

## UCO Policy and Procedure

### HE Assessment, Feedback and Moderation Policy

Reference Code: UCOQH-PO027

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#### 1. Definitions of Key Terms

<b>Assessment</b>	The process of measuring the performance of students (as in examinations, assignments and other assessable work) that enables students to monitor their progress and contributes to their academic results.
<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	Specific criteria against which pieces of work are assessed. An understanding of the criteria must be shared by markers and students. Feedback should relate to these criteria.
<b>Module</b>	The individual components of a programme.
<b>Programme</b>	The full programme leading to an award.
<b>Feedback</b>	Information provided to students on the quality of their performance in relation to assessment criteria, which forms the basis of improved student learning.
<b>Formative assessment</b>	This type of assessment normally has no weighting in the final mark for a module or programme. The goal of formative assessment is to provide an opportunity for students to monitor their learning and provide feedback to tutors that can be used to review their teaching.
<b>Summative assessment</b>	Assessment is summative when the grading of an assessment contributes to the final grade for a class or programme of study. The aim of summative assessment is to evaluate students' attainment of the intended learning outcomes within a unit of study.
<b>Moderation</b>	The process of checking that assessment criteria are consistently applied across markers in marking students' work.
<b>Second marking</b>	Second marking is the process in which student work is independently assessed by more than one marker.

## 2. Scope and Purpose of Policy

This policy applies to all staff teaching on higher education programmes/awards and learners undertaking a higher education award with University Campus Oldham (UCO). All learners at UCO are entitled to learning support and assessment information that is clear, transparent, is compliant with the requirements of the awarding body and provides feedback on progress. This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant UCO policies and procedures. The policy is mindful of the regulations specified by partner Universities who are in most instances the final arbitrator of quality and standards. Level 4 and above courses delivered at UCO and Oldham College which are awarded by professional bodies will adhere to the quality processes relating to assessment, feedback and moderation as determined by that awarding body.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the HE assessment and moderation policy and procedures are implemented consistently across the institution and that the requirements of awarding bodies are met. In addition, the HE assessment and moderation policy and procedures are fully informed by the revised QAA Quality Code.

UCO acknowledge that “assessment” describes any process that involves the evaluation or appraisal of a student’s knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes or abilities. In line with the expectations, core practices and guiding principles of the Designated Quality Body and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, assessment is taken to be an integral component of teaching and learning, and serves multiple purposes. Assessment measures achievement of the outcomes of learning in terms of knowledge skills and understanding. The purpose of assessment is to:

- Provide guidance on how well students are progressing (formative assessment).
- Determine eligibility for final grading of module or awards (summative assessment).

UCO recognises that assessment is central to learning and teaching, and is not designed solely to measure student learning. In addition, essential to enhancing learning, is the provision of continuous feedback to students on their learning; it is recognised that feedback takes different forms (e.g. replies to posts on a discussion forum), but in relation to assessment, useful feedback is specific in telling learners the extent to which they have met published assessment criteria, and tells them what they need to do to improve. The role of feedback in effectively supporting student learning should be recognised at all stages of assessment, including the design stage, where factors such as the timing and sequencing of assessments and related feedback are considered, particularly where feedback is used to improve future work.

Moderation is a process through which UCO assures itself that academic standards are being met and that assessment procedures are being implemented in a way that ensures that assessment decisions are safe, fair and valid. The purpose of moderation is to:

- Verify that the UCO is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and applicable subject benchmark statements.
- Ensure that the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended programme outcome(s) and is effectively operated in accordance with partner institutional regulations.

- Verify that the standards of the awards that UCO delivers and the achievements of students are appropriate and comparable to other higher education providers which the external examiners have experience of.

### **3. Structure**

This policy is structured into four sections: Assessment Design, Assessment Standards, Assessment Feedback and Moderation. Each of the sections has principles with supporting statements.

### **4. Principles**

This policy is founded on the philosophy that assessment is for learning and not just of learning. It also recognises that timely and effective feedback to students and constructive use of assessment are integral to the learning process and have a considerable influence upon what and how students learn. The principles, procedures and processes of assessment should be explicit, valid and reliable. The key principles that underpin this assessment policy are:

#### **Validity**

Validity ensures assessment measures what it claims to measure.

