

Assessment and Feedback Policy

PVC (Student Experience)
All LJMU Staff and Students.
Relevant to Academic Partnerships? Y
Academic Board, 8th June 2022
Dean, Teaching and Learning Academy
September 2022 (merger of multiple
policies into a single Assessment &
Feedback Policy)
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Relevant Documents

N/A

Academic Framework Regulations

ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK POLICY

This document relates to assessment and feedback for all LJMU students. The policy follows a clear assessment workflow: preparation and design of summative assessments, the assessment period and moderation of summative assessments.

Principles of Assessment and Feedback

The Assessment and Feedback Policy works the following core principles:

Equitability: LJMU assessment and feedback should provide all students with a fair and equitable opportunity to meet assessment criteria.

Transparency: All LJMU assessments should be written and communicated in such a way to be transparent to all students to help them understand what is required, how they will be assessed and provided with feedback.

Anticipatory: Assignments should be accessible in the sense of enabling all students, irrespective of physical disability/learning differences, to meet assessment criteria. Students must be supported in their understanding, development and submission of assessment items.

Flexibility: Alternative assessment provides a framework to meet the diverse needs of our students.

Accountability: All assessment design, feedback and marking must conform to LJMU curriculum standards and procedures as defined in the Academic Framework Regulations.

Collaborative: Where possible, students should be enabled and encouraged to contribute to assessment design, the development of marking criteria or choice of feedback methods.

Policy statements

This policy applies to all students on LJMU taught programmes including those delivered by partners.

Preparation and design of summative assessments

Learning outcomes: Assessment tasks and criteria must be aligned to relevant learning outcomes to ensure that students who pass the module, the level and the programme have met the intended learning outcomes. Assessment should not over (or under) assess any learning outcomes.

Internal approval: Summative assessments are validated as part of the 'Module Proforma' and amended only with the approval of the designated School and Faculty authorities.

External approval: External examiners are required to approve the form and content of all summative assessments and marking criteria at all levels. External approval is required prior to the publication of assessment information to students. Any changes to assessment requirements must be approved by the external examiner.

Clear assessment criteria: All assessments must have defined criteria, published in advance. Students must be assessed against these criteria and feedback should specifically relate to them. Information about criteria should be clear and explicit. Students should be able to understand and use the feedback they are given by explicitly relating it back to the criteria for the assessment task. The expectation is the criteria will align with LJMU grading descriptors. The latter are generic statements of required standards, and marking criteria need to explain specific expectations related to the assessment.

All programmes must have a feedback strategy: The purpose of feedback (be it diagnostic formative or summative) and how and when it will be provided should be made clear at the start of the module. This relates to all assessment types, including examinations. This needs to be transparent to students in the module information on the VLE and explained in programme review. This should include a rationale for the range of assessments and the organisation of submission deadlines.

Academic misconduct guidance: Assessment guidance should explain the consequence of, and penalties associated with, academic misconduct.

Alternative assessments: Any alternative assessment should be of an equivalent level and standard to the original assessment. It must assess the same learning outcomes as the original assessment. The University expects that an appropriate alternative to the standard assessment is available for students who are unable to undertake the standard assessment due to a long-term illness, disability, or personal circumstances. Any alternative assessment provided as a reasonable adjustment for a student with a long-term medical condition or disability must be appropriate for that student's condition.

Student assessment and feedback deadlines must be published on the VLE: Programme and module information should specify a feedback deadline alongside assessment submission deadlines. Clustering of assessment deadlines should be avoided where possible.

Online submission: Where feasible, work should be submitted electronically via the VLE. If submission of hard copy documents or artefacts is required, mechanisms should be in place so that students are not financially disadvantaged by this. Assignment guidelines should include clear instruction on the submission process.

Use of digital technology for completion of assessment tasks: Students must receive support (through written, video or workshop instructions) to ensure they can access and use any technology required for the purposes of assessment. All students should have the same opportunity of access and be treated equally regarding monitoring or processing of submissions.

Second marker/moderator: A second marker or moderator should be identified before the module is delivered. Ideally this will be a colleague who also teaches on the module or a member of the programme team.

During the assessment period

Alternative assessment

Alternative assessment refers to a change to the assessment strategy that is deemed necessary to ensure that equitable treatment for students. Alternative assessments

must meet all relevant learning outcomes and should not give any student an unfair advantage or disadvantage over their peers.

Students with long-term medical conditions or disabilities: Students who have disclosed to the University (or Partner College) a long-term medical condition or disability should have a needs assessment. This will identify the type of support required and signal any reasonable adjustment. The Individual Student Learning Plan (or its equivalent in a Partner College) may specify a range of suitable measures, such as additional time in examinations or flexible deadlines. There is an obligation on the module leader to make appropriate reasonable adjustments for the assessments on their modules. Students with an Individual Student Learning Plan should be assessed in accordance with that where practicable. The school disability coordinator or the central disability support team (or its equivalent in a Partner College) can offer advice regarding suitable alternatives. These may differ from those suggested on the Individual Student Learning Plan if they remain appropriate to the student's condition.

