

## Assessment and Feedback Policy

Version number	Date approved (including committee)	Reason for production/revision	Author	Proposed next review date
V1.0	24/03/20 AcBo	New policy	Dean	Annually and as required
<b>Related policies</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICMP Extenuating Circumstances Policy</li> <li>• ICMP Academic Malpractice Policy</li> <li>• ICMP Assessment Pack</li> <li>• ICMP Draft Academic Regulations</li> </ul>				
<b>External Reference</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Assessment</li> <li>• Advance HE: Framework for Transforming Assessment in Higher Education</li> <li>• UEL Assessment and Feedback Policy</li> </ul>				

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Assessment and feedback are an integral part of the cycle of teaching and learning, and critical to student engagement, learning and progress.
- 1.2. ICMP subscribes to the essential principals of outcome-based assessment practice as promoted by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. This is framed by our commitment to:
- 1.3. defining the intended learning outcomes within a unit of study and formulating threshold assessment criteria;
  - choosing learning and teaching activities that enable students to develop their capacity to meet assessment criteria and thereby achieving intended learning outcomes;
  - designing assessment methods that measure how well actual learning matches with intended learning outcomes; and
  - arriving at a final grade, determining the extent to which the student achieved assessment criteria.
- 1.4. Well-designed assessment tasks help students to consolidate their learning, put learning into practice, and to ensure they are developing the range of knowledge, skills and attributes required to meet the aims of the modules and programme.
- 1.5. High quality feedback is essential in helping the students understand the progress they are making, and how to take the next steps in their chosen programme of study.
- 1.6. The ICMP Assessment and Feedback Policy seeks to ensure that assessments are valid, reliable and fair by providing clear, accurate, accessible information and guidelines to all staff and students.

## 2. Key Principles

- 2.1. ICMP has identified the following key principles that serve to underpin all assessment and feedback activity.
- 2.2. Relevance
  - Assessment will be clearly aligned to the module learning outcomes and aims of the programme, and clearly engage the student in applying their learning in appropriate contexts.
- 2.3. Authenticity
  - Assessment will be clearly aligned with the typical working practices of the subject discipline, simulating, wherever appropriate, real-life tasks.
- 2.4. Inclusivity
  - Assessment tasks and methods will aim to enable inclusivity for all students and should be designed to allow measurement of performance against the learning outcomes for the broadest possible range of students. Alternative modes of assessment may be used for students with specific requirements.
- 2.5. Transparency
  - The requirements of the assessment task and the grading criteria will be

communicated clearly. The link between assessment criteria, learning outcomes and task should be explicit and easily understood.

#### 2.6. Variety

- The assessment diet should be designed at the programme level to ensure a varied, interesting, challenging and relevant range of activity that builds work-based skills as well as academic skills.

#### 2.7. Integrity

- Assessment will be designed to minimise opportunities for academic malpractice, and assessment process will be carried out with due diligence and integrity.

#### 2.8. Timeliness

- Assessment will be appropriately scheduled to allow students and markers sufficient opportunity to plan their workload and meet all deadlines. Feedback will be delivered to students in a timely manner to allow students to act on guidance and continually improve their performance.

#### 2.9. Helpfulness

- Feedback will be helpful for the student, clearly justifying the grade awarded, and giving explicit guidance on how further progress can be made.

### **3. Responsibilities**

3.1. The Academic Board have overall responsibility for the setting and maintaining of academic standards and the integrity of assessment and feedback processes.

3.2. The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee have responsibility for the maintenance of ICMP's assessment and feedback policy and processes, including its regular review.

3.3. Programme Leaders are responsible for overseeing the assessment design and scheduling on their programmes.

3.4. Module Leaders are responsible for overseeing the implementation of assessment, moderation and feedback processes on their modules.

### **4. Modes of assessment and assessment design**

4.1. The assessment diet will be designed to ensure that:

- assessment tasks enable students to demonstrate the learning outcomes detailed in the module specification;
- a range of assessment modes enables all students to exploit their individual strengths and preferences;
- assessment tasks are efficient in terms of student and staff time and over-assessment is avoided; and
- assessment tasks are proportionate to the requirements of the module.

