



Assessment and Feedback Policy

Scope

All taught programmes leading to an award of City, University of London.

Senate Regulations

Senate Regulation 19 Assessment

Senate Regulation 13 Student Discipline is also relevant.

Date approved/re-approved

December 2010, for implementation from January 2011 (minor updates approved in October 2011 and July and October 2012)

Minor updates October 2016

Date for review

To be reviewed on a periodic basis, with allowance for minor annual updates of roles and responsibilities by Educational Quality Committee, as required

To be read in conjunction with

Quality Manual Section 6

Equality and Diversity statement

City, University of London is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities, processes, and culture, under its Public Sector Equality Duties and the Equality Act 2010. This includes promoting equality and diversity for all, irrespective of any protected characteristic, working pattern, family circumstance, socio-economic background, political belief or other irrelevant distinction.

Where relevant to the policy, decision-making panels will ensure a reasonable gender balance (with at least one man and one woman) and will actively consider representation of other protected groups.

Assessment and Feedback Policy

The assessment of students on taught programmes leading to an award of City, University of London shall be managed in accordance with Senate Regulation 19. This Policy supports the Regulations by highlighting the principles upon which assessment and feedback are based, thereby supporting staff, students and external examiners engaged in the assessment and feedback process. Guidance to support the implementation of the Policy is also available.

The Assessment and Feedback Policy will apply to partnership provision unless equivalent alternative arrangements have been specifically agreed between City and the partner institution. Details will be included in the Memorandum of Agreement for the partnership.

Where the Regulations cannot be followed as a result of professional, statutory or regulatory bodies or other reasons this should be discussed as part of programme approval(s) or review(s).

Information to students

Programme teams should provide students with information about assessment and feedback and about aspects of the assessment and feedback process in programme and module specifications and programme handbooks. This includes information about good academic practice and academic misconduct. Examples of the areas in which information should be provided to students can be found in Appendix 1.

Programme teams should also provide students with information on where they can access other sources of advice and guidance around assessment and feedback. If a student is unsure of their responsibilities regarding assessment and feedback they should seek advice.

Scope of assessment and feedback

Assessment and feedback are integral to City's commitment to provide high quality learning and teaching. They are also integral to student achievement. Assessment and feedback should support a student's ongoing learning and development and the achievement of programme or module learning outcomes.

In accordance with our commitment to equal opportunities and equality and diversity, City will make reasonable adjustments to the Regulations where appropriate. Where study is interrupted as a direct result of a disability-related cause this should not unjustifiably impede a student's subsequent academic progress.

Assessment and Feedback strategies are agreed and reviewed during programme approval and review procedures. These strategies will include information on how assessment and feedback will be structured and may include, for example: methods for the aggregation of marks and grades; rules relating to progression, final awards and classification; and the approach to be taken to the type and timescales within which feedback will be provided during and at the end of a module.

Assessment

Assessment has a double purpose. It is the summative process by which City is able to confirm that a student has achieved the learning outcomes and academic standards for the module, programme stage and/or award for the programme on which they are registered. It also acts as a strong formative tool to support and assist student learning and development.

Boards of Studies are responsible for identifying someone to take overall responsibility for the security of assessments.

Assessment can take various forms, all of which are equally valuable. The assessment used for a module, including its scheduling, volume and type, should be appropriate to its purpose and to the module's learning outcomes.

Information on the impact on assessment of any professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements should be incorporated into programme and module specifications and communicated to students.

The development and use of online assessment¹ should be approached in the same way as any other assessment, although additional factors will need to be taken into consideration. Guidance on this is available. Where an online assessment activity contributes to a final mark and takes place within defined time and location parameters ('high-stakes e-assessment'), programme staff should inform the relevant administrative departments. Support for the development and use of online assessment is available from Learning Enhancement and Development (LEaD).

Assessment criteria and grade-related criteria

Assessment criteria and grade-related criteria together provide mechanisms by which the quality of a student's performance in an assessment can be measured. Both are descriptions of the skills, knowledge and attributes students need to demonstrate in an assessment, and are based on the intended learning outcomes associated with an assessment:

- Assessment criteria explain what a student needs to demonstrate in order to complete an assessment successfully. These provide the minimum requirement expected of students. Assessment criteria will differ according to the discipline, the type of assessment and the level of the students.
- Grade-related criteria explain what a student needs to demonstrate in order to achieve a certain grade or mark in an assessment. These enable students to be positioned within the overall set of marks available for an assessment. Two options for the presentation of grade-related criteria have been provided (see Appendix). These may be customised as appropriate according to the discipline, assessment type, level of study or the module or assessment in question.

