# ASSESSMENT POLICY

**Varndean College**

**Assessment Policy**

1. **Policy statement**

   - The College recognises that regular assessment and effective feedback make a major contribution to the development of learning and in enabling students to realise their full potential.

   - Both formative assessment and summative assessment are central to the College's teaching and learning

   - Assessment strategies should be embedded in schemes of work as well as course and unit guides and understood by students.

   - Assessment should occur regularly, appropriately, fairly and accurately.

   - Records of regular assessments should be maintained and shared with students through STS Markbook and other means

   - Assessment should be sensitive to individual needs of students and take account of disabilities and learning difficulties.

2. **The Purposes of Assessment**

   To identify, both formatively and summatively, the positive achievements of each student and the areas of their work needing to be improved.

   - Formative assessment is aimed at recognising the positive achievements of each student and identifying the area of their work that need to be improved.

   - Summative assessment enables the tutor and student to know how the quality of their work relates to the standards of external awarding bodies.

   - To understand, clarify and share learning intentions, eliciting evidence of students' learning and providing feedback that moves them forward.

   - To further anticipate and identify each student's individual learning and additional support needs so that appropriate help and guidance can be provided.

   - To identify the level of challenge from which each individual student would benefit

   - To encourage students to act as learning resources for one another through methods such as peer assessment and peer tutoring and mentoring

   - To encourage students, individually and collectively, to take greater responsibility for their own learning through methods such as self-assessment

   - To inform the process by which each student set targets for attainment with their tutor

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- To enable tutors to evaluate students' understanding and progress and determine revisions to the way courses are taught and managed

**3.    Policy Objectives**

- To help students understand how they will be assessed and how their overall progress is monitored.

- To encourage students to be reflective and evaluate their own performance and set targets for improvement.

- To encourage students to be resourceful and to take responsibility for their own work

- To support a culture of reciprocal relationships where students collaborate appropriately with others

- To maintain an ethos which encourages resilience in facing challenges and emphasises the importance of fulfilling commitments and meeting deadlines. To ensure that STS records the standard to which each student is working in each course, enabling this to be compared to an aspirational target grade based on prior achievement.

- To ensure that assessment, internal verification and moderation procedures and practices follow regulatory body requirements.

- To deter plagiarism and encourage good practice in the use of sources.

- To ensure that those with a legitimate interest, including parents, and carers of 16-19 year olds, are informed clearly and regularly of students' progress.

- To support tutors and teams by encouraging the sharing of good practice within and between teams and making available appropriate staff development and resources.

- To ensure that teams work in accordance with the College's Equality Duty Policy.

- To obtain feedback from students to monitor how the policy is working through the quality assurance system and also Student Voice.

4.      **Responsibilities**

a)      **The Corporation and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:**

- The quality of provision and services offered to learners.
- Ensuring a commitment to continuous improvement.
- Supporting developments to improve the quality of assessment.
- Promoting staff development and the sharing of best practice in assessment.
- Reviewing this policy tri-annually in accordance with the College's Equality Duty Policy.

b)      **The Vice Principal (Curriculum) is responsible for:**

- Overseeing Assistant Heads of School who encourage the development of good practice through Teaching and Learning Projects and sharing best practice within and between Schools and Clusters.
- Acting as a point of consultation and advice about assessment issues and procedures.
- Overseeing the calendar of coursework deadlines.
- Oversee all aspects of the quality assurance

c)      **Vice Principal (Students Services) is responsible for:**

- Overseeing the tutorial  programme and individual progress reviews.
- Overseeing the annual reporting cycle.
- Overseeing the development and use of the Student Tracking System (STS).

e)      **The Exams Officer is responsible for:**

- Disseminating information from DfES, QCA, JCQ and the awarding bodies
- Entering and registering students for the appropriate examinations and resits in a timely manner, processing the results and disseminating certificates Advising College managers of the awarding body's procedures for dealing with plagiarism and misconduct in examinations Advising College managers on the awarding body's appeals procedure if there is justified dissatisfaction with the decisions of an external verifier or of assessment of externally examined units.

f)      **The Additional Support Team is responsible for:**

- Ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made to provision to ensure that substantial disadvantage does not occur for students with disabilities.
- Advising on appropriate strategies in relation to assessing students with learning difficulties.
- Advising on how a student's EHCP will impact upon assessment
- Assessing selected students and reporting to awarding bodies with recommendations for Access Arrangements.