4.2. Assessment tasks can take the form of the full range of modes including, but not limited to:

- Portfolios
- Documented projects
- Audio-visual material
- Creative outputs and artefacts
- Live performances
- Presentations
- Examinations
- Observed activity/tasks
- Group tasks
- Written tasks

4.3. Assessment tasks should be designed in a way that ensures the necessary engagement and investment of the student in the task and therefore minimises the opportunities for academic malpractice through the use of 'essay mills' or other forms of 'contract cheating'.

4.4. Modes of assessment are approved at the point of programme validation, according to the academic framework of the awarding body.

4.5. Changes to modes of assessment beyond the scope of the validated module specification can only be made through the module modification procedure.

## **5. Inclusive practice and alternative assessment**

5.1. ICMP ensures that every student has an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievement through the assessment process, with no group or individual disadvantaged.

5.2. In designing assessments, the needs of students are considered, including those studying at different locations, from different cultural/educational backgrounds, with additional learning needs, or with protected characteristics.

5.3. Wherever possible, appropriate opportunities for formative feedback should be built into the design of the assessment task and delivery model.

5.4. Approved assessment procedures and methods are intended to be flexible enough to allow adjustments to overcome any substantial disadvantage that individual students could experience. It may happen, however, that alternative means of assessment need to be considered to account for the specific circumstances of a particular student.

5.5. Where this is the case:

- the programme leader will receive advice from the Head of Student Services;
- the programme leader will make recommendations to the Chair of Academic Board;
- the Chair of Academic Board will agree any reasonable adjustment to the approved assessment arrangements for the module; and
- the Chair of Academic Board will have regard to the necessity for the assessment of each module to be valid, fair and reliable.

## **6. Assessment tariff and equivalency**

- 6.1. Module assessment tariffs at ICMP are governed by the academic framework of the awarding body and are approved at the point of programme validation.
- 6.2. A shared understanding of assessment tariffs and equivalency is essential in ensuring:
  - comparability and fairness in assessment practice;
  - transparency of expectations for students and staff ; and
  - an appropriate and proportionate assessment load in keeping with the credit weight and level of the module
- 6.3. Changes to assessment tariffs can only be made through the module modification procedure.

## **7. Portfolios**

- 7.1. Portfolios present an effective way of providing students with a range of opportunities to demonstrate success against the learning outcomes.
- 7.2. Portfolios should typically be limited to a maximum 3 tasks. The tasks can be of varied assessment types but must, when added together, adhere to the assessment tariff.
- 7.3. The portfolio must not have multiple submission dates within it. The only submission date specified will be the final deadline. This does not preclude the inclusion of formative feedback opportunities (see section 19).

## **8. Live assessment**

- 8.1. Live assessment is defined as assessed activity that takes place at an assigned time, and is assessed at that time.
- 8.2. Live assessment is an essential part of the assessment diet for performance-based and creative programmes. Live assessments at ICMP typically take the form of:
  - Recitals
  - Live performances
  - Presentations
  - Observed activity/tasks
- 8.3. Live assessments are scheduled well in advance, with dates and times clearly communicated to students.
- 8.4. Live assessments for any particular module cohort should be scheduled as a timely cluster to avoid any individual or group of students gaining an unfair advantage of preparation time.
- 8.5. Live assessments should typically be filmed, to allow for moderation and External Examiner scrutiny.

## **9. Group tasks**

9.1. Group tasks can provide students with valuable opportunities to develop core skills, attributes and experience. Specifically, group tasks help to:

- encourage peer learning that can improve the overall quality of student learning;
- foster appropriate social interaction and dynamism amongst the cohort; and
- help develop the generic skills of collaboration, co-operation and creative problem solving that are sought by employers.

9.2. Group tasks can also aid the efficiency of the assessment load for students and staff.

9.3. Group tasks will be carefully designed to ensure that:

- the objectives are clear, especially in relation to whether it is predominantly the process or the product is being assessed; and
- that the expectations and equity of individual contribution is transparent.