Alternative assessment for all students on a module. In very exceptional circumstances where there are operational reasons that prevent the original, validated, assessment occurring as scheduled, or there have been material irregularities with an assessment, an alternative assessment may be given to all students on the module. The decision to offer a replacement alternative assessment to an entire cohort needs approval from the faculty Assistant Academic Registrar.

Reasons for not offering an alternative assessment: There are very few circumstances when it would not be possible to offer an alternative assessment. Professionally accredited or regulated programmes may have prescribed assessment types. In these cases, the programme leader should contact the PSRB to establish whether an alternative is permitted. In addition, alternatives can be rejected if they are deemed impractical or unnecessarily expensive. This would need to be agreed with the assistant academic registrar.

Mark coursework anonymously: All summative assessed coursework assessments that contribute more than 20% to the final module mark, where feasible, should be marked through an anonymised process.

Mark examinations anonymously: All formal, institutionally scheduled examinations should be anonymously marked. This covers open book, seen paper, or unseen paper examination.

Anonymised marking exemptions: Exemptions from Anonymised coursework are as follows:

- Assessments in which students cannot remain anonymous because they are observed, e.g., presentations, performances, laboratory work, clinical practice.
- Assessments in which the production of the work has been closely supervised by the marker, e.g., art and design work, dissertation, thesis.
- Assessments where the code of practice for a professionally accredited course would be contravened if marking were anonymised.
- Where programme teams wish to provide individual, personalised feedback on summative assessment. Staff on these programmes should consult with student representatives to explain these exceptions.

Students can request access to comments: Please note that General Data Protection Regulation (2018) permits students to access any comments or internal correspondence about their work, whether made by internal or external examiners on any coursework. **With respect to examination scripts, GDPR does not afford students the right of access**, but the university is obliged to make staff annotations available **in a meaningful and intelligible form**.

Feedback: Feedback should be available 15 working days after the assessment deadline. Working days exclude Saturday and Sunday, bank holidays and any other day when the University is closed. Personal annual leave is deemed a working day. Note that feedback on final year, final semester examinations can be exempt from this requirement, except where a part-time student is taking such an examination and is continuing to study in the next academic year. **Note** that this does apply in instances

where students are unable to submit their work by the advertised deadline. In such cases, relevant academic staff are encouraged to provide feedback in a timely manner but it is recognised that working to a 15 day timeframe may no longer be feasible in relation to other workload commitments.

Students should receive in person or online face to face feedback on their first piece of assessed work: Programme and module teams must provide an early opportunity in each year of study for students to receive face-to-face feedback on their first piece of assessed work. This does not have to be in a one-to-one meeting. Feedback could be given in a group setting such as a tutorial, but the opportunity must be provided for students to discuss feedback on their work.

Moderation of summative assessments and workflow

All assessment must be internally and externally moderated prior to ratification at the examination board

Marking calibration events: If the number of tutors marking the same assessment is greater than 1, tutors should mark a small number of papers together at the start of the process to establish a shared understanding of marking and feedback quality.

Internal moderation

The purpose of moderation is to corroborate the reliability of marking

Moderation at all levels: Marking and moderation procedures at all levels should include sighted double marking/moderation of at least 10% of students' attempts at summative assessments (or 10 pieces, whichever is the greater) (See exceptions for non-standard items).

Moderation of dissertations or equivalent: ALL dissertations or their equivalents that have a value of at least 40 credits must be double marked. This means most L6 undergraduate, and all postgraduate dissertations will be double marked.

Moderation performance or presentation: Moderation can be challenging if an assessment does not involve the production of physical evidence, as with some types

of performance or presentation. Where possible, processes should be put in place for a second marker to attend a sample of assessment events to moderate. If this is not possible, the module handbook should indicate alternative moderation processes have been put in place to ensure consistency of marking and maintenance of standards. An example of a suitable alternative is to record events for later moderation.

External moderation

External moderation provides objective, external engagement with the assessment to ensure that marking is reliable and reflect sector-wide academic standards for relevant disciplines/subject areas.

External examiner role: The external examiner will be provided with samples in a timely manner to allow them to engage with the external moderation process. Samples of assessed work will include evidence of second marking and must align with the minimum thresholds outlined below (moderation sample) and be of sufficient size to enable the examiner to form a view as to whether student performance is judged against the appropriate standards. External examiners must ensure that assessments are conducted within the approved Academic Framework Regulations, comment on the effectiveness of the assessment and are expected to attend Boards of Examiners.

