

Title of Policy: Assessment Policy

Date of creation	July 2012
Date of last update	July 2026
Next update due	August 2027
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Responsible Manager	Quality Department
Approved by	Principal
Date of Approval	July 2012
Date of Equality Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment - All Documents

Policy Statement

This policy details the principles and practice of assessment of student work at Barnet Southgate College.

Aim:

- 1. To ensure that assessment methodology is valid, reliable and does not disadvantage or advantage any group of learners or individuals**
- 2. To ensure that the assessment procedure is open, fair and free from bias and to national standards**
- 3. To ensure that there is accurate and detailed recording of assessment decisions.**



Assessment Policy

Introduction

Assessment Policy is the process by which a student's skills and knowledge are reviewed in order to evaluate what they have learnt or in the case of NVQs how they are performing against the competencies they are required to demonstrate. Assessment will ensure that students are fairly, accurately, and regularly assessed in a consistent manner and:

- provide diagnostic information that assists both staff and students/candidates to provide appropriate support to enable achievement of the learning outcomes (initial assessment)
- allow students/candidates to monitor their own progress
- enable tutors to review and develop their learning programmes to achieve their intended learning outcomes
- provide evidence of progress and achievement to enable accreditation and progression to take place
- enable a dialogue between the students/candidates and tutor/assessors to ensure progression within the provision (tracking)
- provide a measure of the student's achievement on qualification-based courses (grades)

Principles of Assessment

All assessment in Barnet Southgate College follows the five principles below:

- **Authenticity:** All assessment activity must have in place processes to ensure that the achievement is the student's/candidate's own work. Students/candidates must sign a statement to this effect. Awarding Bodies boards have their own rules and regulations about authenticity and tutors/ assessors must make themselves familiar with them and abide by them (see Plagiarism policy)
- **Validity:** The method of assessment and the evidence provided must be appropriate and capable of demonstrating the achievement of learning outcomes/competencies and related assessment criteria of the provision at the appropriate level.
- **Reliability and Consistency:** The assessment results should be standardised across levels and provision. Moderation and standardisation must follow the College and Awarding Bodies board procedures (see Internal Verification Policy)
- **Fitness for purpose:** Assessment must be fit for the students/candidates and the learning. The assessment strategy must be clearly appropriate for the target group of students/candidates in the correct context in which they are learning e.g. homework must be supportive, or initial diagnostic must not be intimidating. The criteria and methods which are being used to judge the work must be clear to the student, staff and internal and external moderators/verifiers and meet and exceed the requirements of QAA, the awarding bodies and our student/candidate charter.
- **Inclusiveness:** Assessment should be based on students'/candidates' needs. It must allow all students/candidates to demonstrate their achievements regardless of individual circumstances. It must comply with the Equalities policies of the College.

Scope

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

Assessment Strategy

Assessment will be a standing item on the agenda of all course/subject/College team meetings.

Course/subject teams will review their assessments and procedures and processes annually to ensure that they are current and valid. The College Management team will then update their Assessment Strategy to reflect any changes and this will feed into the overall College Assessment policy.

All course/subject teams will hold a Final Examiners/assessment meeting upon completion of the assessments for the current academic year.

All College Curriculum Areas will contain in their handbooks a description of the overall approach to assessment. This will specify where relevant:

