



BRENTWOOD
OPEN LEARNING COLLEGE

Assessment Policy

September 2013

Access to Fair Assessment statement

Introduction

Assessment is a vital part of the learning and teaching process. It also provides a measure of the student's achievement on the qualification based courses, and provides diagnostic information that assists both staff and students in the ongoing improvement of learning and teaching process. To contribute to both these functions properly, it is essential that the assessment is valid, fair, reliable and transparent.

Policy Purpose

This policy establishes a frame work for the Brentwood Open Learning College, for quality assurance in the management of the assessment system, responsibilities and obligations for assessment, and procedures for effective conduct of assessment practices.

Scope

This policy applies to all programmes offered by the college where all or part of the programme is formally assessed.

Principles

The following principles must be followed at Brentwood Open Learning College when planning, implementing and reviewing assessment tasks and assessment process.

- **Validity and reliability**
Individual assessment tasks should be chosen to maximise validity and reliability, and the learning (formative) purposes of assessment should be considered alongside the grading (summative) purposes.
- **Fairness and Manageable**
The workload associated with assessments should be reasonable and manageable, and the assessment tasks should be described early in the course so the students have adequate opportunity to plan for them alongside their other commitments.
- **Relevance**
Assessment should centre on the knowledge, skills and competencies relating to the stated learning outcomes of the course.
- **Transparency**
Students and staff should be fully informed of the college policies, procedures and practices in relation to the assessment.
- **Equality and diversity**
Assessment materials must be presented in clear and unambiguous language and must differentiate only on the basis of a student's knowledge, skills and understanding. Such material must be free from any overt or covert of discrimination against an individual, either in wording or content.

Core Commitments

The College seeks to have quality assurance and enhancement mechanism in place to achieve and maintain rigorous and high standards in our assessment practices; specified by:

Programme Design and assessment

- The college will designate assessment staff whose knowledge, skills and understanding are appropriate for the units they assess. Staff will maintain their competence by regular staff development organised internally and externally.
- The programme design and assessment must meet the specific requirements of the awarding body.
- Awarding body's guidance in relation to special assessment requirements must be strictly adhered to.
- External assessments will be administered strictly in accordance with instructions issued by the relevant awarding bodies.
- For course work assessment (whether internally or externally assessed) the Quality Manager will liaise with all awarding bodies.

Special assessment arrangements

- Where a candidate is likely to have difficulty in demonstrating attainment through the standard assessment arrangements it may be possible to request and provide alternative assessments in line with student's specific needs.
- Where such a need is identified, it should be communicated to the course tutor first, who will discuss this further with the Quality Manager. The Quality Manager is responsible for liaising with the awarding body to gain approval for the use of alternative assessment arrangements.

Communication with Students

- The assessment tasks, submission and marking criteria must be fair, transparent and well communicated to all parties at the appropriate times. Students should also be aware of any opportunities for re-assessment including re-submission of coursework and examination re-sit.
- Full guidance and support should be available to the students, to encourage appropriate academic approaches to their study and assessment preparation.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

- Assessment operations must be fair and clear which are periodically reviewed to test fitness for purpose.
- Parity of treatment is ensured for all students across modules and programmes.
- Robust system for recording marks must be in place at institution level.
- Assessment must be set and marked by appropriately qualified staff. Where possible the programme directors should have a broad view of the amount and timing of assessment tasks being set for the students to ensure:

- a) suitable and timely workloads
- b) opportunities for progression and development
- c) variety and balance across programme
- d) avoidance of unnecessary duplications.

Feedback on Assessment

Written and oral feedback must be given to students as soon as possible after assessment. In the case of written and other product work submitted, the feedback must be given within 3 working weeks of the official submission date. Feedback should be as helpful as possible to the student, i.e. confirming what has gone well and giving clear guidance on what the students need to do in order to improve their performance.

Assessment Appeals

All students must be informed of the college's academic appeals procedure at the start of their course. If a student feels that he/she has not been assessed fairly. Then he/she should use the complaints procedure to appeal the assessment decision of the tutor. However, the first step is always to discuss the situation with the course tutor, the second step is to involve the internal verifier and the College centre manager.

Academic Deceit

The college takes academic integrity very seriously. Each student has an obligation to act with honesty and integrity, and to respect the rights of others in carrying out all assessments. Any student found to have violated this obligation and to have engaged in academic dishonesty of any kind will be penalised.