**Assessment Policy**

*1. Aims of the Policy*

This policy aims to outline the guidance around assessment briefs, assessment decisions, internal verification process and breach of academic regulations.

**2. Principles of Assessment**

All assessments in CECOS are based on the following principles:

1. *Authenticity*: All assessment activity must have processes in place to ensure that the

achievement is the student’s own work.

1. *Validity*: The method of assessment and the evidence provided must be appropriate and capable of demonstrating the achievement of learning outcomes and related assessment criteria of the provision at the appropriate level.
2. *Reliability and consistency*: The assessment results should be standardised across levels and provision. Internal verification and standardisation must follow the College and Pearson’s policy on Internal Verification).
3. *Fitness for purpose*: Assessment must be fit for the students and their learning outcomes.
4. *Explicit and accessible*: Clear, accurate, consistent and timely information on assessment tasks, assignments and procedures will be made available to students, assessors, placement providers, employers, and external verifiers/examiners.
5. *Manageable*: The scheduling of assignments and the amount of assessed work required provides a reliable and valid profile of achievements without overloading students

The CECOS assessment policy reflects and builds upon the **Guiding Principles set out in the UK Quality Code Assessment Guide** and provide a framework for ensuring assessment is appropriately managed. For qualifications which fall within the **Regulated Qualifications Framework** (RQF), regulatory authority and awarding body guidance is applied.

1. Assessment methods and criteria are aligned to learning outcomes and teaching activities to enable all students to achieve the desired learning outcomes.



[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Assessment is reliable, consistent, fair and valid.
2. Assessment design is approached holistically.
3. Assessment is inclusive and equitable.
4. Assessment is explicit and transparent
5. Assessment and feedback is purposeful and supports the learning process
6. Assessment is timely.
7. Assessment is efficient and manageable.
8. Students are supported and prepared for assessment.
9. Assessment encourages academic integrity.

**3. Assessment linked terminology** (*Guiding Principles 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10*)

*Assessment item*: a piece of assessed work, e.g. an essay, project, assignment or examination; assessment items should be valid, reliable and authentic

*Assessment brief*: guidance provided for students on how to complete a specific item of assessment, to include information about the nature of the task, the format for presentation, and assessment criteria, and, if used, the marking scheme

*Assessment criteria*: specify the qualities of student work required to successfully complete the assessment item and indicate how particular grades may be achieved.

*Formative assessment*: Formative assessment is any task or activity which creates feedback (or feedforward) for students about their learning. It has a developmental purpose and does not carry a grade which is subsequently used for summative purposes.

*Summative assessment*: Summative assessment is any assessment that contributes to the final grade/mark of a module or course to provide a measure of student achievement in relation to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

*Grade descriptors*: describe in broad terms the typical performance required to achieve a particular band of marks; CECOS publishes generic grade descriptors for HND work to be used by academic teams as a reference point or benchmark in establishing assessment criteria *Approval of assessment*: a process involving both internal and external scrutiny to assure assessment items and assessment criteria are appropriate in terms of academic level, and learning outcomes are valid, reliable and authentic and that there is broad equivalence for students across modules/units

*Moderation of marking*: a process to assure assessment criteria, and thus academic standards, have been applied consistently and that assessment outcomes are fair and reliable

*Internal moderation*: a process of professional engagement by college staff to demonstrate that the grades awarded are accurate, appropriate and consistent to ensure parity of standards

*External moderation*: a process of objective engagement by experienced academic peers (external examiners), independent of the College, to ensure that the level of achievement of students reflects the required academic standards and is comparable to similar programmes nationally

*Internal Verifier*: Undertakes internal verification, covering all Assessors and all units, in line with the internal verification plan

*IQA:* Internal Quality Assurance involves the impartial monitoring of assessment for consistency and quality carried out within the College. IQA may also be used to refer the person carrying out the quality checks – the Internal Quality Assurer.

**4. Assessment Briefs and Assessment Criteria** (*Guiding Principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10*)

Students must be provided with written assessment guidelines describing the nature of the task, the format for presentation and the assessment criteria for all items of assessment. This normally takes the form of an assessment (or assignment) brief and provides clear information for students on what they are expected to do, how they are expected to go about it and how their work will be marked.

Assessment briefs should include:

* Assessment criteria/grade descriptors - the basis upon which the quality of a student’s work will be graded
* Any specific constraints or requirements, e.g. word limits, and the need for good academic practice, e.g. referencing of sources
* Details of any marking scheme (if used) and/or grade criteria
* Submission procedures and deadlines, and the consequences of late, incomplete or non-submission.

In establishing assessment criteria, course teams should ensure they are benchmarked to the College’s grade descriptors and take account of subject benchmark statements as appropriate.

*Assessment requirements*

* Assessment criteria should be subject to internal/ external scrutiny before publication to students in order to assure academic standards.
* Assessment criteria should be discussed with students in classes, and feedback to students on their assessments should be informed by assessment criteria.

**5. Guidance on Internal Verification/Moderation**

Internal verification, or quality assurance of assessment, is part of an overall quality system at CECOS.

Internal verification has two components. One focuses on internal verification/review of assessment brief whilst the other is concerned with accuracy and consistency of the assessors’ judgements on student work.

Records of the internal verification activities for both the assignment and assessment decisions must be maintained and made available to the Chief Internal Verifiers and/or Director of Quality. See Internal Verification policy for further information.