- Setting up Access Arrangements for students with the awarding bodies.
- Producing profiles of students with learning needs

g) **Heads of School, supported by Assistant Heads of School and Programme Leaders, areas responsible for:**

- Leading and developing assessment practice and procedures within their School
- Monitoring assessment practice and procedures within their School and to ensure that assessment processes and criteria are reviewed annually by Programme teams as part of the SAR process.
- Disseminating best practice within and between their Schools.
- Ensuring that an appropriate volume of work is set for students by Programme teams and tutors.
- Ensuring that all programme teams adhere to assessment, progress review, target setting and reporting and recording procedures and deadlines.
- Acting as required in appeals and misconduct/plagiarism cases.
- Assessing the impact of assessment practices on students with disabilities and learning difficulties and ensuring Programme teams have access to appropriate advice and guidance.
- Implementing processes for obtaining feedback from students on assessment practice within their School.

h) **Programme Leaders, supported by Subject Teachers are responsible for:**

- Explaining their assessment and marking policy to students; specifying details on the setting, marking, returning and recording of student work and adherence to deadlines.
- On a weekly basis, setting all students independent study tasks – either whole assignments or particular tasks as parts of longer term assignments or projects Monitoring the completion of tasks and meeting of deadlines by individual students
- Providing regular and frequent feedback, including via STS Markbook, aimed at improving student performance (such feedback will take various forms, partly depending on the nature of each course, but it should include written feedback on an assignment at least once each half term).
- Ensuring consistency of assessment standards and procedures within r Programme teams.
- Publishing course materials providing guidance on internal and external assessment arrangements including: deadlines; word limits; details of how much help and guidance tutors are allowed to give e.g. looking at drafts etc.; rules on plagiarism; and moderation procedures.
- Keeping up-to-date team and individual records especially on STS of work that has been assessed and, where appropriate, the mark or grade given; The assessment of the work of their students against national standards; if they are responsible for internal verification, they should provide the internal and external verifier with all the information they require and ensure and guarantee the authenticity of each student's work.

- Providing realistic grade estimates on STS assessing the impact of assessment practices upon students with disabilities and learning difficulties and, where possible and in accordance with awarding bodies' regulations, make appropriate modifications.
- Taking account of student feedback when planning the development of assessment methods for each scheme of work.
- Considering assessment methods practices and procedures within the Programme SAR.
- Developing assessment practice through the Teaching and Learning Development Programme, including through research lessons and projects.

### 5. Procedures

#### a) Initial Assessment

- Pre enrolment interviews for students with learning difficulties, disabilities or special medical circumstances are carried out by the Additional Support team.
- Additional support requirements are discussed with the student based on, information from previous school and reports from external agencies.
- Profiles of individual students' learning needs will be available on STS from the start of the course

#### b) Coursework/Portfolio work Issues: Deadlines and Central collection

Clarity on when coursework deadlines fall in the year and the importance of meeting them benefits all members of the College community and is important in preparing students for expectations of Higher Education and employment. For the purpose of this policy, coursework is defined as any piece of work, which contributes to the final mark or grade of a course undertaken at the College.

- All students should meet published coursework deadlines.

- A calendar of coursework deadlines for the year will be published centrally by courses, as appropriate by September. After this, changes should be very rare and require the authorisation of the Vice Principal (Curriculum).

- Coursework should be handed in to the Registry and a receipt issued.

- Students may apply for extension to coursework deadline for legitimate reasons.

- Teachers should ensure that students are aware that if they fail to meet a coursework deadline their work may not be marked.

