P2 SCRUTINY OF ASSESSMENT ELEMENTS BEFORE RELEASE TO STUDENTS

For students on programmes and awards validated by the University of Plymouth this section of the CAPR has been agreed by the University (as the awarding institution) as meeting its requirements for academic assessment. The shaded sections below form GSM London regulatory and policy framework as applied to Plymouth University and GSM awards.

Related guidance and codes of practice can also be found at the [QAA Code of Practice, Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality:](#) Chapter B4 Enabling Student Development and Achievement and Chapter B6, 'Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning'.

Purpose and scope

2.1   This section of the Consolidated Academic Policies and Regulations (CAPR) explains how the College examines assessment elements before their release to students (scrutiny); who is involved in scrutiny; and what the outcomes may be.

Definitions

2.2   'Scrutiny' means the initial (pre-issue) inspection of all summative assessments by an independent team member.

Introduction

Overview

2.3   The College requires all summative items of assessment (coursework and examinations) to be considered via a formal process of approval before they are made available to students or used in an exam setting. This is to ensure that the assessments set are appropriate and of a consistent standard across modules/courses.

2.4   Departments are responsible for ensuring that internal approval takes place. Faculties are required to approve the processes adopted by each department in their areas of provision and report these to the Education Committee for auditing purposes.

Principles

2.5   The College internal approval process requires programme teams to scrutinise and approve the draft assessment elements in the areas for which they have responsibility. For example, this could be through Internal Approval Panels involving nominated teaching staff held at times appropriate to the Faculty timeline.

2.6   Summative assessed work comprises five (5) levels: Level 3, Level 4; Level 5; Level 6; and Level 7 (postgraduate taught). For all Level 5, Level 6 and Level 7 taught work, the College will send copies of summative assignments and assessment criteria (i.e. assignment briefs and examination papers) to external examiners for approval, unless stated otherwise in external bodies' requirements.

2.7   In the first year of a new module, programme or pathway – or if required by the Chair of the Board of Examiners or an external body – the College will also send Level 3 and Level 4 work to the external examiner for approval.

2.8   The College will provide assessment scrutiny schedules for all programmes. The programme leader will monitor compliance with the schedule.

<u>Procedure</u>

Appointment of staff to undertake scrutiny

2.09   An independent team member, normally appointed by the programme leader, will usually manage the scrutiny of all internally set, summative assignments and assessment criteria (i.e. assignment briefs and examination papers), at all levels of assessment, before it is submitted to external examiners or released to students.

2.10   Scrutiny should be done by the module and programme teams most closely associated with the assessment element and modules. It should involve at least three (3) members of staff.

Internal scrutiny

2.11   Scrutiny of assessments should ensure they:

(a)   are appropriate for the module and for the level;

(b)   enable students to meet the learning outcomes;

(c)   use the correct module title, code, and assessment weighting;

(d)   are complete as regards instructions for students;

(e)   use correct grammar and spelling;

(f)   refer to assessment criteria;

(g)   have accompanying marking guidance;

(h)   use the College templates.

2.12   Internal scrutiny of exam questions should ensure that the scale of the exam (number of questions and tasks involved) is appropriate to its level and proposed duration and that all questions are unambiguous and appropriate.

2.13   When reviewing draft assessments, the overall assessment pattern as regards type, amount and scheduling of assessment across the route, course or mode should also be considered, particularly to avoid 'bunching' of assessment.

2.14   If a module or course is delivered in more than one Faculty or by a partner institution, the Course/Programme Team is responsible for ensuring that the assessment is approved by the Internal Approval Panel.

2.15   If changes are identified to the provisional mark, these must be discussed with the module leader. Once the changes have been made, the assessment must be checked again and then recorded as approved by the module leader and the approval relayed to the appropriate external examiner where required. This approval should be subsequently tracked in the Faculty.

2.16   Normally, at the same time as the questions are written, the independent team member should prepare an indication of what is expected in each answer and bring it to the moderation sessions. This could be in the form of model answers, answer plans or a brief review of an answer's possible scope. The aim is to inform the (pre- and post-issue) moderator of what is expected. However, the College accepts that for some questions, the breadth of possible answers is wide and this should be mentioned. The College does not want to penalise creativity.

