



HE Assessment Policy

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1. Purpose

The main purpose of the policy is to ensure that all students are provided with fit for purpose assessment opportunities during their HE programmes. This policy is also to provide clear guidance to all programme teams about assessment practice. The assessment policy seeks to ensure that assessment practices and procedures: -

- meet awarding body requirements for programmes, validated by.
- include the appropriate external examiner oversight and scrutiny.
- are subject to appropriate internal moderation/verification.
- can be evidenced.
- are applied consistently across all programmes.
- take account of the diversity of learners

1.1 Scope

This policy and process applies to all Higher Education programmes validated by the awarding/validating body, the Open University (OU), delivered by Ada.

1.2 Assessment for Qualifications

The specific assessment procedures for degree qualifications and the apprenticeship qualifications will be in accordance with the requirements of the OU and for the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), respectively.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Dean

Responsible for: -

- Ensuring effective moderation of assessment through evaluation and reporting upon implementation, recommending improvements, and providing staff development.
- Overseeing the academic management of HE programmes, in the context of assessment scheduling and return of assessed work this will include.
- Supporting the Head of Degree Programmes in his/her effective management of the implementation of all assessment procedures in programmes.

Heads of Degree Programmes

Responsible for: -

- Ensuring that, module leaders, assessors, internal verifiers and second markers undertake their roles.
- Ensuring assessment activity for each programme is planned, timely and undertaken according to the procedures identified in the associated policies.
- Ensuring the implementation and effectiveness of internal verification/moderation and double marking activity across all programmes.
- Monitoring programme teams' adherence to planned assessment schedules when providing feedback to students.
- Appointing internal verifiers and ensuring implementation of internal verification activity and moderation to ensure national standards and awarding body requirements are met.
- Liaison with module leaders, to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to retain coursework submissions securely and will ensure that the return of coursework to learners is timely and secure.

Module Leader

Responsible for:

- Planning assessment requirements well in advance of the start of the academic year in which the programme of study takes place.
- Reviewing the schedule of assessments across the module
- Agreeing dates for moderation of assessment tools and assessment decisions with the Head of Degree Programmes.
- Providing information about when assessment(s) will be set and the submission dates across the module
- Setting the date by which students can expect to receive their assessment feedback for each assessment.
- Preparing a clear assessment schedule which includes:
 - Module title
 - Assessor (s)
 - Assessment type
 - Date set
 - Submission date
 - Internal verifier/moderator name

- Date by which assessed work will be returned to students with feedback
- Ensuring an accurate assessment schedule is provided on the VLE and distributed at the beginning of the programme of study or academic year as appropriate.
- Accommodating learning support needs for individual students within the assessment schedule by reviewing the schedule, collating information about special support needs any students may have.
- Where appropriate, provide support and ensure others within the programme team are aware of their responsibilities in providing specific support.
- Advising and supporting individual students in their arrangements with those outside the programme team to ensure additional support to meet the needs of each student is in place.
- Reviewing with the students whether the support is timely and effective in meeting their needs and making further recommendations if appropriate.
- Providing clear information about all assessment requirements and making these available to all students formally, module guides at the beginning of the academic year or programme of
- Providing assessment feedback to students in sufficient time to enable them to improve their subsequent performance. Feedback will normally be within 20 working days of the final submission date and in all cases as detailed on the assessment schedule and assignment brief.

For further information on learning support for assessments, please refer to [Academic Support](#) on the VLE.

Assessors/First Markers

Responsible for:

- Developing appropriate assessment tools, reaching valid assessment decisions, and providing timely feedback to students for the units/modules/elements for which they have responsibility.

- To inform each of these activities, assessors will refer to the programme specifications, awarding body requirements, validated aims, intended learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the unit/module being assessed.
- Reference will also be made to the Framework for Higher Education
- Qualifications, Subject Benchmarks, and the Quality Assurance Agency Codes of Practice.

Moderators/Double markers

Responsible for:

- Assuring the fairness, reliability, and consistency of the marking, checking overall standards and ensuring that mark schemes have been applied.
- The reference points (above) which inform assessors will be used by double markers when reaching their judgments.
- Double markers will, for all assessments, meet and formally record their moderation notes in which the final marks to be awarded are agreed.

3. Assessment Procedure

3.1 The purpose of assessment is to measure students' learning, skills, and understanding. Assessment enables students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the objectives of their course and achieved the required standard. Assessment also helps students to reflect on their learning, and to recognise and enhance their achievements.

