

## Aims

The School of Information Risk Management is committed to providing learners with an assessment process that is fair and addresses the basic principles of authenticity, consistency, transparency, validity, reliability, currency and sufficiency. We are committed to ensuring that standards of assessment are consistent and in line with the requirements of the awarding bodies.

This policy provides a framework which covers initial, formative and summative assessment, internal verification and standardisation procedures.

This policy aims to give quality assurance in assessment processes by establishing quality control mechanisms for assessment through a system of internal verification and standardisation.

## Scope

This policy applies to all teaches, assessors, internal verifiers and learners at the School of Information Risk Management.

## Key Principles of Assessment

Assessment is defined as the process where assessors make judgments on evidence produced by learners against required criteria for the qualification.

- Assessors will be appropriately qualified as per awarding body requirements
- Any internally devised assignment briefs or other summative assessment materials will be externally verified by the awarding body before being issued to learners.
- Assessment will enable learners to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes of the units and overall aims and learning outcomes of the programme and achieved the standard required for award.
- Learners will be made aware at the start of their studies of the number and frequency of formative and summative assessments, with planned dates for assessment, schedule for re-assessment, assessment regulations and arrangements for the announcement of provisional and final results.
- The scheduling and amount of assessment will be manageable for learners as well as assessors.
- Written assignment briefs will be fully communicated across learner group before assessment takes place.
- Learner assessment work will be internally assessed and verified and externally verified by the awarding body.
- Learners will be left in no doubt that any result awarded will be subject to external verification and that the final result rests with awarding body.
- Formative assessment feedback will indicate strengths and weaknesses and provide clear information about what the learner needs to do to improve their assessment outcome. The feedback must be clear, timely, transparent and consistent.
- All assessment outcomes will be formally recorded prior to being released to the learner

- Provisional confirmation of summative assessment results will be confirmed to learner after the internal verification process.
- Final confirmation of summative assessment results will be confirmed to learner after the full external verification process.
- Learners will be made aware of how to appeal via the Academic Appeals Procedure.
- Learner's achievement will be recorded and documented accurately and systematically and in line with awarding body requirements.

## Forms of Assessment

- **Initial** – initial assessment can be incorporated into programs to get information about learner's prior knowledge, skills and experience prior to the start of studies as an indicator of learner's ability and readiness for the programme of study and as identification of possible learning problems and needs.
- **Formative** – the primary purpose of formative assessment is to improve the learning, it does not carry a grade contributing to the final mark. This assessment may include peer-assessment, self-assessment, tutor led assessment, written, oral and practical activities and may include the evaluation of the effectiveness of the learning process carried out while the unit delivery is in progress.
- **Summative** – summative assessment will take place at the end of unit, it is a judgment on whether the learner has achieved all of the learning outcomes for the unit.

## Assignment Submission

- All assignments should be submitted in digital format by uploading their work into the SIRM Moodle or email it to Academic Coordinator by the submission deadline, unless the assignment brief explicitly states otherwise so that assessments can be securely and scrupulously administered. It is the learner's responsibility to ensure that they upload the correct file. The specific time and date for submission deadline will be clearly stated on the assignment brief.
- The assignment must be accompanied by the assignment submission sheet which includes learner's declaration that the work is their own. Without a signed learner declaration of authenticity the assignment cannot be accepted for assessment.
- If a learner fails to meet the submission deadline, the assignment evidence cannot be assessed and the learner must be given a Fail mark for that assessment. An opportunity to resubmit the assignment should be provided. In addition, the learners who do not submit the assignments on the published dates may be subject to the disciplinary procedures. The importance of adhering to deadlines and the implications of failing to do so should be emphasised to all learners at induction.
- An extension to the set submission deadline can be granted if a learner is unable to submit their work on the deadline date due to extenuating circumstances. Extensions to the original submission or resubmission date must be authorised prior to the original deadline, documented and recorded. The extension can only take place if it is necessary, appropriate and fair. The period of extension must not provide the learner with an unfair advantage.

## Assignment Marking

All assignments will be first marked, wherever possible, assignments should be marked anonymously.