#### **Reliability/Consistency**

Reliability refers to the accuracy with which an assessment measures the skill or attainment it is designed to measure. A reliable assessment consistently gives the same results under similar conditions.

#### **Fairness and inclusivity**

A fair assessment, in addition to being valid and reliable, provides equity of opportunity for learners in line with Equality legislation.

#### **Transparency**

A transparent assessment policy and guidelines will ensure clarity and understanding by all relevant stakeholders.

#### **Quality**

Quality is a key principle in ensuring the credibility and status of awards. Quality will be assured through adherence to the regulations and requirements of awarding and professional bodies and the UCO policy and guidelines, national award standards, programme approval and validation and monitoring and evaluation.

### **5. Policy Statement**

At UCO all of the programmes adhere to the assessment, feedback and moderation regulations outlined by their validating institution partners. UCO is responsible for the academic standards and quality of the programmes it designs and delivers and is therefore accountable for:

- Designing, approving, monitoring and reviewing the assessment strategies for modules and awards wherever the learning takes place.
- The consistent implementation of rigorous assessment practices and quality feedback, which ensure that the academic/professional standard for each award element is set and maintained at the appropriate level and that student performance is properly judged against this.

- Evaluating how academic standards are maintained through assessment practice and associated feedback mechanisms that also encourages effective learning and a high quality learning experience.
- Ensuring that External Examiner feedback is utilised effectively to inform future practice and enhancements to processes.

## 6. Process

The process and principles of assessment, moderation and feedback at UCO adhere to the expectations, core practices and are informed by the guiding principles of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

### Section A: Assessment Design

All staff at UCO adhere to the [Best Practice Guidance](#) for the approval of assessments and the Procedure for Submission of HE Assessment. All internal verification activity of assessment briefs should be recorded on the Internal verifier checklist for assessment briefs (Appendix A). Pearson Higher Nationals will use the Assessment & Assignment templates provided on [HN Global](#).

*1: Assessments are clearly matched to learning outcomes and set at the appropriate academic level.*

- a) Each learning outcome will be subject to summative assessment. This will be mapped and checked at the approval event
- b) Assessment tasks will be appropriate to the academic level of the module. This will be checked at the relevant programme approval event.

*2: Programme assessment strategies include a range of summative methods that encourage learning and counter possible bias associated with individual assessment methods.*

- a) Each module/programme assessment strategy is developed taking account of the way in which assessment/tasks integrate with each other, both within and across modules, pathways and programmes.
- b) Assessment tasks are designed on the basis that they are appropriate to assess the type of learning outcomes.
- c) Where appropriate, assessment tasks are work-related to ensure that graduates exit with appropriate employability skills.
- d) Where group working forms part of an assessment strategy, consideration should be given to whether marks should be awarded to individuals or to the group. The decision and way in which this is managed, should be clearly explained in the assessment strategy and communicated in all assessment briefs.

*3: Assessment practices are inclusive, ensuring all students have equal opportunity to demonstrate achievement.*

- a) Students will be given equal opportunity to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes and competence standards as appropriate.
- b) Where students have a confirmed disability, reasonable adjustments to assessments will be made where possible through individual learner support plans as outlined in the UCO HE Disability Policy.

*4: Programme assessment strategies include a range of formative methods/processes that encourage learning.*

- a) Each programme incorporates a range of formative processes including oral, written, and where feasible, peer assessment and feedback.
- b) Due regard is given to the inclusion of an early formative piece of work to promote skills development in Level 4 or the transition phase between levels i.e. early in Level 5 and 6.
- c) Where appropriate, some assessment tasks are designed to encourage students to apply formative feedback (from staff or peers) to improve their performance in the next assessment.
- d) Where less familiar types of assessment are used, timely opportunities will be made available for a student to practise and to receive constructive feedback.