- Purpose, arrangements and choices of assessment methods
- Details of any initial or diagnostic tests
- Who will be doing the assessing
- Arrangements for recording and tracking assessment evidence
- Timing of assessment tasks e.g. a diary or table
- Volume of assessment including homework and coursework and an estimate of the time required to complete it
- Number of attempts allowed at an assignment
- Consequences of non-submission or late submission. For non-submission, students will not be able to achieve a grade without providing evidence that meets the assessment criteria. For some courses it may only be possible to achieve a pass grade if the assignment is a late submission. It may be that a different assignment is used for any reassessment. For some courses specifically BTECs, if assignments are submitted late, they are still marked for and grade recorded, students will not be eligible for a resubmission in line with the BTEC rules.
- Arrangements if the student is absent for an assessment or requires an extension e.g. previous approval of absence, genuine reason or medical certificate
- Plagiarism policy
- Student Malpractice in Assessment/Examinations Policy
- Arrangements for the secure retention of assessment evidence by the College which may be required for internal quality assurance/moderation, and will normally be returned to the student at the discretion of the College, and only after the completion of the external quality assurance/moderation process in accordance with the Awarding Organisation requirements
- Nature of the IQA/moderation process demonstrating that assessment decisions are to national standards and that internal and external quality assurance/moderation is in place to ensure that all assessments are applied consistently for all students and that the final assessment mark/decision is accurate, reliable and recorded
- Results for internally assessed units are final only after internal and/or external quality assurance
- Written and oral feedback is given to the students as soon as possible after assessment and internal quality assurance (normally 3 working weeks of the official submission date for written work). These standards are reviewed annually and shared with students in the handbook.

- That where an assessment takes place outside the College it is the responsibility of the teacher/trainer/supervisor/assessor to ensure that adequate arrangements are made for the supervision of the assessment activity and authentication of the student's/candidate's assessment evidence.
- Arrangements for students who are unable to demonstrate attainment through the standard assessment arrangements
- Awarding Body requirements/regulations
- Student Appeal Against the Assessment of Performance

The assessment strategy enables students/candidates to know that:

- Open and transparent methods are used to assess.
- They are expected to spend a designated amount of time outside the classroom each week completing assessments
- There is feedback on the process and results of assessment.
- Students have the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved the outcomes of their programme of learning.
- Students are allowed to resubmit work under appropriate and agreed assessment regulations in line with the Awarding Organisation regulations, in order to achieve to their best ability/capacity
- Where work is part of external assessment then a record of the development process - e.g. first submission - feedback, second submission - feedback, third submission - feedback must be clearly signed and dated, a copy kept and a review of this is part of the standardisation/quality assurance process
- Assessment is relevant and integrated into the learning process
- Students will normally be permitted an initial attempt and one further summative attempt at an assignment. A third summative attempt may only be offered where there are appropriate circumstances as agreed by the Awarding Organisation subject leader/personal tutor and manager.
- Students have the right to appeal against assessment decisions which may adversely affect their academic achievement, if they feel there are just grounds such as error, inconsistent judgement, misinterpretation or unfairness (see Assessment Appeal Policy).
- Failure to submit coursework to the required standard and/or deadlines or to achieve summative assessments or failure to meet the agreed requirements of any support or recovery plan may lead to the Student Positive Behaviour Policy being implemented, and consequently a reduced or no grade being awarded.
- Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are not tolerated (see Plagiarism Policy)
- Progress as monitored by assessment will be reflected and tracked in the Individual Learning Plan

Forms of Assessment

- **Initial** assessment usually takes place at the start and to ensure the learner is on the right learning programme. It is used to identify the learner's achievements, skills, interests, previous learning experiences, goals and learning needs.
- **Diagnostic** assessment of specific skills required for the course. This can include a diagnostic assessment of the underpinning skills of English and mathematics. It is used to identify specific learning strengths and needs, referral for Additional Learning Support (ALS), and to determine learning targets and appropriate teaching and learning strategies to achieve them. Informs the learner's Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
- **Formative** assessment is developmental, supportive and encouraging and on-going throughout the course. It is used to give feedback and support to the student on progress to date and to inform the student and tutor of action to take to maintain or improve performance.
- **Summative** assessment takes place at the end of each learning episode and counts towards a final assessment decision. It is used to measure how much learning has taken place. It is a judgement on whether the student has achieved all or some of the learning outcomes for a given level. To enable the tutor/assessor/student to know how the quality of work relates to the standards of external awarding bodies and helps students to set their targets
- **Formal** assessment is structured and usually takes place in clearly stated conditions, e.g. the completion of a practical task, or presentation. It may be undertaken by the whole group or by an individual. It is usually summative in nature and may be assessed externally.
- **Informal** assessment is on-going integrated and flexible. It is varied and may be recorded by the student and the tutor/assessor. It can include self-assessment or verbal feedback given by the assessor. It can be formative or summative or both. If it is summative it must be recorded although NVQs record formative assessments to demonstrate competency over time.