Assessment criteria and grade-related criteria will be:

1. Linked to each other.
2. Used by markers.
3. Used to support the feedback process. Assessment criteria should be used to provide feedback on a student's performance whilst grade-related criteria provide a mechanism with which to relate feedback to grades. Grade-related criteria might support the provision of early feedback.
4. Used to aid transparency in the assessment process.
5. Written clearly and in language that makes them easy for students to understand.
6. Communicated to students prior to the assessment task.
7. Made easily accessible to students and provided in consistent versions.
8. Presented in the same format to both staff and students and provided to the markers of the assessment as part of the marking guidelines for that assessment.

¹ Online assessment is taken to mean any assessment with an online or electronic component. This could include assessments undertaken online, for example through the internet or the strategic learning environment; assessments in which students use technology to support completion; assessments submitted online; or assessments upon which technology is used following submission (e.g. plagiarism detection software)

Assessment criteria will also be:

1. Provided for each assessment task.
2. Provided at an appropriate level for each assessment.
3. Linked to the module learning outcomes that are being assessed through the assessment task.

Marking and moderation

Marking may take various forms, including the use of anonymous marking and double or second marking. Double marking usually means that markers do not see each other's comments or marks whilst for second marking these may be made available to the second marker.

Moderation is used to ensure that an assessment outcome is fair and reliable. Moderation can also take various forms including sampling, additional marking of borderline cases or statistical review of marks.

Marking guidelines should be provided to all markers, moderators and external examiners and used to mark and grade assessments. This supports consistency and transparency. Marking guidelines consist of the intended learning outcomes the assessment is designed to assess; the assessment information; the assessment criteria; the grade-related criteria; and, if relevant, additional guidance that provides information on what should have been included in specific answers.

City requires that:

1. In addition to external examining requirements, more than one member of staff is normally involved in marking and moderation processes. This should ensure that no module mark is finalised on the basis on only one internal assessor's decision.
2. Marking of examination scripts is anonymous. This is considered to be an appropriate means of avoiding claims of bias and demonstrating a commitment to equal opportunities and equality and diversity policies.
3. Second marking or moderation of all dissertations or equivalent assessment tasks takes place.

Boards of Studies are required to determine appropriate marking and moderating mechanisms and the criteria for the identification of samples to be considered through the moderation process.

City also considers that the use of anonymous marking for forms of assessment other than examinations should be encouraged where this is appropriate to the assessment type. The use of a statistical analysis of the distributions of marks both within and between modules, including their centre and their spread, is also to be encouraged². Where possible, Boards of Studies should review the efficacy of their marking and moderation processes with the aim of considering the use of moderation at component level and should also review the weighting of individual assessment components.

Guidance on procedures for marking and grading summative assessments is available.

Assessment Boards

Assessment Boards should operate in accordance with the Assessment Regulations. Information provided to Assessment Boards should be produced and presented in a consistent manner. Guidance on processes for recording and publishing assessment decisions is available.

² Centre could include mean or median, spread standard deviation or interquartile range

Assessment Board decisions should be recorded and maintained in accordance with data protection requirements. Within those requirements, the decisions should be published as quickly as possible.

Feedback

Feedback should be provided to support students in their learning. Feedback will be provided on all assessed work (either formative or summative), including examinations, and on other relevant aspects of a student's performance and progress in a module.

Feedback on assessed work

This comprises a marker's comments on a student's performance in an assessment component. It should facilitate a student's understanding of his/her achievement in an assessment and should promote learning and self-reflection so that a student is provided with information to help him/her improve performance in subsequent assessments. Feedback may, for example, provide information on how the mark was derived, the extent of a student's success in meeting the assessed learning outcomes and an indication of areas for improvement in the future.

Feedback should be given on all assessments, including examinations, and may relate to the content of an assessment and/or assessment technique.

The type of feedback given will be informed by the nature and purpose of the assessment and the discipline, and as such will be linked to the task's learning outcomes, assessment criteria and grade-related criteria. Programme Teams are responsible for identifying and implementing the most appropriate methods for providing feedback on assessed work, whilst considering an appropriate level of consistency in relation to how that feedback is perceived by students. Pro-formas, which allow markers to lay out how a student has met the learning outcomes being tested, may be used if appropriate.

Consideration should be given to the type of feedback provided to students who are eligible to resit and the most appropriate mechanisms through which their learning can be supported.

It is noted that feedback should not be used as a basis for negotiation on marks but to enable a dialogue on ways in which to improve performance for the future. The process of providing feedback must be kept separate from the extenuating circumstances and appeals procedures.