*5: Assessment strategies and tasks promote good academic practice.*

- a) Assessments will be designed with due regard to preventing academic misconduct.
- b) Students will be informed about academic misconduct and its consequences using standard information.
- c) Appropriate support for the development of good academic practice will be provided for students.

*6: Assessment workloads are realistic and not over-burdensome for students and staff and are timed to support learning.*

- a) Assessment deadlines will be spread across an appropriate time period to avoid assessment bunching and minimise non-completion.
- b) The volume of assessment will not exceed that required to assess the learning outcomes.
- c) The use of elements within components of assessment (compound assessment) should not result in over-assessment within a module or programme.

*7: Assessment strategies are regularly reviewed and, where appropriate, revised.*

- a) Students and staff continuously review assessment and feedback practices through module and programme feedback channels, including at the Staff Student Panel Meetings. Staff invite external examiners to comment upon assessment and feedback mechanisms.
- b) Detailed analysis of student performance data should be undertaken as part of UCO Annual Evaluation process, and assessment strategies adjusted where necessary.
- c) Faculty Leads and Course teams regularly review workload equivalences to ensure a level of consistency across UCO.
- d) Module Leaders and Course Leaders will reflect annually on the appropriateness of the assessment strategy in light of student feedback, performance and external examiner comments, and implement enhancements as appropriate. This will be reflected in individual Annual Evaluation Reports.
- e) Module statistics will be reviewed at the relevant assessment boards and assessment reviews and where issues related to student performance are identified, an action plan will be implemented.

## **Section B: Assessment Standards**

*1: Assessment processes are transparent and clearly communicated to relevant stakeholders.*

- a) Clear information regarding assessment regulations and processes will be provided to students and other stakeholders.
- b) External Examiners will be provided with access to information about assessment processes.
- c) For each module, timely information will be given that clearly states the purposes and methods of module assessment, assessment criteria, and how and when students will receive feedback.
- d) Consideration will be given to how students may be more involved in the assessment process for each module/programme – e.g. self, peer, group activities, exercises to help students use assessment criteria, peer marking.

*2: Clear and appropriate assessment criteria are provided for all assessment tasks to promote effective learning.*

- a) Module teaching schemes integrate opportunities for giving and receiving feedback and establish this developmental practice as a fundamental element of the student learning journey.
- b) Each module assessment task has specific assessment criteria based on the module learning outcomes.

- c) Feedback should identify and praise good performance as well as highlighting areas and skills that need further development.
- d) Feedback should be forward-looking to enable students to close the gap between current and required or aspirational performance.
- e) Assessment criteria are developed with regard to the generic marking criteria in addition to the relevant learning outcomes.

*3: Assessment of students is carried out by appropriately prepared and supported staff who are competent to undertake this role.*

- a) Through the recruitment and induction process and annual staff development series, all members of the academic staff involved in the assessment of students' assessment are given training and support on assessment and feedback processes.
- b) Assessments will be set, marked and moderated by appropriately qualified staff.
- c) Assessment briefs will be developed in consultation with External Examiners.

### **Section C: Assessment Feedback**

*1: Students are provided with timely feedback which promotes learning, encourages critical reflection and facilitates development.*

- a) Students are made aware at the beginning of a module as to the purpose, weighting, and timing of assessment and feedback.
- b) All programmes will have a feedback strategy including both formative and summative feedforward and feedback.
- c) Individual formal feedback is provided to students on all summative assessed work.
- d) Opportunities will be made available for students to discuss their feedback with a module tutor as appropriate.
- e) Feedback will be provided for all summative assessments within 15 working days (3 weeks) of the hand-in date (dependant on awarding partner regulations).
- f) Students will be informed about the position regarding the reading of draft work for that module or programme prior to submission.

## Section D: Moderation

Marking and internal and external moderation processes will be carried out in accordance with the relevant partner institution's academic regulations and UCO staff adhere to the [Best Practice Guidance](#) for moderation.