- It is unacceptable for students to miss lessons in order to meet coursework deadlines.

- Failure to meet coursework deadlines will be handled via the student management system

- For long projects and individual studies, frequent interim deadlines should be built in to help students structure their work and to provide necessary guidance, supervision and feedback. Failure to meet these interim deadlines should be treated seriously and trigger action via the student disciplinary process.

### c) Conflict of Interest statement

It is the duty of every member of staff or student to disclose any conflict of interest with his/her work or studies within college or any circumstances that might reasonably give rise to the perception of conflict of interest. Apparent or perceived conflicts of interest can be as damaging as actual conflicts of interest.

1. The general rule, is that disclosure should be made *at the time the conflict first arises, or it is recognised that a conflict might be perceived,* in writing to the Head of School. If the Head of School (or equivalent) has an interest in the matter to be discussed, the disclosure shall be made to the Principal.
Many situations will require nothing more than a declaration and a brief written record of that declaration, which must be held in the department's or college's records.

2. Some instances will however need to be dealt with by agreeing how the conflict can be actively managed. The approach adopted should be documented and copies provided to the relevant parties. A copy of the final plan must be held in the department's records. One or more of the following strategies may be appropriate to manage the conflict of interest:

    2.1 not taking part in discussions of certain matters;

    2.2 not taking part in decisions in relation to certain matters;

    2.3 referring to others certain matters for decision;

    2.4 resolving not to act as a particular person's tutor or supervisor;

    2.5 standing aside from any involvement in a particular project;

    2.6 It is the responsibility of those affected to comply with the approach that has been agreed.

### d) Standards Moderation

- When there is more than one tutor assessing work, internal standardisation should take place involving all involved with that unit:

- The work of all assessors across the mark range should be sampled.
- Teams must exchange work and discuss standards during the marking process as well as at the end both to support assessors and aid consistency.

- When there is only one tutor assessing work, Programme Leaders should ensure they are familiar with the standards required and that exam board procedures are followed.

- Teachers will only provide, or at least give an indication of, internally moderated coursework marks and not  grades  to students (otherwise students are not sure how well they have performed or whether it is worth doing another assignment where that option exists with the proviso  that all marks are subject to external moderation.

- Where work has not yet been internally moderated, teachers should be very careful about relaying their opinion about the standard of the work. Any indication of the likely eventual mark should be accompanied by the caveat that the work has not yet been internally moderated and will be subject to external moderation.

e)    **Internal Verification of Vocational Programmes**

- The Lead Internal verifier for the course will normally support assessors by offering guidance and advice on a regular basis and facilitate on-going staff development and training for assessors.

- Programme teams should meet on a regular basis in line with the assessment plan for each programme/course, to internally verify learner work and ensure the work is being standardised to national standards.

- The Programme Leader should include the deadline dates for submission, assessment and internal verification in the scheme of work and course and unit guides.

- Lead Internal verifiers should:

  - Have lead IV status and training for their course.
  - Establish procedures to develop a common interpretation of standards between assessors.
  - Sample evidence of assessment decisions made by all assessors to monitor and ensure consistency in the interpretation and application of standards within the team.
  - Establish record-keeping systems and documentation used for assessment and internal verification.
  - Co-ordinate, review and agree assessment decisions with the assessors and standards verifier/external moderator.

- Where an assessor is also the internal verifier, their work must be internally verified by a different member of staff.

f) **Academic misconduct and plagiarism - see separate Plagiarism policy**

g) **Certification and Re-sitting Units**

The College will pay for a student's first attempt at any examination and the student will pay for any re-sits, with the exception of level 1 or 2 Maths and English.

h) **Appeals Procedure**

**Requests for review of internally assessed marks (controlled assessments/coursework)**

Varndean College is committed to ensuring that whenever its staff mark candidates' work this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the awarding body's specification and subject-specific associated documents.