Workflow:

The first marker/s mark/s all submitted summative assessments in accordance with the agreed criteria/markings scheme.

Moderation sample: This is usually 10% of the validated summative assessment item (scripts) (or 10 pieces, whichever is the greater) for each module. The 10% sample should include the entire range of marks. Large cohorts with multiple markers may necessitate review of several scripts from each marker that will result in more than 10% of scripts being moderated. The group marking sample must include 10% from all markers.

Standard moderation (non-team marking)

A second marker marks the moderation sample using the same criteria/marketing scheme as the first marker. The marks of the first marker will stand, except in the following circumstances:

- o Where a second marker identifies the inconsistent application of the assessment criteria by the first marker, the work of the whole cohort should be remarked.
- o If there are issues of marks being consistently different (+/- 5 percentage points) between the first and second marker, the two markers should agree the marks and then an identical scaling should be applied to the entire cohort's work. The merit order must not be changed by the scaling process. Disagreements that cannot be resolved by the two markers will require arbitration by the module/programme leader.

Team marking moderation

A second marker marks the moderation sample using the same criteria/marketing scheme as the first markers. The marks of the first marker will stand, except in the following circumstances:

- o Where moderation identifies inconsistencies in the marking of an individual marker then scaling or remarking should be applied to all the work marked by that individual.
- o If there are issues of marks being consistently different (+/- 5 percentage points) between the first and second marker, the two markers should agree the marks and then an identical scaling should be applied to the entire cohort's work, not just individual summative assessments in a moderation sample. The merit order must not be changed by the scaling process. Disagreements that cannot be resolved by the two markers will require arbitration by the module/programme leader.

Moderation of non-standard assessment items: If an assessment does not involve the production of physical evidence, as with some types of performance or presentation, markers must make clear what processes are in place to ensure consistency of marking and

maintenance of standards. For example, presentations and performances could be recorded and examples shared and discussed at a meeting convened for that purpose. Where double marking has been considered and is not possible, the module handbook should indicate what moderation procedures are used instead.

Oversight of moderation

- The completion of the module mark verification report forms part of the evidence that internal and external moderation has taken place. The mark verification interface is in WebHub and the module leader must confirm that moderation has taken place by completing the module mark verification report in relation to several prompts.

- Oversight of all marking and moderation activity is invested in Boards of Examiners. Prior to a Board of Examiners, the Director is responsible for ensuring that procedures are followed regarding the consideration and approval of the form and content of all summative assessments that count towards the assessment of the programme and its module(s). The Director is also responsible for the completion of the moderation process, for ensuring that marks achieved by students for each summative assessment task are finalised by the deadline and that External Examiners have been involved in the moderation process.

Moderation of modules studied in collaborative partner institutions

Moderation of modules studied in collaborative partners should be done on a risk-based approach. Normally this would mean that LJMU staff would moderate 10% of assessments in the first year of the partnership. Depending on the outcome of moderation and the stability of provision, it might be possible to delegate most of the moderation to the collaborative partner in subsequent years. If this is the case, there would still be the expectation that annual risk assessments would take place to ensure that LJMU staff are confident that the moderation process is robust and in line with LJMU standards.

Definitions

Summative assessment: Summative assessments are conducted for the purposes of awarding credit, the right to progress through a programme of study, or of determining a final award.

Moderation: Moderation is a process to ensure that marking is consistent, fair and aligned with criteria, irrespective of whether the summative assessment is taken at the first or any subsequent opportunity.

Second marker: The purpose of the second marker is to ensure consistency by independently reviewing the marks awarded by the first marker(s) for a sample of work.

Double marking: Where two individuals independently mark the same piece of work

Feedback: Feedback should be aligned to assessment criteria, outline positive attributes and constructively alert the student to where improvements are needed.

Plagiarism prevention and detection software: The Turnitin service allows individual student's work to be uploaded and automatically matched for similarity with content on the web; certain electronic journals; and all assignments uploaded by LJMU and the other institutions using the service.

Personal circumstances: Students with personal circumstances that affect their ability to complete a scheduled assessment may request an alternative assessment. However, consideration should be given for an extension to a coursework deadline and rescheduling of the assessment to the next available assessment period (deferral)

Anonymity: Anonymity means that the marker does not know the identity of the student whose work they are marking. It ends when the final overall mark/grade is made available via the VLE (Virtual Learning Environments) (Canvas) or transcribed to a marksheet.

Alternative assessment: An alternative assessment will assess the relevant learning outcomes to the same standard and at the same level as the standard assessment. Alternative can relate to the mode of assessment (i.e., providing and adaptation to the standard approach) or method (i.e., assessing using a completely different approach)