Anonymous marking is where the assignment is marked without the learner's name being known to the assessor. Anonymous marking provides the reassurance for learners and staff against the perception of discrimination and bias entering the assessment process and ensures learners are treated equally.

Anonymous marking should be adopted for all assignments except where it is recognised that this is not practical because the nature of the assessment involves direct contact between learner and the assessor.

The following information is passed to assessors, alongside anonymised (if possible) learner work, normally within 2 working days of the assignment submission deadline:

- Unit list indicating which learners met the deadline and which have failed to submit and received Fail mark, and which have prior approved extensions.
- A full report of learner's work detailing percentage of text match that plagiarism detection software has detected, for the assessor to investigate whether academic misconduct has occurred.

The assessors should look at the following when assessing an assignment:

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| a) | Content and argument  |
| •  | The learner answers the tasks set in the assignment                               |
| •  | All the information included is relevant to the task set                          |
| •  | The mainline of argument is clear   |
| b) | Research material   |
| •  | There are sufficient examples and evidence to support illustrate learner's points |
| •  | There is evidence of learner's own thoughts and arguments                         |
| •  | Range of cited references is included   |
| c) | Structure   |
| •  | The text is in the appropriate structure/ format for the type of assignment       |
| •  | The ideas/ points are clearly linked  |
| •  | Each paragraph is well structured   |
| •  | It is clear how each paragraph links to the paragraphs before and after           |
| d) | Style   |
| •  | The style is appropriate for the programme  |
| •  | The text is academic and clear  |

- The text is free of slang and colloquialisms
- Technical terms are used appropriately and if necessary, the meaning of terms as used in the assignment are defined
- There is no plagiarism
- The text is to the point, with no repetition
- The text can be easily read
- e) Clarity
- There is nothing that the reader will find confusing
- The language is clear and straightforward
- The reader will easily follow the line of reasoning
- Sentences are of reasonable length and are uncomplicated
- f) General
- The introduction is clear and appropriate
- The conclusion provides a clear synthesis of the argument
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation have been checked and are correct
- References are correctly used and cited
- The reference list/ bibliography is accurate

## Assessment Feedback

- Assessors are required to ensure that assessment process is consistent and transparent, that evidence is valid, sufficient, authentic and that judgment of evidence is valid and reliable.
- Assessors must adhere to awarding body specification in the assessment of student assignments.
- Outcomes of assessment must be recorded using appropriate documentation as specified by the awarding body. Outcomes, including the associated internal verification records will be held secure for three years, measured from the point of certification.
- The assessment feedback should be completed within 2 weeks of assessment.
- The feedback should follow these principles:
  - Be in relation to each assessment criteria, which in turn link to assessment intended learning outcome
  - Identification of the good elements of the assessment criteria that have been met.
  - Identification of the weaker elements of the submission and the assessment criteria that have not yet been met
  - The comments should highlight learner's strengths and provide advice on ways in which aspects of their future or re-submitted work may be improved in relation to each of the assessment criteria
  - An explanation how missing assessment criteria may be achieved
  - It should be clear to learners and verifiers from the comments and the marks for

individual assessment criteria exactly how the overall mark for the assignment was reached, including evidence to support judgements.

- Any relevant comments regarding spelling and grammar
- Assessors might also annotate the student submission to highlight specific points of concern, the main aspects of which will be summarised.

## Key Principles of Internal Verification

- Internal verifiers will be appropriately qualified as per awarding body requirements.
- Each programme has a named lead internal verifier and an appropriate number of internal verifiers.
- Internal verification ensures that assessors clearly understand what evidence is required to meet the assessment outcomes/ criteria.
- Internal verification provides appropriate feedback to assessors.
- The outcomes and any actions resulting from internal verification are followed up, acted upon and signed off in regular internal verification meetings.
- If there have been no issues with the assessor's decisions at the first submission stage, then the resubmission does not need to be internally verified.
- Appeals are documented and where appropriate, forwarded on to the external verifier in line with the awarding body requirements.
- Records of internal verification are kept and made available for external verification.
- Standardisation should take place when a unit or assessment is delivered and assessed by more than one person. Standardisation must be carried out before any formal assessment and internal verification has taken place.
- An audit of the internal verification and standardisation processes will take place at least once year with formal reports presented to senior management. This is essential to make sure that the assessment is consistent across the programme.