9.4. Group tasks are not the same as group assessment. ICMP does not engage in group assessment on any programme. Each student in the group is assessed individually, the group being the vehicle through which the individual is able to demonstrate their competence against the module learning outcomes, framed by clearly defined assessment criteria.

## **10. Grading criteria**

10.1. ICMP operates a criteria-based approach to assessment, with grading grids published for each component of each module assessment task.

10.2. Grading criteria is contextualised to the assessment tasks, advising students on what markers would typically expect to find in relation to each learning outcome within each grade boundary.

10.3. Module Leaders have access to guidance and exemplars of grading in the ICMP Assessment Pack.

10.4. Grading grids are published at the outset of the module delivery.

10.5. Module leaders are responsible for the regular review of the grading criteria in relation to the assessment task.

## **11. Assessment briefing**

11.1. Clarity of assessment starts with the clear articulation of the assessment requirements. The requirements for each component of each module assessment is published at the outset of the module delivery and clearly communicated in the form of the assessment brief.

11.2. Module Leaders have access to guidance and exemplars of assessment briefs in the ICMP Assessment Pack.

11.3. The assessment brief should give as much detail as is possible in terms of what is required and expected, and precisely what should be submitted.

## **12. Assessment schedules**

- 12.1. Assessment schedules are designed at the programme level and considered holistically.
- 12.2. Excessive bunching of submission dates and/or the scheduling of examinations or live assessment is, as far as is practicable, avoided.
- 12.3. Scheduling should account for feedback turnaround, and allow time for students to make use of feedback in successive submission.
- 12.4. Submission dates and times must correspond with days/ times when ICMP is open and technical support is available in case of problems with submission.
- 12.5. Submission dates immediately following a national holiday or institutional closure will also be avoided.
- 12.6. Submission, examination and live assessment dates are published at the beginning of the academic year.
- 12.7. Assessment schedules will only be changed post-publication in exceptional circumstances and with the authority of the Dean.

## **13. Submission**

- 13.1. Wherever possible, assessment tasks are submitted electronically through ICMP's VLE. Submissions requiring large amounts of audio-visual material may require physical submission. Students will be fully briefed on how to submit work and the format it should take.
- 13.2. Physical submissions are only permissible with the authority of the Dean.
- 13.3. Electronic submissions are made through ICMP's VLE. All written tasks are subject to TurnItIn anti-plagiarism checks.
- 13.4. Submissions that miss the published deadline are subject to the relevant awarding bodies regulations on late submissions
- 13.5. For details on extenuation please refer to the ICMP Extenuating Circumstances policy

## **14. Academic Integrity**

- 14.1. ICMP is committed to the safeguarding and maintenance of academic standards and as such, academic malpractice is taken very seriously. ICMP has developed processes, guided by the OIAHE's Good Practice Framework, for the management of academic malpractice.
- 14.2. All written tasks are subject to TurnItIn anti-plagiarism checks. Assessing tutors are required to consider the TurnItIn 'similarity reports' and refer suspected cases of academic malpractice to the Programme Leader in the first instance.
- 14.3. Assessing tutors are also required to monitor potential inconsistent

behaviours or variances in the quality of written work that may be an indicator of other malpractice, for instance, the use of 'essay mills'.

## **15. Marking**

- 15.1. ICMP operates a 'moderated marking' model with a 'marker' making the initial assessment and a 'moderator' ensuring that marking is consistent.
- 15.2. Module leaders are responsible for co-ordinating the marking process and ensuring that all marking tutors are suitably briefed. Guidance is provided in the ICMP Assessment Pack.
- 15.3. Marking will begin as soon as possible after the submission deadline
- 15.4. Where a marking tutor suspects a case of academic malpractice, this will be reported immediately to the Module Leader who will refer to the ICMP Academic Malpractice Policy.
- 15.5. Grade decisions are made strictly in accordance with the grading criteria. Marks will not be awarded or deducted for any aspect of the submission that does not relate to the grading criteria.
- 15.6. ICMP adopts a 'credit where due' approach to marking and markers are required to seek out evidence of the student meeting the criteria. Students will not 'lose' marks for weaker aspects of the submission.
- 15.7. Grade decisions are recorded on the Assessment Feedback Report (AFR) and on the VLE in accordance with the ICMP Assessment Pack.
- 15.8. All grade decision are provisional pending scrutiny of the External Examiner and ratification by the relevant module, progression or award board.