### Internal Moderation

*1: All assessed work that contributes towards a final award will be subject to consistent, reliable and independent internal scrutiny*

- a) All modules and assessments covering all students across UCO will be independently internally moderated. All moderation activities should be recorded using UCO Internal Moderation Form (Appendix B) containing the assessed marks, module leader's and moderator comments and the Internal Moderation Module Sampling Record (Appendix C). Pearson Higher National will use the Assessment & Assignment templates provided on [HN Global](#). Course Leaders will send copies of all moderation documents to the HE Quality Partnerships Officer for audit purposes. The Course Leader will send a copy of the documents to relevant external examiners and these will be available at assessment boards and assessment reviews where applicable.
- b) Internal Moderation involves a review of assignments by an appropriate member of academic staff. The internal moderation process will sample assessments to satisfy the moderator that there is consistency and fairness.
- c) Course Leaders are responsible for developing a moderation schedule, a moderation sampling plan and a course team moderation brief following relevant partner institution's regulations. Records of these are sent to HE Quality Partnerships Officer.
- d) Where marking is shared between a number of markers, moderation should involve two processes. First there should be an initial discussion involving those who are undertaking the marking. This could take place before marking has started and be focussed on an outline answer and marking plan. Alternatively, the meeting could take place after a small number of assessments have been graded by each marker and considered by the person with overall responsibility for marking the assessment. The second stage in the moderation process will involve an independent moderator considering a sample drawn as before. This sample should include assessments marked by each of the initial markers.
- e) Where a single assessment constitutes 100% of the credits for a single module for an honours degree, or is a dissertation or research project, the entire assessment sample should be second marked.
- f) A sample of work across each of the grade boundaries, including borderline grades will be calculated based on the square root of the cohort size, it will be no smaller than 6 but no larger than 15. Where cohort sizes are below 6, all of the students assessed work will be moderated.
- g) All assessed work graded less than 40% and more than 70% will be subject to moderation.
- h) The sampling plan devised will identify risk: considering new tutors to the programme; new modules; specific identified modules.

- i) Where the internal moderator has concerns they will have a conversation with the module leader and Course Leader and may suggest a review and revision of marks. Where marks require a review, the entire cohort must be reviewed.

## **External Moderation**

To ensure the quality provision and maintain the standards of the awards it delivers, UCO places significant reliance on its External Examiners.

*1: All assessed work that contributes towards a final award will be subject to external independent scrutiny.*

- a) External examiners will be appointed by the relevant awarding body for a standard period of tenure for each award.
- b) External examiners will provide informed, independent and impartial judgements through reports that verify standards of assessment are comparable to other academic institutions.
- c) External examiners will judge that fairness and equity are evident in the assessment process, marking, grading and classification of student performance and that decisions are made in accordance with the relevant Academic Regulations.
- d) External examiners will report on the standards of achievements, identifying where appropriate, examples of good practice and reporting any concerns regarding standards of assessment.
- e) UCO will ensure that all concerns reported by external examiners are responded to appropriately and will take any necessary actions and disseminate good practice.
- f) All assessed work will normally be retained by UCO for the current Academic Year, plus one further Academic Year.

## **7. Monitoring and Review**

UCO is committed to regularly monitor and review this policy and its associated procedures to assess the effectiveness of its implementation and outcomes

## **8. Associated Documentation**

- Academic Regulations for partner institutions
- Academic Appeals Policy and Process (for UCO and relevant awarding body)
- [Procedure for the Submission of HE Student Assessments](#)
- [Best Practice Guidance](#) Notes: Providing Student Feedback
- [HE Disability Policy](#)
- [Best Practice Guidance](#) for the approval of assessments
- [Best Practice Guidance](#) to moderation

## 9. Appendices

Appendix A: Internal Verifier Checklist for Assignment Briefs

Appendix B: Internal Moderation Form

Appendix C: Internal Moderation Module Sampling Record

Appendix D: Assignment Cover Sheet

### Version History:

Issue	Changes	Author	Approved at	Date of Issue
1	Policy Implemented	Head of Teaching Scholarship & Excellence	QIC / C&Q	March 2020
2	Policy Review	Assistant Principal HE and Higher Skills	CQSC / Governors C&Q	June 2023

### Published on:

UCO Website	UCO Staff Intranet	UCO Student VLE
✓	✓	✓

## Appendix A: Internal Verifier Checklist for Assignment Briefs

(includes Case Studies, Projects, Practical Activities etc.)