Recruitment and initial assessment of learners

Prior to registration, you must ensure that learners are provided with the correct information and advice on their chosen qualification and that the qualification will meet their needs. Centre staff should assess the suitability of each potential learner and make appropriate professional judgments about the learner's potential to successfully complete the assessments and achieve the qualification at the chosen level. you must also ensure that a learner is able to communicate effectively in English (this includes listening, speaking, reading and writing) and understand the requirements of the qualification and the information within the learning materials in English without assistance.

During this process it may be identified that a learner will require additional support or reasonable adjustments to be made to enable them to be assessed fairly. This should be discussed with the learner.

Learners should be able to have reasonable and fair access to the assessment, but any adjustments made to the assessment itself should not compensate the learner for lack of understanding, knowledge or skills. It is your responsibility to communicate to the learner that they may not be able to demonstrate attainment because their impairment directly affects performance in the attributes being assessed. The learner may however still wish to proceed with studying a qualification and not be entered for all or part of the assessment. You should confirm with AIM that this is possible before the learner commences their programme of study.

Assessment Activities

Any assessment will include a variety of assessment activities or methods, formal or informal mapped to the learning outcomes/performance indicators or assessment criteria. These may include (and other suitable methods) where applicable, (please note some qualifications do not recognise some activities):

- observation of activities such as role plays, simulations, practical activities, performance etc.

- discussion ranging from unstructured informal conversations to guided discussions This can be used in a group with a clear set of conditions for recording individual achievement, or on a one to one basis;
- question and answer sessions, oral or written, formally or informally structured e.g. worksheet, quiz, IT based activities etc.
- structured tasks such as a research project, experiment, essay, or case study, or workplace task or presentations (individual or group)
- examinations and tests, either seen or unseen, with a formal structure and time constraints

Responsibility for Assessment

The assessment strategy for each programme/course outlines who is responsible for making and recording judgements.

1. Assessor: The Assessor is responsible for:

- Planning the assessment strategy in accordance with the Awarding Organisation's guidelines and ensuring that it complies with the College Assessment Policy
- Including assessment details of assessment on the Scheme of Learning
- Notifying students of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria before the assignment is undertaken
- Giving guidance to the student when there are choices regarding assessment
- Ensuring that assignment briefs have been internally quality assured before they are given to the student
- Provide assessment processes that are fair and meet the requirements of the qualifications
- Recording the assessment either on Markbook, Record of Learning, the ILP or other agreed tracking file and provide learners with a schedule of assessment
- Setting appropriate homework in line with College procedures
- Returning marked homework/assessment in a timely manner in line with the College's Service standards by which date all students will have had the opportunity to complete the assessment.
- Retaining coursework in accordance with the Awarding Organisation guidelines and College requirements
- Participating in the Internal Quality Assurance process by keeping all the necessary records, attending IQA meetings and submitting marked student assessments as requested
- Ensuring that provisional assessment decisions are internally quality assured before they are given to the student and explaining that they may change after external quality assurance. This should be clearly stated on the assignment brief.
- Keeping all assessment records secure. Record internal standardisation, moderation and quality assurance decisions accurately and systematically, using agreed documentation
- Giving on-going feedback which is not just a word like "good" or "excellent" but the of feedback which sets out very clearly what students have to do to improve and following Awarding Organisation requirements
- Ensuring that all students have equal opportunities for their achievements to be assessed. Provide special arrangements for learners with specific needs and or disabilities according to the regulations of the Awarding Organisation and College procedures
- Ensuring that Plagiarism and cheating are detected