Assessment in relation to credit and awards

3.2 The basis of the assessment for the OU validated awards, are by assessment of students within and/or at the end of each module. The assessment method, criteria and the marking scheme are based on the module's learning outcomes and reflect the appropriate credit level.

3.3 The compatibility and mapping of module outcomes with the aims of the relevant programme has been verified through the process of validation and are presented in the programmes' specifications.

3.4 Credit is awarded by Ada to quantify learning achieved at a given level to learners who have attained the specified learning outcomes of the module. Credit is given based on

module assessment. Students are awarded credit for modules passed at Levels 4, 5, or 6. No student will be required or permitted to retake a module for which they have already received credit, unless :

- a) the maximum period of enrolment (see below) has expired; *or*
- b) an Academic Integrity Panel has required that modules be reassessed as part of the penalty for cheating or plagiarism (see Academic Misconduct policy);

3.5 The College expects all work submitted for assessment is the sole work of the individual submitting the work (except where it is specified as a group assignment). There are defined processes, and penalties, related to poor academic practice, plagiarism, collusion and cheating in examinations. For further information see Academic Misconduct policy.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

3.6 Applicants who meet or exceed the criteria for entry to a course may be eligible for recognition of their prior learning and this will exempt them from some of the requirements for their award. The decision to admit a student onto a course is separate from the decision to recognise prior learning. The decision to recognise prior learning is taken after the decision to admit has been made. This is taken in reasonable time so the applicant can determine whether they wish to accept the offer of a place. For more information, please see the RPL policy.

Module Assessments

3.7 The Lecturer responsible for each module establishes transparent procedures to ensure that no individual student or group of students are disadvantaged by the nature of the assessment task, or the marking system used.

3.8 All assessments are course work-based, and there is no written examination-based assessment. At all levels, both the setting and the marking of assessments must be moderated by external examiners. A system of internal verification of assessments, at all academic levels is implemented by the academic team.

3.9 A student's achievement in each module must be assessed so they are awarded an overall mark for each module. If an assessment covers more than one module, the assessment must be structured so that a separate overall mark can be awarded for each module.

3.10 Assessment will normally take place during the semester in which the module is offered. At or near the start of each module the relevant division must ensure that students are informed of the requirements and criteria for assessment and of the weight carried by each component of assessment.

3.11 If the assessment of a module consists of more than one component (for example formal examination and coursework) the overall module mark is calculated as a weighted average of the marks for all the components. This is based on the weightings approved through the course validation process (see the [Modules' Descriptors](#)).

3.12 A component may be further divided into sub-components, each with its own weighting in the calculation of the mark for the component.

3.13 Some components (typically assessment to demonstrate competency) may be pass/fail only, in which case the module mark will be calculated from the weighted average of the marks for components which are quantitatively assessed.

3.14 A threshold mark will normally be specified which a student must achieve in each component of assessment to pass the module. The minimum threshold mark for a component is normally 40% at all Levels 4, 5 and 6.

3.15 To be awarded a pass in a module a student must:

- a) achieve an overall weighted average mark for the module of at least 40% at Levels 4, 5 or 6 and
- b) achieve the minimum threshold mark in each component of assessment for which a threshold is specified; and
- c) achieve a pass standard in specified pass/fail assessments where such assessments are used.

3.16 A student registered on specific courses may be awarded a module pass with merit or distinction. In order to be awarded a pass with merit a student must normally have achieved a weighted module mark of at least 60%. In order to be awarded a pass with distinction a student must normally have achieved a weighted module mark of at least 70%.

3.17 All module marks must be computed as a numerical percentage rounded off to the nearest whole number. Marks with a decimal part below .5 will be rounded down to the nearest whole number, and marks with a decimal part above .5 will be rounded up to the nearest whole number. Students will normally be informed of their module marks following the completion of the module, in accordance with procedures published by the college. These module marks are provisional until ratified by an examination board.

3.18 The module lead who delivers a module will ensure that the dates for examinations and submission of coursework are recorded in the VLE before a module begins. The module lead will inform the students registered on the module of any change in the deadline date for coursework submission at the earliest opportunity.

3.19 Students must:

- a) make themselves aware of these dates that are published via the VLE; *and*
- b) submit work for assessment on the dates required.

Attempts at Assessment

3.20 A student will be deemed to have made a first attempt at each component or subcomponent of assessment (coursework and examination) at the due date, whether or not the attempt has been made. A student who fails to submit a component or sub-component of assessment as required will be awarded a mark of 0% for that component or sub-component of assessment.

