated or special dispensation has been granted to an individual student. In the event that a script of an exam is illegible, the examiners send the script to the Course Team which determines the course to be followed. The most common procedure is to ask the student to reproduce a legible script under supervision, while retaining the original script for comparison. The tutor may decide to deduct up to 10% of the exam mark in case of illegibility.

14.2. **Plagiarism:** See advice in the Course Handbooks. See regulations on Plagiarism, Collusion and Poor Practice.

14.3. **Non-Attendance:** Students are expected to attend classes, unless there are extenuating circumstances justifying their absence. Students are asked to inform the Head of Student Services if they cannot attend class. A minimum class attendance of 80% of sessions is required. Students whose attendance falls below the 80% attendance requirement without valid justification and have failed to achieve the learning outcomes set out for the module will be deemed to have failed the module and must retake it.

For further information about attendance see College Guidance on Attendance Monitoring.

14.4. **Late submissions or non-attendance of examinations:** If a student does not show up for an exam or fails to submit an assignment on time, s/he will be awarded a failing grade unless s/he has contacted the Examinations Officer and obtained a concession either before the deadline or as soon as possible depending on the circumstances. However, non-attendance at an exam or work submitted late because of extenuating circumstances or following the grant of a concession will be considered to be a first submission.

14.5. **Deferral of Assessment / Extenuating circumstances.**

Where a student fails to sit an examination or is unable to submit all or part of their course work due to extenuating circumstances supported by acceptable evidence the student may be permitted to sit/submit the failed assessments as if for the first time by a date to be determined by the

Examinations Officer The Examinations Officer may prescribe whatever form of assessment s/he considers suitable taking into account all circumstances of the case and including the use of viva voce examination. In cases where leave of absence is more complex the matter must be brought to the attention of the Mitigations Team.

14.6. All cases of Extenuating circumstances must be conveyed to the External Examiner. These will be considered and may be taken into account by the Examinations Board when determining the classification of degrees and the progression of students. In order to facilitate this, the Examinations Officer will summarise all such cases. Access to the original evidence is restricted to the Chair of the Examinations Board, the Head of Academic Services and the Secretary of the Examinations Board.

In cases where special assessment arrangements have been agreed in advance such as in cases of learning disabilities, there is no need to take these concessions into account when determining the classification of the degree and/or the progression of the student.

14.7. Fails:

14.7.1. Where a student fails a module, he/she may re-sit/resubmit the examination or assessment at a date not later than August of that academic year. In particular circumstances involving illness or personal distress, the Academic Board will determine the date by which the failed assessment can be retaken.

14.7.2. Not more than one re-sit/re-submission will be permitted.

14.7.3. Where an assignment or examination has failed in addition to its re-sit/re-submission, the student shall not be allowed to complete the programme, until s/he has re-taken the said module and passed it unless the module is compensatable.

14.7.4. Where a student re-submits an assignment or re-sits an examination only a borderline pass is achievable.

14.7.5. At level 5 and above, following re-sitting of an exam and or the resubmission of an assessment, where capping the reassessed component(s) results in an overall module fail grade, whereas with no capping, the overall module grade is a pass, a minimum pass grade shall be awarded for the module.

14.7.6. The Examinations Board has the authority to grant compensation in those modules marked as compensatable. This is subject to the student's satisfactory overall performance and provided the student has achieved a grade of between 35-39% for levels 5 and 6 and 45 - 50% for Level 7.

14.7.7. The Examinations Board may exceptionally exercise discretion in a student's favour, where it appears to the Board that strict interpretation of a particular assessment regulation would cause injustice to the student. In

such an event an appropriate entry must be made in the minutes of the meeting.

15. Maintenance of Accurate Records

15.1. It is the responsibility of the Head of Academic Services or his/her representative:

- to ensure that the results have been entered into the students' files, both in hard and electronic copies, and are transmitted to the students at the earliest possible time
- to maintain the student files in an accurate manner
- to retain copies of the work of students as determined in the Data Retention Schedule.

15.2. Questions or queries arising about the recording of marks must be brought to the attention of the Examinations Officer.

15.3. Transcripts and certificates

Transcripts of grades are sent to students following the completion of the Programme. This will normally occur within 2 months of the publication of results by LBC.

Certificates will be sent within 4 months of the publication of results by the collaborative partner.

16. Information and Training on Assessment

16.1. Guidelines on assessment including agreed marking criteria and assessment regulations are published in the College's course handbook.

16.2. Information and training on aspects of the theory and practice of assessment and the College's policy on marking and annotation is made available to all teaching staff in staff training sessions.

16.3. The College holds a variety of reference books on assessment in the Resource Centre.

16.4. The Head of Academic Services is responsible for organising the training which is part of the overall provision for staff development. This is done in consultation with the Course Team leaders of the College.

17. Academic Appeals and Complaints

See the College's Code of practice on Appeals and Complaints.

Middlesex regulations can be found at <https://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies/university-regulations>