This checklist is to be used by the internal verifier and the programme team to evaluate the suitability of assignment briefs and to ensure consistency of standards and practice in the design of assessment activities for UCO programmes.

**Course Title:** .....

**Year:** .....**Semester:** .....

**Mode of Delivery:**      Part-time day      Part-time evening      Full-time      Fast Track

(circle as appropriate)

**Module/Unit:** .....**Tutor:** .....

**Assignment title/no**.....

	YES	NO
Is the aim clearly stated?		
Are relevant learning outcomes identified?		
Are the tasks clearly identified?		
Is the assignment pitched at the correct level for the programme?		
Is the application of skills and knowledge required?		
Is the expected volume of work reasonable?		
Are the assessment criteria clearly indicated?		
Are the assessment grades clearly defined?		
Are the submission dates clearly indicated?		
Are the dates practical in relation to the scheduling of assignments relating to the rest of the programme?		
Overall, is the assignment suitable for the student group?		

**Internal Moderator's/Verifier's Comments/suggested modifications** (if applicable)

<i>Name of Internal Moderator/Verifier:</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Signature:</i>	
<i>Name of External Examiner</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Signature:</i>	

# INTERNAL MODERATION FORM

FOR COURSEWORK AND EXAMINATIONS

<b>SECTION A: MODULE AND ASSESSMENT DETAILS: <i>to be completed by the Module Leader (ML) or nominee</i></b>				
<b>Module code</b>		<b>Module title</b>		
<b>Academic year</b>		<b>Level</b>		<b>Module credits</b>
<b>Module leader</b>				
<b>Assignment title/number</b>				
<b>Assignment weighting</b>		<b>No. of markers</b>		
<b>Name of moderator</b>		<b>Date sample for moderation</b>		

Name of Marker	Total no. of assignments marked	Mean (AVERAGE in Excel)	70%+		60-69%		50-59%		40-49%		<=39%		Sample totals
			total	sample	total	sample	total	sample	total	sample	total	sample	
<b>Totals</b>													

Sections A and B completed by:	
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<b>SECTION B: MODERATOR'S REPORT: <i>to be completed by the moderator</i></b>		
Do you agree that the marks awarded are appropriate?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If you have answered 'No', please indicate why. (e.g. descriptive statistics across markers, variation in grade boundaries) and any other details:		

Do you recommend that marks should be adjusted?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the recommended adjustment:			
Is the marker in agreement re the adjustment?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Any further comments:			
Moderator's signature		Date moderation completed	
<b><i>If there is a major disagreement, the third party should complete Section C.</i></b>			

<b>SECTION C: ADJUDICATOR'S DECISION: <i>to be completed by the Adjudicator (if required)</i></b>			
Name of adjudicator			
Do you agree to any adjustment suggested by the Moderator?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the rationale for your decision:			
Adjudicator's signature		Date adjudication completed	
<b><i>Once completed, please return this form to the sampler, who should then forward the marks to LTS</i></b>			

<b>SECTION D: EXTERNAL EXAMINER:</b>		
Sample sent to External Examiner by:	Sample Size:	Date:



## ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET

<b>Student Name:</b>
<b>Module Title:</b>
<b>Module Code:</b>
<b>Assignment Type:</b>
<b>Assignment Title:</b>
<b>Full Time / Part Time:</b>

### Self-evaluation (feedforward)

Feedback from my previous assignment has included comments in text and development points summarised as:

[list here your development points and any specific comments from the assignment text that have indicated an area for improvement (do not paste the whole feedback) along with the action you have taken. This section is not included in your word-count].

Areas for improvement identified in previous assignment	Action taken

**Declaration:** This must be signed and dated by you before any work can be accepted for assessment.

I certify that all work now submitted for assessment has been prepared by me alone and that I have clearly identified any material which is not my own work or which has been included in work submitted in connection with any other module or project.

Signed .....

Date .....