- Familiarise themselves and learners with the Appeals Against Internal Assessment Decisions Procedure
 - Be aware of and keep up-to date with Awarding Organisation guidance in respect of assessment, standardisation, moderation and quality assurance
 - Inform their line manager by email of any students/ candidates being enrolled for a programme at the college, which would be considered a conflict of interest
2. **Students:** Evaluating their own work it helps students to improve. This is a skill which is developed in tutorials and classes. Work based candidates may have reflective accounts.
3. **NVQ Candidates**
- Attend workshops as per the programme requirements
 - Familiarise themselves with the standards for their qualification (NVQ and/or Functional Skills)
 - Negotiate and develop a personal action plan with their Assessor
 - Complete and sign their ILP with their Assessor
 - Build a portfolio of evidence in accordance with Awarding Organisation and Centre requirements, mapping evidence against standards on Evidence Grids
 - Be available to discuss assessment evidence with Internal and/or External Quality Assurer if requested
4. **Peers:**
- Peer assessment involves students in formal or informal situations, either as groups or individuals giving feedback in assessment. Assessment by other students in the group can encourage evaluative skills and increase group cohesion. This sort of assessment must always be supported and moderated by the tutor/assessor
5. **External assessors:**
- This may include NVQ assessors, work placement coordinators and supervisors in the workplace. They must have full access to the College assessment policy and the assessment strategy of the provision.
- They are responsible for:
- ensuring that each candidate is aware of his or her responsibility with regard to the collection and presentation of evidence
 - ensuring that the candidate is fully briefed and understands the NVQ and, if appropriate, Functional Skills standards
 - advising the Centre if a candidate has any special assessment requirements that are not advised at the beginning of the programme but have subsequently come to light
 - completing the Individual Learning Plan with the candidate
 - assessing the candidate against the performance criteria, range statements and underpinning knowledge associated with elements of competence
 - contributing to the candidate's on-going assessment plan to identify valid and sufficient evidence and assessment
 - judging all evidence against performance criteria range statements and underpinning knowledge to identify candidates' achievements
 - identifying gaps in evidence and discuss/agree remedial action with the candidate
 - carrying out regular observations of the candidate within their workplace and provide written reports

- providing the candidate with written feedback on assessment and action planning
- signing and dating the candidate's assessment/action/training plans, all evidence and any other documentation
- using the Centre documentation for all records relating to the assessment process
- following the Centre Guidelines for reporting assessment and candidate progress
- following the assessment guidance given by the Awarding Organisation and Internal Quality Assurer
- attending standardisation meetings as required and liaising with the Internal Quality Assurer and other assessors, Centre co-ordinator as necessary;
- explaining and discussing special assessments or problems with the Internal Quality Assurer
- maintaining records of their candidates' achievements and feeding back to the co-ordinator and Internal Quality Assurer
- carrying out appropriate risk assessment of where the candidate is working to ensure they are working in a safe and healthy environment
- being mindful of the data protection act and the candidates right to see any information recorded about them.

6. NVQ Internal Quality Assurer:

Internal Quality Assurers work under the direction of the NVQ Centre Co-ordinator in accordance with the College Policy and Joint Awarding Body Guidance on Internal Verification of NVQs and contribute to the Centre's compliance with the NVQ Code of Practice (2008).

They will:

- Develop a plan for internal quality assurance of the programmes for which they are responsible in line with the NVQ Centre Strategy for Internal Quality Assurance.
- Carry out on-going and summative sampling of portfolios according to the IV Strategy and plan and feed back to the Assessor.
- Observe assessments by Assessors, as directed by the Centre Co-ordinator.
- Interview candidates.
- Support and guide Assessors.
- Ensure fair, reliable, and consistent assessments.
- Deal with Appeals in accordance with the NVQ Centre Appeals Policy and under the direction of the Centre Co-ordinator.
- Attend and contribute to Standardisation Meetings.
- Maintain Centre records, as required. (Updating Candidate Progress Records, completing Internal Quality Assurance Reports, Internal Quality Assurance Summary Sheets and Reports on Observations of Assessors.)
- Attend meetings with the External Quality Assurer, when requested by the Centre Co-ordinator.