2.17   The module/programme leader (as appropriate) should lodge evidence in the module/course file of the initial moderation process (moderator, meetings, date sent to external examiner, outcomes).

External scrutiny

2.18   The College requires summative items of assessment (coursework and examinations) that contribute to a student's overall classification to be scrutinised by appointed external examiners.

2.19   External examiners are responsible for ensuring that the standards of assessments are comparable with those of other institutions in the sector, and that assessments have been through an internal approval process whereby the College can be confident in the:

(a)   appropriateness of the task;

(b)   appropriateness of the standard for the level and nature of the module;

(c)   accuracy, clarity and detailed instructions describing the assessment;

(d)   coverage of the specified learning outcomes.

2.20   Once assessments have been through the Internal Approval Process and their approval confirmed to the Education Committee, the following documents should normally be sent by email to the appropriate external examiner:

(a)   Module plan.

(b)   Assignment brief with assessment criteria, or examination paper.

(c)   Any additional documents attached to the assignment brief.

(d)   Marking guidance.

2.21   Confirmation of the date of internal approval should be given to the external examiner, along with a deadline for return of their comments (normally a working week) to the responsible module and programme leader.

2.22   On receiving the external examiner's comments, module and programme leaders will forward them to the assessment drafter for information. If the external examiner requests changes to the

documents, module leaders must take responsibility for considering the request. If the request is agreed to be appropriate, the module leader takes responsibility for making the amendments, confirming them to the Education Committee and emailing the revised version to the external examiner for final approval. If the module leader decides not to take any action in response to the external examiner's comments, they must send a response with their reasons via the Education Committee.

Prior release to students

2.23   When coursework assessments have been approved by the external examiner, the Quality Team will inform the module leaders who are responsible for making available to students the assignment briefs and assessment criteria.

2.24   When examination papers have been approved by the external examiner, the Quality Team will inform the Academic Registry. This should be at least two (2) working weeks before the examination weeks.

Advice and support

2.25   Advice for students on assessment and examination principles, and the associated lower-level College rules, is available from their programme leader or Head of Department. More complex queries may be referred to appropriate individuals.

2.26   Advice for staff on assessment and examination principles is available from their nominated Academic Policy Partner or Head of Department.

2.27   If any staff development needs are identified, these may be discussed with members of the Staff and Educational Development Team.

Fees

2.28   A fee may be charged for risk assessments of student events as set out in the College's list of charges.

2.29   The College is not liable for financial or other consequences arising from action under these regulations.

Legal and regulatory context

2.30   This policy embodies the College commitment to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education. In particular, it reflects the guidelines in Parts A and B, and more specifically, the indicators outlined in Chapter B6 of the Code, "Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning" (2011).

2.31   The College may not be bound by the principles in paragraph 2.31 and this policy alone may not provide the procedure to meet all of these principles, some of which may be met by other College policies and procedures. It uses the principles as guidance only, to help it deal soundly with these matters.

Enforcement, monitoring and review

2.32   If any person or body in the College refuses to comply with a request or decision made to enforce this policy, their refusal must be reported to the Academic Registrar, who will take such action to enforce this policy as they think necessary.

2.33   Each year, the College must receive a report that enables it to monitor, identify and act on any shortfalls in how this policy is interpreted and applied.

2.34   Every two (2) years, the College must review this policy to ensure that:

(a)   it remains up to date and continues to meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code, applicable legislation or guidance;

(b)   areas of improvement, or any concerns, raised by students, external examiners, or professional bodies have been addressed; and

(c)   opportunities to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy have been taken.

Schedule (not part of the policies or regulations):

Responsible Officer: Provost

Approved by: Board of Directors and Academic Board

Version: 2.0

Date: June 2017

Monitoring and Review Body: Academic Regulations and Awards Committee

Effective From: tbc July 2017

Next Scheduled Review: June 2018