3.21 Where a student has not successfully completed the assessment for the module a resit opportunity is allowed. For a resit, the form of the re-assessment must be equivalent to the original assessment and internally verified. The form the reassessment will take must be made explicit to the student. If we have accepted a claim for extenuating circumstance the first resit opportunity will be regarded as a first attempt. Students are expected to attempt the assessment at the next available opportunity. If the student does not attend the examination or submit the coursework at that time unless they have further extenuating circumstances accepted, they will be deemed to have made an attempt at the assessment and be awarded a mark of 0%.

3.22 Where a student has been required to repeat a module and there are no other regulatory requirements to prevent it, they will be permitted a first attempt at assessment of the repeated module and a resit opportunity. Students are not usually allowed to register more than twice on any module including deferral and referral opportunities.

Submission of Assessment

3.23 Work submitted for a summative assessment component cannot be amended after submission or re-submitted.

3.24 Students must submit assessments electronically unless the type of assessment makes it impossible to do so. The relevant module guide will inform students of the format(s) that they are expected to use. It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they have back-up copies of any work submitted. Failure of IT equipment will not be accepted as a reason for non-submission, incomplete submission of an assessment or (normally) as an extenuating circumstance.

3.25 Student requests for extensions to assessment deadlines will not be approved unless made in accordance with the college guidelines as approved by The Open University.

Late Submission of Assessment

3.26 Where coursework is submitted late and there are no accepted extenuating circumstances it will be penalised in line with the following tariff: Submission within 6 working days: a 10% reduction deducted from the overall marked score for each working day late, down to the 40% pass mark and no further. Submission that is late by 7 or more working days: submission refused, mark of 0.

3.27 A student who is unable to submit a written coursework assignment by the specified deadline may submit up to two weeks late. Coursework not submitted by the published deadline but, following notification, is submitted within two weeks (ten working days) of the published submission date will be marked by an appropriate member of staff and will have their marks capped at the pass mark (40%).

3.28 A successful claim for extenuating circumstances may mean the capping is not applied. (Please see [Personal Mitigating Circumstances Policy](#)). A valid extenuating circumstance claim means the Ada has discretion to remove the cap where assessment and feedback make this reasonable.

3.29 Work submitted more than two weeks after the published deadline date will receive a mark of 0% (zero).

3.30 Resubmission of coursework and forms of assessment such as group work, presentations and class tests are not covered by this regulation and must be completed on time. A successful claim for extenuating circumstances may mean that the student is able to submit the work later.

3.31 Students unable to submit course work by the published submission date must notify the university prior to the submission date using the Extension Request form. Any other form of notification, such as an email, is not acceptable.

3.32 Students registered with Disability and Dyslexia Support (DDS) may be entitled to submit up to two weeks (ten working days) after the deadline, subject to the agreement of their individual support plan, and the mark will not be capped. Students will need to show that they are registered with DDS when they notify the university that their coursework will be late. DDS registered students who do not submit within two weeks (ten working days) will be awarded 0% (zero).

Assessment Moderation

3.33 The final grade for an individual assessment component will be determined after completion of a quality assurance process (e.g. moderation, double-marking). It is Ada's

policy that formally assessed work should be systematically moderated or double-marked, whichever is appropriate, and that anonymous marking is operated for all examinations and coursework. These procedures are designed to standardise marking and remove any unintended bias from the process.

- All formally assessed work must be systematically moderated or second marked. For moderation the sample should comprise 10% or a minimum of five scripts across the full spread of marks including high, middle, and low performing student scripts, and for second-marking all of the scripts should be examined.
- All non-anonymous student work must be second-marked.
- Dissertations should be marked by the dissertation supervisor and one other internal marker.
- Where there are conflicting marks arising from moderation or second marking, the markers and moderators or first and second-markers should discuss the differences and agree a final mark.
- Where agreement cannot be reached the Head of Degree Programmes must be informed and he or she will appoint a third assessor. The results of all three assessments must then be considered by the Head of Degree Programmes to arrive at a final decision.
- Where the moderation process results in an agreed change of final module grades to the sample, this must be applied to all students within the cohort and not just the sample viewed.

4. Examination Boards

4.1 For every programme leading to a validated award of The Open University there will be a Board of Examiners whose constitution (including a note of those members constituting a quorum) and terms of reference will have been approved by The Open University as part of the Institutional approval and review process.

4.2 Examination boards are attended by external examiners, who are subject experts from UK universities and who provide an independent point of reference for the standards of awards. They are sufficiently experienced to make judgements about the standards of awards compared with those of other UK universities. They do not, however, moderate or adjust the marks of individual students of whom they see only a representative sample within each award.