7. Invigilator

- To ensure the security of an exam, before, during and after the exam
- To prevent possible candidate malpractice
- To prevent possible administrative failures or errors

- To be familiar with relevant guidance by the Awarding Organisation in relation to the exam
- To give all their attention to conducting the exam properly
- To be able to observe the candidates within the exam room at all times

Assessment Evidence

1. The evidence must always be linked to the assessment method e.g. if 'tutor observation' is the method there must be a 'tutor observation checklist'.
2. Evidence should comply with the principles of assessment and must always be:
 - Sufficient, i.e. there must be enough evidence to enable a reliable judgement on achievement
 - Current, i.e. up to date with the demands of the curriculum and able to demonstrate that the student is competent at the time
 - Valid, i.e. directly related to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
 - Authentic, i.e. the result of the student's own work.
 - Validated by internal moderation/ standardisation and Awarding Bodies.
3. Evidence will be generated by the student throughout the course and may be:
 - Paper based: notes, reports, learning journals, essays, examinations etc.
 - Non-paper based: evidence of role plays, videos, audio, witness statements, computer programmes, performance, oral questions and answers etc. There must be a transparent process for recording the evidence which clearly shows how judgements were made.
 - A portfolio which is a collection of assessed evidence used to demonstrate achievement. This may be electronic if the relevant awarding body agrees.
 - It will always be flexible, varied and appropriate.

Recording Assessment

1. Assessment records form a vital component of evidence for the following purpose:
 - to demonstrate the student's progress towards the achievement of learning outcomes
 - evaluating the student progress (useful to both student and tutor)
 - presentation to internal and external moderator/ verifiers/ assessors as evidence of achievement
2. Assessment records map evidence of progress through the programme. It is the tutor's/ assessor's responsibility to record assessed achievement and to track this against the learning outcomes. Students must be fully advised and aware of any assessment requirements or regulations, including the opportunities to resubmit and of the appeals procedure.
3. The assessment record must be available to students and staff for review throughout the duration of the course/programme
4. Evidence can be recorded in a number of ways but must be
 - Tracked against the individual student and achievement of the relevant outcomes
 - Clearly structured
 - Available for internal and external moderators at any point throughout the year

Retention of Assessment Evidence

1. Retaining examples of assessment enables the monitoring of standards over a period of time
2. A minimum of 2 pieces of assessed work (or portfolios) per programme should be retained for a minimum of 3 years. Ideally these should be electronic copies and not the original work.
3. The work should be representative of the sampling and standardisation process used for internal quality assurance initially and subsequently submitted for IQA. They should be supported by internal and external quality assurance records to evidence the processes of sampling and standardisation.
4. Where retention of the assessed sample is impractical e.g. for Art and Design courses suitable photographic or equivalent records should be retained.
5. Once External Quality Assurance has taken place and after the student appeal timeline, student work can be returned. All IQA records must be kept for a minimum of three years

Good Practice in Assessment

- Assessment is not carried out exclusively for accreditation purposes – it is used to measure progress, build up self-confidence and review the success of the course.
- Assessment has to consider the learning needs of the individuals and target groups.
- Assessment tasks are internally quality assured before use.
- Assessment documentation includes the requirement that students state the authenticity of their own work.
- Assessment procedures are explicit and public.
- Assessment procedures are varied, flexible and may be negotiable, while assessment criteria are fixed for different levels.
- Methods of assessment are creative, innovative and varied.
- Assessment procedures allow students to work at and be assessed at the correct level.
- Assessment builds the self-esteem of the student.
- Assessment encourages self-assessment by students to promote independence.
- Students are encouraged to evaluate the assessment procedures to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.

Marking learners' work and correction of Spelling, Punctuation and Grammatical [SPaG] errors and inaccuracies

It is essential that marking, including error analysis, includes:

- regular, accurate and consistent feedback to learners;
- the correction of spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.
- written guidance on what learners have to do to improve their skills and knowledge;
- clear written feedback that is understood by learners.
- regular checks and reviews on progress and improvement of skills.

