Section J: Assessment Policy

1   Policy Aims

1.1   The University of Brighton Assessment Policy aims to promote good practice, consistency and rigour in summative assessment design and practice in terms of:

    i.   clarity and student understanding of assessment criteria and assignments;

    ii.   promoting learning (including the quality of feedback to students);

    iii.   evaluating attainment of the intended learning outcomes;

    iv.   appropriateness to the student profile, level and mode of study;

    v.   consistency and rigour of marking;

    vi.   internal moderation and scrutiny by external examiners.

1.2   The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Code of Practice on Assessment informs these aims.

2   Purposes of Assessment

2.1   The purpose of assessment is to:

    i.   evaluate the extent to which students have achieved the desired learning outcomes of their programme, or part of their programme, in order to record that achievement for the award of credit and to recognise student achievement– **summative assessment**;

    ii.   provide opportunities for students to receive feedback on their learning in order that they can improve – **formative assessment**;

    iii.   provide an indicator of a learner's aptitude for a programme of study and to identify possible learning problems - **diagnostic assessment**;

    iv.   provide opportunities for staff to receive feedback on their teaching in order that they can improve - **quality assurance and enhancement**.

2.2   Formative and summative assessment will often take place simultaneously. Formative assessment may be summated and included in summative assessment whilst tutor commentary on a summative assessment can have a formative influence. In designing assessment tasks course designers should be cognisant of these differing but complementary aspects and should ensure that students are fully informed about these distinctions and how they might apply within the context of their particular course.

3   Guiding principles of summative assessment

3.1   Assessment must reflect programme content and be valid, reliable and fair to be effective.

The following principles apply:

3.2   Assessment design

    i.   the method of assessment will be appropriate to the curriculum and the achievement of the learning outcomes;

    ii.   assessment will be designed to encourage learning; to provide a range of learning opportunities to students; and to meet the diverse needs of students;

    iii.   multiple assessment methods will be used to counter possible bias associated with individual methods and should be consistent with learning and teaching practice;

    iv.   assessment tasks will be designed with due regard for security to limit or prevent fraudulent activity;

    v.   assessment criteria will be aligned to learning outcomes;

    vi.   each module will be assessed independently within the semester(s) in which it is delivered;

    vii.   assessment of students with disability shall be in accordance with University policy

    viii.   assessment tasks will be clearly stated in the module specification.

3.3   Marking, grading and internal moderation

3.3.1   i.   assessment practice and grading will be criteria based;

    ii.   assessment marking and grading schemes will be consistent and rigorous (refer **Section J3.3.2**); and

    iii.   all summative assessment will be subject to the application of appropriate internal moderation procedures (refer **Section J3.3.3**).

3.3.2   The University's marking/grading descriptors (available from staffcentral) are generic descriptors applicable to a broad range of academic disciplines.

3.3.3   University guidelines for the moderation of summative assessments (available from staffcentral) set out minimum requirements for the moderation of students' summative assessment.

3.4   Supporting student learning

In order for students to be fully engaged with assessment and its value to them in the learning process they need to understand fully the assessment criteria involved. Clarity and student understanding of assessment criteria and tasks will be facilitated by providing students with the following information at the start of each module/commencement of the course, as appropriate:

i.   the rationale for the specific nature and timing of the assessment tasks;

ii.   the assessment criteria for each element of assessment;

iii. assessment marking and grading schemes;

iv.   the specific elements of assessment on which students will be given feedback, the method and timescale to be employed;

v.   identification of specific PSRB requirements, where appropriate.

Additionally:

vi.   feedback to students will seek to support learning and facilitate improvement (see Sections B2.3 and B2.4 for requirements on providing timely feedback);

vii. the volume of assessment should not exceed that required to evaluate the learning outcomes.

4   Internal and external examiners

4.1   It is the responsibility of Heads of School to ensure that all internal examiners are provided with appropriate information, instruction or staff development as required, either through School specific provision or through more generic training and staff development provided by the University.

4.2   All external examiners must be provided with course specific guidance on assessment, including marking schemes and assessment criteria, in addition to University guidance issued as part of the External Examiner pack.

5   Implementation and evaluation: roles and responsibilities

5.1   The School Academic Scrutiny Committee is responsible for ensuring all taught course summative assessments reflect these principles; that assessment is applied in a fair and consistent manner across the School and that annual monitoring and review will occur within the overall context of the implementation of the University strategy.

5.2   Heads of School are responsible for ensuring all staff involved in the assessment of students are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities and ensuring assessment procedures are routinely quality assured, including measures of reliability.

5.3   The University will review this Policy periodically, as determined by Academic Board.

6   Guidance

6.1   Further resources on assessment and feedback can be found on the Centre for Learning and Teaching's website:

https://staff.brighton.ac.uk/clt/Pages/CurrDev/Assessment-and-Feedback.aspx