Candidates' work will be marked by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skill, and who have been trained in this activity. Varndean College is committed to ensuring that work produced by candidates is authenticated in line with the requirements of the awarding body. Where a number of subject teachers are involved in marking candidates' work, internal moderation and standardisation will ensure consistency of marking.

Candidates have the right to request a review of the centre's marking before the marks are sent off to the exam board.

1. Any mark that comes out of this process is not the final graded mark. Following the review and any subsequent adjustment of marks (either up or down), the marks for the centre are then sent to the exam board. The exam board may then adjust the marks up or down according to their own procedures. (The actual grades associated with any particular mark is decided at a later date by the exam board).

2. This review process is designed to cater for any students who feel that their individual teacher has not graded their coursework fairly.

3. Students wishing to appeal need to state a reason for the appeal

4. There will be a small window between the release of the centre mark to candidates and the final marks being sent off to the exam board during which a review can take place. Deadline dates will be made available to students before the submission of coursework.

5. Following an appeal other teachers in the team (or if necessary teachers from a different centre) will review the mark and decide whether there should be

an adjustment. Students will be informed in writing of the outcome of the review.

6. There will be a fee per module/unit charged to candidates who wish to make use of this review process. This fee will be non-returnable.

7. Forms will be available to candidates via the registry and need to be returned with payment to finance office by the deadline date.

**Appeals against EAR (Enquiry About Results) remarks**

The examination boards offer a number of post results services following the issue of results. Full details of these services, internal deadlines for requesting a service and fees charged can be provided by the examination officer.

The services are:

1. A clerical re-check and a statement of the marks

2. A post-results review of marking and a statement of the marks by component.

3. A photocopied script prior to the submission of an enquiry about results.

4. The original script.

All these services incur a cost which the candidate/parent/carer are required to pay in advance of any request submitted to the board.

As the cost is incurred by the candidate or their representative, the college will not stand in the way of any such request. Candidates should however seek guidance as to whether or not a request for a re-mark would result in a realistic improvement to their current grade. As a re-mark can go down as well as up, the candidate is required to sign, on their application form for a re-mark, that they understand that the negative scenario is a possibility. A reduction in the candidate's mark as a result of a re-mark, will stand.

As there will be no objection from the college for a request for a re-mark, there is no requirement for an appeals procedure against the college's decision not to support an enquiry about results.

Appeals procedure following the outcome of an *enquiry about results* (EAR)

1. Where the head of centre remains dissatisfied after receiving the outcome of an Enquiry about Results, an appeal may be made to the awarding body, following the guidance in the JCQ publications:

   *Post-results services* http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/post-results-services

   *A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes* http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/appeals

2.  Where a candidate, after receiving the outcome of an EAR, is not satisfied a candidate may raise an appeal.

3.  The grounds of the appeal must relate to the awarding body's procedures or the application of the post-service procedures. Appeals do not generally involve further reviews of marking of the candidate's work.

4.  Candidates, parents/carers are not permitted to make direct representations to an awarding body in relation to any aspect of EARs, including the appeal process.

5.  If the candidate wishes to make an appeal, the internal appeals form (IAF) (Appendix B) should be completed no more than 7 calendar days following the notification of the outcome of the enquiry (the centre is required to submit any appeal to the awarding body within 14 calendar days of the notification of the outcome).

6.  The Head of Centre will be notified and, will appoint a senior member of staff, e.g. Vice Principal (Curriculum), to decide the merits of the appeal. Appeals can only be made against the awarding body's failure to follow their procedures.  If necessary, a meeting may be called.

7.  If the senior member of staff decides not to pursue the appeal, the candidate may refer the matter to the Head of Centre, whose decision is final.

8.  The cost of whole cohort appeals may be underwritten by the Head of Centre. However, the cost of an individual appeal must be met by the appellant on submission of the IAF. If the appeal is upheld by the awarding body, this fee will be refunded by the awarding body and repaid to the appellant by the centre.

Other Relevant Documents
*   Examinations Policy
*   Access Arrangements for Exams Disability Policy
*   Plagiarism Policy