**6. Assignment Submission:**

Assignments are to be submitted on or before stipulated dates. Failure to do so without prior authorisation will result in non-acceptance of the assignment in that term and a ‘Referred’ status will be recorded in the results. Assignments submitted within a week after the submission date will still be accepted but the grade will be capped at “Pass”.

*Request for Late Submission/Extenuating Circumstances:*

* Extenuating Circumstances or ‘ECs’ are circumstances which are unexpected, significantly disruptive and beyond the control of students that affect their ability to meet an assessment deadline or affect performance in assessment. Please see Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedures for further information.

**7. Feedback to Students and Return of Student Assessments** *(Guiding principles 6 & 7)*

In normal circumstances, assessment items should be marked and returned to students with feedback within 4 weeks of the date of submission. Where, for valid reasons, this cannot be achieved, the member of staff concerned should consult with the course/programme manager and where appropriate their line manager; agree an alternative date, and inform the students affected of the revised date of return. In such circumstances, it may be desirable to provide students with feedback in advance of the return of the assessment item and determination of the provisional grade.

Staff should enter grades for marked coursework assessment items onto the VLE as soon as possible after the work for the whole group has been marked. Students must be advised all grades for assessment items remain provisional until confirmed by the Academic Assessment Panel and therefore a provisional ‘fail’ grade can be turned into a ‘pass’ grade or vice versa.

Effective and timely feedback (i.e. commentary on performance identifying strengths and ways in which improvements could be made with an emphasis on feedforward) should be given to students for all formative and summative assessments. See assessment feedback to students guide for further information.

**8. Confirmation of assessment decisions** *(Guiding principles 1 & 2)*

There is a two-stage process for considering the assessment taken by a student in any given year or other defined period of study.

*Stage 1* involves a meeting of the Academic Assessment Panel after every term to review the results for the modules taken and to confirm recommendations regarding the grade achieved by each student.

*Stage 2* involves the Progression Board meeting once a year who review the student’s entire profile of module results, confirm progression or award recommendations and, if appropriate, the classification of each student.

Progression Board normally meet at the end of the academic year of study which we. See Progression Board Policy for further information.

9**. Publication of Results** *(Guiding Principles 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10)*

The administrative department is responsible for the publication of official results to students following the meeting of the Academic Board. Publication of results is made electronically via the secure student portal (VLE)

It is the student’s responsibility to ascertain his or her results.

Course administrators/coordinators will provide student with an official transcript when a student completes their studies.

**10. Re-assessment**

For HND programmes, re assessment links usually open a day after the academic assessment board has taken place.

For HND programmes, if a student is referred or misses on some of the ‘Pass’ criteria in a submission, he/she has to resubmit again using the same assignment brief covering the missing criteria during the resubmission time.

Re-assessment or resubmission will follow the requirements of the awarding body or higher education institution. Students will be made aware of the timings and conditions for all resubmission or re-assessments though handbooks and through confirmation by teaching staff.

**11. Academic misconduct/academic integrity** *(Guiding principle 10)*

Academic misconduct covers a range of offences which collectively can be described as cheating. The following is not an exhaustive list and the College reserve the right to include any other type of cheating under the terms of this policy:

* Plagiarism by copying and passing off, as the student’s own, the whole or part(s) of another person’s work, thereby not properly acknowledging the original source. This particularly relates to material downloaded from the Internet or copied from books, journals or magazines
* Collusion by working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as individual learner work
* Submitting work done by another learner as their own including work paid for from professional sources
* Impersonating another candidate in an examination, introducing unauthorised materials into the exam room, unauthorised communication during an exam and obtaining an advanced copy of an ‘unseen’ exam paper.
* Falsely claiming extenuating circumstances to gain an unfair advantage in assessment outcomes

**Consequences of Academic Misconduct**

CECOS does not tolerate actions (or attempted actions) of academic misconduct. Cases will be investigated and where appropriate, the college’s disciplinary procedures will be applied. Students are advised that this can have an effect on their career prospects.

**12. Assessment Appeals**

 A student can appeal against the assessment decision(s) within fourteen days of the assessment result release date by the Assessment Board. All appeals against an internal assessment of grading decision will be subject to the process outlined in the CECOS’s Appeals Policy.

**13. Standardisation and Moderation of Marking.** *(Guiding Principles 1 & 2)*

In addition to IV process, the College holds standardisation meeting and markers training to ensure that academic standards are appropriate and consistent across course teams and reflect agreed assessment policies and assessment criteria, and that the assessment outcomes for students are fair and reliable.

**14. Ownership and Archiving of Student’s Assessed Work**

The material produced by students for assessment (essays, projects, computer disks, etc) is the property of the College, and may be retained until confirmation of marks awarded by Assessment Boards, possible appeals and quality audits.

Assessed coursework that has not been collected by the student will be retained by the College for six months after the relevant Assessment/Examination Board, after which time it may be disposed of, or student may request it be returned to them.[[2]](#footnote-2)

As per BTEC Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment 2018-19: Levels 4 to 7, “A holistic view of the programme should be taken to ensure there is an appropriate spread of assessment activities within and across the units. The units making up the programme should collectively allow students opportunities to develop, and be assessed in, higher level skills, such as analysis, literature searching,

1. UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance – Assessment. [www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Extract of the BTEC Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment 2018-19: Levels 4 to 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)