Various types of feedback on assessed work exist. Some examples include:

- Individual or group verbal feedback
- Individual or group written and/or audio feedback
- Model answers and/or example solutions
- Previous assessment questions/papers/performances
- Generic feedback

Guidance on types of feedback and how they can be used is available. This includes guidance on the provision of feedback on examinations.

Timeliness of Feedback

- Students will normally be provided with feedback within three weeks of the submission deadline or assessment date. This will include a provisional grade or mark. For end of module examinations

or an equivalent significant task (e.g. an end of module project) feedback will normally be provided within four weeks; again, this will include a provisional grade or mark³.

In light of the substantial nature of the work and associated internal and external marking processes, feedback on final year projects and dissertations may be provided after the final Assessment Board. The timescale for feedback on this component of work may therefore be longer than four weeks. Students must be advised in writing of the feedback timescale for this element of the programme and the reasons why this is in place.

- Adjustments may be made where alternative turnaround times are integral to the nature of the assessment, or to accommodate closures or staff absence due to religious holidays. Any adjustments should be approved by the Board of Studies, which will also be responsible for monitoring the impact of any adjustments on the student learning experience.
- In accordance with the Assessment Regulations and the statement provided to students in programme handbooks, all marks will remain provisional until the end of year Assessment Board when internal moderation and external examiner scrutiny will have been completed.

Boards of Studies will oversee the effective implementation of the timeliness of feedback and associated data on turnaround times. School Executive Committees will also receive reports. Monitoring will take place through Senate and City's Executive Team.

Students will be informed in writing of all submission and feedback dates. Students will also be informed in writing of any unforeseen delays in receiving feedback and the reasons for this.

Feedback on student performance and progress

This comprises any comments given to students regarding their performance and progress in a module to support their learning and academic development. This can take place in formal or informal settings, for example: in lectures or seminars; in personal tutorials; through the strategic learning environment; and during group or in-class activities. Where possible, some form of feedback should be provided in the first term of an academic year.

This type of feedback can relate closely to feed-forward. Feed-forward comprises information to students which is similar to feedback but is provided in advance of an assessment task to support student learning and development prior to completion of the assessment. Feed-forward is considered to be an important mechanism for supporting student learning. Where used it should support, rather than replace, the provision of feedback.

Extenuating circumstances and academic misconduct

Regulations and policies exist to deal with instances where the assessment and feedback process is affected by the following:

Extenuating circumstances

Please refer to the separate Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

Academic Misconduct

Please refer to the separate Academic Misconduct Policy.

³ Provision of feedback within these timeframes cannot be guaranteed for work submitted after the deadline or where the student is not entitled to receive the result (e.g. if there is an outstanding fee debt). Where work is submitted after the deadline, students should nonetheless receive feedback in a timely manner.

Appendix 1 – Information for students

Information about assessment and feedback

Examples of the types of information that should be provided to students about assessment and feedback include information on:

- The nature and format of the assessment, including any special arrangements for online assessment;
- Submission procedures and deadlines;
- Assessment criteria and grade-related criteria;
- The type of feedback that will be provided and feedback timescales. Where turnaround times differ from the schedules set out in this policy (e.g. where it is integral to the nature of the assessment or where there are holidays), the rationale should be made clear to students.
- How marks and awards are calculated.

Other information to support the assessment and feedback process

Examples of the types of information that should be provided to students to support the assessment and feedback process include information on:

- The processes for informing staff if it is not going to be possible for the student to attempt an assessment at the first opportunity.
- Developing good academic practice, including how to avoid academic misconduct. This should include information on the existence and use of learning activities embedded into the curriculum; and information on referencing and paraphrasing.
- What happens in instances in which a student commits poor academic practice.
- Academic misconduct and the use of any technologies for detecting academic misconduct.
- The details of any local procedures for considering cases of alleged academic misconduct in the first instance.
- Possible impacts of being found guilty of academic misconduct, for example in terms of the penalties possible through the Assessment Regulations/Disciplinary Regulations; any requirement to report instances of academic misconduct to professional, statutory or regulatory bodies associated with the programme; and any impact a record of academic misconduct might have on a student's employment prospects, particularly in a particular career.
- Other sources of information for a student to learn about assessment and feedback.