4.3. External Examiners are appointed by, and report to The Open University. The terms under which they engage with the partner institution and the programmes to which they are appointed are those determined by The Open University.

4.4. The Board of Examiners is authorised to determine the progression of students in accordance with the academic regulations and to recommend progression or the conferment of validated awards of The Open University.

4.5. All progression and award recommendations are made to The Open University's Module Results Approval and Qualifications Classification Panel (MRAQCP) for them to ratify.

4.6. Ada must not issue results to students (or send Diploma Supplements/transcripts) until the awards have been ratified/conferred by MRAQCP and formal notice has been received from the University that the results can be released. If for any reason the results must be released, Ada ensures that students are aware that they are provisional and may be subject to change.

For further details on way of working of the Examination Boards, please see

[OU Handbook for Validate Awards 2022-23](#)

5. Conferment & Certification by The Open University

5.1 The OU may approve conferment of a validated award when the following conditions are satisfied:

- a) The student has been a registered student at Ada at the time of the assessment for an award.
- b) Details of the student's full name, full postal address, email address, date of birth, gender, programme of study, award and all required information have been forwarded to The Open University.
- c) Ada has confirmed that the student has completed a programme of study approved by The Open University as leading to the award being recommended.
- d) The award has been recommended by a Board of Examiners convened, constituted, and acting under regulations approved by The Open University and including all members appointed by The Open University as External Examiners for the programme.
- e) The recommendation of the award has been signed by the Chair of the Board of Examiners, the External Examiners and The Open University's representative at the Board of Examiners, confirming that the assessments have been carried out in accordance with the requirements of The Open University and that the recommendations have received the written approval of the External Examiners.

5.2 Following the Open University approval, an award certificate will be prepared for each student appearing on the award list.

5.3 All Foundation degrees are classified based on the overall weighted average mark, which is calculated as the average mark of all the Levels 4 and 5 modules comprising the award. The classification is as follows:

Distinction: 70%+
Merit: 60-69%
Pass: 40-59%

5.4 The bachelor's degree with honours is classified based on the following bands:

1st Class 70%+
2nd Class (Upper Division) 60 - 69%
2nd Class (Lower Division) 50 - 59%
3rd Class 40 - 49%

5.5 Certificates are sent to Ada with a copy of the corresponding award list. Certificates will normally be dispatched within 4 weeks of notification that the awards have been ratified/conferred.

6. Apprenticeship End-Point Assessment (EPA)

6.1 All students enrolled on the Bachelor Apprenticeship Degree programme must undertake an independent end-point assessment (EPA) which is a synoptic assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that have been learnt throughout the apprenticeship.

6.2 The purpose of the assessment is to make sure the student meets the apprenticeship standard and are fully competent in the occupation. Students at the very end of the programme take it when their employer and the College is satisfied that they have met the "gateway" criteria to undertake the assessment. EPA is graded and an apprenticeship certificate is only awarded after EPA is successfully completed.

6.3 This is an integrated bachelor's degree level apprenticeship, which incorporates on-programme academic and workplace learning and assessment with an independent end-point assessment to test the knowledge, skills and behaviours detailed in the standard.

6.4 Ada is an approved institution to be on the Register of end-point assessment organisation, (RoEPAOs), and conducts the EPA.

6.5 The degree programme consists of 360 credits that will typically take three years to complete, with 320 delivered on-programme and 40 through the EPA, which is taken in the last six months. The 40-credit EPA is achieved through a synoptic project & dissertation, and a work-based portfolio.

6.6 Performance in the EPA will count towards the overall degree classification and apprentices cannot successfully complete the bachelor's degree without passing the EPA.

6.7 The gateway for the EPA will occur when the apprentice has completed 320 credits of their degree, been given a provisional grade, and achieved English and Maths at level 2 or higher. The gateway requirements must be met, prior to taking the EPA. The EPA must be completed within a six-month period, after the apprentice has met the EPA gateway requirements.

6.8 The EPA consists of three distinct assessment methods: Review of portfolio, review of project dissertation, and a presentation.

6.9 An assessment Panel, comprised of i) an independent assessor (chair), ii) a representative from Ada College, and iii) a representative from the employer integrates the process of reviewing all the submissions and assessing whether the candidates meet the Digital Technology Solutions Degree Apprenticeship Standard.

6.10 The panel reviews the candidate's full portfolio, synoptic work-based project dissertation and presentation against the standard, to ensure that the apprentice has demonstrated the full range of skills, knowledge and behaviours detailed in the standard. During this process, members of the panel will interview the apprentice, asking clarification questions.