## Standardisation

Standardisation ensures each assessor is assessing to the same standard across the programme.

The lead internal verifier will arrange internal verifiers and assessors standardisation meetings at which the internal verifiers and assessors are expected to attend (in person or distance). These will be held once every term and require mandatory attendance.

These meetings are an essential tool for ensuring everyone is interpreting assessment criteria in the same way and requiring the same level and quality of work from learners. It also provides internal verifiers and the assessment team the opportunity to share experiences. Assessors will undertake activities that involve sharing assessed work and discussing judgements to develop shared and consistent practices. These activities will be led by the lead internal verifier and should occur at the start of each term and may involve 'mock marking' of sample and exemplar learner work against the criteria for the given unit. Assessors will be guided by the lead internal verifier to develop quality judgements against the brief and relevant unit content & criteria.

Guidance on robust and rigorous marking is also undertaken by the Lead IV.

Records of the meeting will be minuted and written feedback given to the assessors and internal verifiers as soon as possible after the standardisation meeting. Where attendance at a meeting is impossible, the lead internal verifier will ensure that the copy of the minutes is shared where necessary.

## Internal Verification Sampling Strategy

- Sampling will ensure that assessment judgements are consistent.
- All units, assessors and learners will be sampled by the internal verification process during the programme.
- The sampling strategy must be agreed with the Lead Internal Verifier and the sample determined, as appropriate for the qualification. Internal verifier will provide copies of the sampling plans to the lead internal verifier as soon as they have been drawn up.
- The internal verification sample plan will be located in the programme file (digital or hard copy) for the cohort and made available to the Curriculum & Quality Manager, Faculty Deans and the Awarding Body on request

Sampling will be managed in line with the following principles:

- Sampling must be representative
- It must be planned, however, should be flexible to take account of the changes
- Work assessed by different assessors
- Samples of assessment decisions made by assessors for learner work across all units must be undertaken.

There are several key features that will be considered in selecting a sample:

- First time delivery
- Delivery by new assessor
- Range of learners
- Age and gender of learners
- Previous issues or problems identified by internal or external verification
- Both, Pass and Fail assessment decisions should be included in the sample
- New or inexperienced assessors should have more work internally verified
- In the first year of the programme delivery, 50% of the assessment decision should be sampled
- The number of learners
- Issues identified at previous verifications may increase the sample size.

The sampling strategy will cover the following approach:

- Learners - a sample will have a selection of all learners
- Assessors – sampling will cover all assessors, taking into account a higher risk of new assessors or feedback from External Verifier reports
- Sampling will cover all units. A Higher percentage will be used in evidence of
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

- Evidence types – written confirmation from assessors that assignment’s evidence is valid, authentic, sufficient, plus a focus on any special requirements and identified problem units

The sampling size will depend on the experience of the assessor:

- 50% sample - trainee assessors, newly qualified assessors, assessors new to the qualification, assessors who are struggling with the assessment process
- 30% sample – less experienced assessors, experienced assessors but working with a different level qualification, assessors returning after a period of absence.
- 20% sample – experienced assessors confident in knowledge and understanding qualification specification and level.

### Internal Verification Report

The internal verification report will be completed for every verified assignment.

A copy of the report will be given to assessors and a copy placed in the Internal Verification file.

Learners should not be given copies of these forms as they are written to address assessors practice and may therefore contain comments that might undermine learner confidence in assessors.

Internal verifier will ensure that their written feedback to assessors is recorded on the appropriate report form as per the awarding body guidance. The feedback will be directed to each assessor and should address their assessment practice. The internal verifier should avoid generalised statements.

The internal verifier will also note whether assignment feedback forms have been signed and dated by assessors.

The full plagiarism report must also be presented to the internal verifier.

If assessment issues are identified, the internal verifier will record what action is required, by when and, at a later date, the verifier will assess whether the action was completed.

If the internal verifier finds serious concerns, such as an incompetent practice, it needs to be brought to the attention of Curriculum and Quality Manager.

### Associated Policies

- Academic Malpractice Policy
- Plagiarism Policy
- Academic Appeals Policy