Appendix 2 – Common Grade-related Criteria

OPTION 1: For Undergraduate and Graduate programmes:

Class – Degree (Diploma/ Certificate)	%	Alphabetic ⁴		Literary	Description
1 (Distinction)	85-100	A	A+	Outstanding	Work that demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of the subject area and addresses the learning outcomes/assessment criteria in full. Where relevant, it will show evidence of independent reading, thinking and analysis. It will be well-constructed and demonstrate a professional approach to academic practice. It will be of a professional standard.
	75-84		A	Very good	Work that demonstrates strong knowledge of the subject area and addresses the learning outcomes/assessment criteria well. Where relevant, it will show evidence of wide and comprehensive reading. It will be clearly written and adhere to the principles of good academic practice.
	70-74		A-		
2:1 (Merit)	67-69	B	B+	Good	Work that demonstrates a sound level of knowledge of the subject area and makes a good attempt to address the learning outcomes/assessment criteria, realising all to some extent and most well. Where relevant, there will be evidence of thorough research of the topic(s). It will be well-structured and logically written and will demonstrate good academic practice.
	64-66		B		
	60-63		B-		
2:2 (Pass)	57-59	C	C+	Fair	Work that demonstrates knowledge of the subject area and attempts to address the learning outcomes/assessment criteria, realising all to some extent and some well but perhaps also including irrelevant or underdeveloped material. Where relevant, answers will provide some evidence of analysis but may be largely descriptive. It will have structure but this may not always be clear. Attempts to demonstrate academic practice will be evident.
	54-56		C		
	50-53		C-		
3 (Pass)	47-49	D	D+	Satisfactory	Work that demonstrates basic knowledge of the subject area and provides some level of response to the learning outcomes/assessment criteria but only realises these outcomes and criteria to some extent and may not include important elements or information that is completely accurate. Where relevant, development of ideas is limited. Expression and structure will lack clarity and evidence of academic practice will be limited.
	44-46		D		
	40-43		D-		
Fail	37-39	E	E+	Poor	Unsatisfactory work that demonstrates very limited knowledge of the subject area and does not succeed in grasping the key issues. Learning outcomes/assessment criteria will not be realised. There will be no real development of ideas and few sources will be used or used correctly. Presentation is confused or lacking in clarity.
	34-36		E		
	30-33		E-		
	15-30	F	F	Very poor	Work that demonstrates no real knowledge of the subject area and which demonstrates a totally inadequate attempt to address the learning outcomes/assessment criteria.
	0-15				

⁴ The smaller divisions (A+, A, A- etc) are usually used by performing arts students

OPTION 1: For Postgraduates programmes:

Class	%	Alphabetic ⁵		Literary	Description
Distinction	85-100	A	A+	Outstanding	Work that demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of the subject area and addresses the learning outcomes/assessment criteria in full. Where relevant, it will show evidence of independent reading, thinking and analysis and strong critical ability. It will be well-constructed and demonstrate a professional approach to academic practice. It will be of a professional standard.
	80-84		A	Excellent	
	75-79		A-	Very good	
	70-74				
Merit	67-69	B	B+	Good	Work that demonstrates a sound level of knowledge of the subject area and makes a good attempt to address the learning outcomes/assessment criteria, realising all to some extent and some well. There will be evidence of thorough research of the topic(s) but some answers may not be complete or arguments sufficiently explored. It will be well-structured and logically written and will demonstrate good academic practice. Some critical ability will be evident.
	64-66		B		
	60-63		B-		
Pass	57-59	C	C+	Satisfactory	Work that demonstrates knowledge of the subject area and provides some level of response to the learning outcomes/assessment criteria but only realises these outcomes and criteria to some extent and may not include important elements or information that is fully accurate. Where relevant, development of ideas is limited but attempts will be made to analyse materials critically. Expression and structure may lack clarity and evidence of academic practice will be limited.
	54-56		C		
	50-53		C-		
Fail	47-49	D	D+	Poor	Unsatisfactory work that demonstrates very limited knowledge of the subject area and which does not succeed in grasping the key issues. Learning outcomes/assessment criteria will not be realised. There will be no real development of ideas and critical analysis will be very limited. Presentation is confused or lacks coherence.
	44-46		D		
	40-43		D-		
	20-40	E	E	Very poor	Work that demonstrates no real knowledge of the subject area and which demonstrates a totally inadequate attempt to address the learning outcomes/assessment criteria. No critical ability will be displayed.
	0-20				

⁵ The smaller divisions (A+, A, A- etc) are usually used by performing arts students