6.11 As part of the EPA, the apprentice will be required to take part in a Professional Discussion. The professional discussion is a structured Interview between the apprentice and the assessment panel in order to conduct a Q/A session on the portfolio of evidences and project dissertation (if necessary). The purpose of the interview is to:

- Provide a basis for the assessment panel to make a holistic decision about the grade to be awarded.
- Clarify any questions the panel has from their assessment of the full e-portfolio and the project dissertation if necessary (viva).
- Confirm and validate judgements about the quality of work.

6.12 The panel will then award marks based on their assessment of the portfolio, synoptic project dissertation and the presentation.

6.13 The interview is not awarded any mark and is used to facilitate the holistic decision-making about the grades of the three components.

EPA Processes

On Programme Assessment

6.14 The On-Programme will give an ongoing indication of performance against the outcomes defined in the standard. The degree modules will cover the full range of the required skills and knowledge from the standard.

6.15 Formative assessment will give an ongoing indication of performance against the outcomes defined in the standard. Through regular reviews, Ada College and employer will support the apprentice, and provide extra guidance and support where performance issues might arise, to ensure the apprentice is fully supported in meeting the required outcomes.

6.16 Modules will be assessed and passed in accordance with the Open University regulations. This will ensure that the student is prepared for the synoptic work-based project near the end of the programme and demonstrate successful outcomes against the knowledge, skills and behaviours defined in the standard.

Gateway to the End Point Assessment

6.17 The Gateway process will be used to confirm that the apprentice has met the pre-requisite requirements of the standard before they move to the End Point Assessment.

6.18 The gateway for the EPA will occur when the apprentice has completed 320 credits of their degree, been given a provisional grade and achieved English and Maths at level 2 or higher.

6.19 The gateway requirements must be met, prior to taking the EPA.

End Point Assessment

6.20 Following successful completion of the Gateway, the College will submit the candidates' details and written submission to the independent assessor. The independent assessor then receives a copy of the candidates' online portfolio and end project, for assessing ahead of a final interview panel.

6.21 The portfolio of evidence and the work-based project are reviewed, assessed to confirm that there is sufficient evidence that the candidate's learning has been applied, and that they have demonstrated all the skills, knowledge and behaviours against the standard.

6.22 The final panel then integrates the process for reviewing all submissions and assessing whether candidates meet the Apprenticeship Standard. At this final Panel, the candidate's

full portfolio and work-based project dissertation are reviewed against the standard, to ensure that the apprentice has demonstrated the full range of skills, knowledge and behaviours detailed in the standard.

Apprenticeship Certification

6.23 The EPA results are classified based on the weighted average mark of the components in section 6.8, as follows:

| | |
|--------------|--------|
| Distinction: | 70%+ |
| Merit: | 60-69% |
| Pass: | 40-59% |

6.24 The EPA grades will be sent to Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), which will prepare the apprenticeship certificates.

Assessment Responsibilities and Quality Assurance

6.25 As the assessor will be assessing work at Level 6, it will be required that each assessor holds a Masters/Level 7 qualification or comparable, has experience of the subject area for the assessments for which they will be responsible and holds an appropriate quality assurance qualification.

Internal Quality Assurance

6.26 Ada College will be responsible for internal quality assurance of the End Point Assessment process. To ensure that assessments are run correctly (in relation to running, marking, standardising and reporting outcomes) The College will:

- Uphold the rigour of a Level 6 Apprenticeship standard.
- Provide training to the assessor in relation to systems and process.
- Ensure assessors have relevant experience and qualifications.
- Undertake sampling of assessor work (it is anticipated this would be 40% of assessments undertaken)
- Standardise the assessment decision of assessors and consider external moderation of assessments.
- Hold meetings with assessors to provide updates and share good practice at least twice a year.
- Seek feedback from employers and training providers as to satisfaction with the service provided.
- Meet any requirements set in relation to external QA.

External Quality Assurance

6.27 External quality will initially be undertaken by the Institute for Apprenticeships.

Management and Affordability

6.28 The approach presented offers an affordable and scalable solution to assessment for this apprenticeship. The approach is robust with an End Point Assessment that delivers an effective synoptic assessment at reasonable cost and through a delivery model, which minimises time and impact on the apprentice and employer.

6.29 It is recommended that the End Point Assessment will be delivered through a series of panel days, which will be set-up based on demand to deliver at Ada premises to reduce venue costs. This will ensure that the independent assessor and Ada time is maximised, and that employer and apprentices have access to panels which are conveniently located, reducing the time spent on travel and associated costs.