## **16. Moderation of submitted assessment tasks**

- 16.1. Module leaders are responsible for co-ordinating the moderation process, and ensuring that all moderating tutors are suitably briefed. Guidance is provided in the ICMP Assessment Pack.
- 16.2. All assessments submitted electronically are subject to the same moderation process.
- 16.3. Moderators perform the dual duty of ensuring accuracy and parity of grading, and the quality of the feedback that is returned to students.
- 16.4. Moderators sample assessment in keeping with the relevant awarding bodies expectations, reviewing assessments across the full range of marks awarded, paying particular attention to borderline assessments and new markers.
- 16.5. Moderation activity is recorded on the Moderation Report Form (MRF) in accordance with the ICMP Assessment Pack



## **17. Moderation of live assessment tasks**

- 17.1. Live assessment tasks, especially live performances and recitals, are typically assessed by a panel of at least two tutors.
- 17.2. One member of the panel will be designated as the marker, with other members of the panel adopting a moderating role.
- 17.3. Marking and moderation processes are recorded on the AFR and MRF in accordance with the ICMP Assessment Pack.
- 17.4. Live assessment tasks will typically be filmed to ensure a secure record of the assessment activity.
- 17.5. Where appropriate, live assessment tasks may be moderated 'after the event' through review of the filmed material. Where this is the case the process is identical to the moderation of submitted assessment tasks.

## **18. External Examiners**

- 18.1. All assessment activity is subject to scrutiny from External Examiners.
- 18.2. External Examiners are appointed by the relevant awarding body.
- 18.3. External Examiner carry out their duties in accordance with the relevant awarding bodies processes and regulations.

## **19. Formative feedback**

- 19.1. Assessment for Learning' practices, including formative, diagnostic and ipsative assessment, are a critical aspect of learning and teaching.
- 19.2. Formative modes of assessment are used whenever appropriate to support students, and to help them maximise their success in summative assessments.
- 19.3. Formative feedback practices can include a range of in-class, supervisory, or on-line activity.
- 19.4. Formative feedback should inform students of their success and/or trajectory in relation to meeting the assessment criteria, and give clear guidance on how their work can be improved.
- 19.5. Formative feedback activity does not form any contribution to summative marking or grades.

## **20. Summative Feedback**

- 20.1. Feedback is central to learning and is provided to students to develop their knowledge, understanding, skills and to help promote learning and facilitate improvement.
- 20.2. Feedback will be given on all summative assessments.

- 20.3. Feedback will be provided in a timely manner (within 20 working days of the submission deadline)
- 20.4. Feedback is provided on the AFR or, where appropriate, through embedded feedback mechanisms on the VLE. Additional feedback can be given through in-text annotation on the electronic submission.
- 20.5. Alternative modes of feedback (such as audio or video feedback) is permissible, through negotiation with the Module Leader. In these cases, the AFR will refer the student to the relevant feedback source.
- 20.6. Markers are expected to demonstrate due diligence and attention to detail in the feedback provided to students. The feedback is required to:
- justify the grade awarded in relation to the learning outcomes and grading criteria;
  - identify the areas of strength and celebrate the student's successes;
  - identify areas for improvement and/or where criteria have not been sufficiently demonstrated; and
  - clearly articulate 'next steps' providing guidance to the student on how improvement can be made, especially in relation to successive assessment activity.
- 20.7. Feedback should not shy away from identifying deficit, but the overall 'tone' should be constructively critical and encouraging. Feedback should be written 'to' the student in the first person.
- 20.8. All grade decisions are provisional pending scrutiny of the External Examiner and ratification by the relevant module, progression or award board.