The preferred approach to marking learners' work is use of the "error analysis" approach as it is a very effective way of developing learners' self-correcting skills. It also helps learners identify their errors, focus on specific difficulties and structure their work.

A marking code understood by learners is used to indicate the error and to identify what type it is. Some examples might be Sp for spelling, P for punctuation, T for tense, E for (grammatical) ending or G for grammar, SS for sentence structure, V for vocabulary.

Strategies to improve SPaG will be incorporated in the delivery of teaching, learning and assessment. Learners will also be encouraged to develop these skills independently, with their peers and to proofread their written work.

Late submission of work

All course teams should make students aware of any penalties that they will incur as a result of late submission of coursework. Where Awarding Organisations have prescribed rules for late submission these must be adhered to and explained to the students at the start of the programme and prior to submission of all assessments.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Reasonable adjustments are adjustments that can be made to the assessment for a qualification so as to enable a student to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification. A student may be eligible for reasonable adjustments if their ability to access an assessment is likely to be substantially affected by an impairment involving for example communication and interaction, cognition and learning, physical or behavioural issues, or emotional and social needs.

The nature of any reasonable adjustment depends on the learner's requirements and the assessment methods being considered.

Reasonable adjustment may not be appropriate if the student's difficulty directly affects performance in the attributes being assessed. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability or validity of assessment outcomes, nor must they give the student an advantage over other students undertaking the same or similar assessments.

All reasonable adjustable must be approved and in line with the relevant Awarding Organisation policies and procedures. Liaise with your EQA before the assessment takes place. Details/evidence of the student circumstances must be provided to approve the reasonable adjustment. All details must be recorded and stored with all other Quality Assurance documents, ready for your EQA sampling.

Special consideration can be given to a student who has temporarily experienced an illness or injury, or some other event outside of their control, which has had or is reasonably likely to have had an effect on their ability to take an assessment or on their level of attainment in an assessment. Special consideration should not be granted solely on the grounds of disability and students must declare their needs prior to assessment with any reasonable adjustments being implemented before the assessment takes place.

Special consideration should not give a student an unfair advantage. The student's result must reflect their achievement in the assessment and not necessarily their potential ability. Special consideration may lead to a small post-assessment adjustment to the student's results, the nature of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances and reflect the difficulty faced by the student. Example of Special Circumstances are as follows:

- An illness or injury, or
- Some other event outside of the student's control

- Which has had or is reasonably likely to have had a material effect on the student's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment.
- The college recognise adjustments or special considerations may be required at the time of an assessment:
- Students have a permanent disability or individual learning need/s
- Students have a temporary disability, medical condition or learning need/s.
- Students are indisposed at the time of the assessment.

The adjustment will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the student. An adjustment cannot be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment. Where an assessment requires the student to demonstrate practical competence or where criteria have to be met fully, or in the case of qualifications that confer a License to Practice, it may not be possible to apply special consideration. Where a student has temporarily experienced an illness or injury, or other event outside of their control and it may be more appropriate to offer the opportunity to take that the assessment at a later date.

All adjustments based on special considerations must be in accordance with the awarding body policy on reasonable adjustments and special considerations and must be approved prior to rescheduling the assessments.

Extenuating circumstances

Extenuating circumstances can often be claimed to enable tutors/assessors to mark late submitted work without the student incurring penalties providing students have negotiated and agreed an extension before the submission date.

The process for application of extenuation circumstances for students is specified within the student programme handbooks. The Lead IQA has responsibility for managing and authorising requests for extenuating circumstances to allow late submissions.

The rules and regulations relating to extenuating circumstances' must be referenced and applied for each Awarding Organisation. The College Quality Department will provide support and guidance with all aspects of Awarding Organisation requirements.

To apply for extenuating circumstances students must complete an extenuating circumstances form prior to the assessment deadline outlining why they feel they should be given extra time. This should be supported by any relevant documentation for example medical notes.

In all cases consideration must be given to student support assessment reports, EHCPs and any other evidence of possible barriers. Students will be informed by curriculum teams as quickly as possible of their decision in line with the Assessment Plan.