OPTION 2: for Undergraduate and Graduate programmes

Class – Degree (Diploma/ Certificate)	%	Alphabetic ⁶		Literary	Knowledge	Independent thought, use of sources and research materials	Presentation	Professional
1 (Distinction)	85-100	A	A+	Outstanding	Comprehensive knowledge of subject area, addresses learning outcomes and assessment criteria in full – be of a professional standard	Where relevant, evidence of independent reading, thinking, analysis. Comprehensive use of sources and links to research and evidence of independent research	Well-constructed	Professional approach to academic practice
	75-84		A	Very good	Strong knowledge of subject area, addresses learning outcomes/ assessment criteria well	Where relevant, evidence of wide and comprehensive reading	Clearly written	Adhere to the principles of good academic practice
	70-74		A-					
2:1 (Merit)	67-69	B	B+	Good	Sound knowledge of subject area, good attempt to address the learning outcomes/assessment criteria, realising all to some extent and most well.	Where relevant, evidence of thorough research of the topic(s)	Well-structured and logically written	Demonstrates good academic practice
	64-66		B					
	60-63		B-					
2:2 (Pass)	57-59	C	C+	Fair	Knowledge of subject area, attempts to address the learning outcomes/ assessment criteria, realising all to some extent and some well but perhaps also including irrelevant or underdeveloped material.	Where relevant, answers will provide some evidence of analysis but may be largely descriptive.	Has structure but this may not always be clear.	Attempts to demonstrate good academic practice will be evident.
	54-56		C					
	50-53		C-					
3 (Pass)	47-49	D	D+	Satisfactory	Basic knowledge of subject area, provides some level of response to the learning outcomes/ assessment criteria but only realises these outcomes and criteria to some extent and may not include important elements or information that is completely accurate.	Where relevant, development of ideas is limited.	Expression and structure will lack clarity	Evidence of good academic practice will be limited
	44-46		D					
	40-43		D-					

⁶ The smaller divisions (A+, A, A- etc) are usually used by performing arts students

Fail	37-39	E	E+	Poor	Unsatisfactory - very limited knowledge of subject area and does not succeed in grasping the key issues. Learning outcomes/ assessment criteria will not be realised.	There will be no real development of ideas and few sources will be used or used correctly.	Presentation is confused or lacks coherence.	Unawareness of good academic practice may be evident
	34-36		E					
	30-33		E-	Very poor	No real knowledge of subject area; totally inadequate attempt to address the learning outcomes/ assessment criteria	No development of ideas	Confused or unstructured presentation that lacks coherence	Unawareness of good academic practice will be evident
	15-30	F						
	0-15	F						

OPTION 2: for Postgraduate programmes

Class	%	Alphabetic		Literary	Knowledge	Independent thought, uses of sources and research materials	Presentation	Professional
Distinction	85-100	A	A+	Outstanding	Comprehensive and informative knowledge of subject area, may include - new knowledge derived from which the marker and wider community may learn; addresses the learning outcomes/ assessment criteria in full	Where relevant, evidence of independent reading, thinking and analysis and strong critical ability	Well-constructed	professional approach to academic practice; professional standard generally
	80-84		A	Excellent	Sophisticated or strong - shows knowledge of complex issues or a broad range of issues and addresses the learning outcomes/assessment criteria well.	Where relevant, show evidence of wide and comprehensive reading and critical ability	Clearly written	adhere to the principles of good academic practice
	75-79			Very good				
	70-74		A-					
Merit	67-69	B	B+	Good	Sound knowledge of a broad range of issues or detailed knowledge of a smaller number of issues; makes a good attempt to address the learning outcomes/assessment criteria, realising all to some extent and some well	Evidence of thorough research of the topic(s) but some answers may not be complete or arguments sufficiently explored. Some critical ability will be evident.	well-structured and logically written	demonstrate good academic practice
	64-66		B					
	60-63		B-					

Pass	57-59	C	C+	Satisfactory	Adequate knowledge of important issues – some level of response to all learning outcomes/assessment criteria but may not include important elements or information that is fully accurate	Where relevant, development of ideas is limited but attempts will be made to analyse materials critically	Expression and structure may lack clarity	evidence of good academic practice will be limited
	54-56		C					
	50-53		C-					
Fail	47-49	D	D+	Poor	Unsatisfactory work - inadequate knowledge of the important issues and doesn't succeed in grasping key issues, therefore learning outcomes/ assessment criteria will not be realised	No real development of ideas and critical analysis will be very limited.	Presentation is confused or lacks coherence	General unawareness of good academic practice may be evident
	44-46		D					
	40-43		D-					
	20-40	E	E	Very poor	Knowledge is lacking either through omission, the inclusion of large amounts of irrelevant information or evidence of significant misunderstanding - totally inadequate attempt to address the learning outcomes/ assessment criteria	No critical ability will be displayed	Confused or unstructured presentation that lacks coherence	Unawareness of good academic practice will be evident
	0-20							

