

ASSESSMENT POLICY

1. AIM

To ensure that assessment methodology is valid, reliable and does not disadvantage or advantage any specific group of learners or individuals.

To ensure that the assessment procedure is open, fair and free from bias and reflects national (UK) standards.

To ensure that there is accurate and detailed recording of assessment decisions.

2. STRATEGIC APPROACHES

The College has developed a clearly defined Assessment Strategy. This Strategy is focused on setting assessment activity within a well-resourced learning environment that enables all students to add value to their entry position. A series of clearly defined Policies provide a framework for students and staff that 'facilitate successful transitions and academic progression' (QAA).

3. FACILITATING DEVELOPMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

The College has a strong employment record in terms of recruiting and retaining academic staff. A number of staff at Athena Global Education (AGE) have been with the College since its inception, and are very much part of the College community. Many staff are practitioners in industry who bring real life experience to the teaching. A CPD programme will ensure that their academic knowledge is current and focused, whilst the peer observation programme will provide opportunities for the sharing of good practice, both formally and informally, and the enhancement of the overall learning experience.

The College ensures that resources for learning are fit-for-purpose and suited to student numbers. As part of its course review process the College solicits views on the adequacy of resources from students, staff and external agencies. The College has a ring-fenced budget for academic resources and ensures that they make available appropriate learning resources, to enable students to develop the relevant skills.

4. THE BASIS OF EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT

In promoting an efficient and effective assessment regime that embodies the requirements of the UK Quality Code and promotes student achievement, Athena Global Education (AGE) will:

- publicise and implement principles and procedures for, and processes of, assessment that are explicit, valid and reliable;
- encourage assessment practice that promotes effective learning;
- publicise and implement effective, clear and consistent policies for the membership, procedures, powers and accountability of assessment panels and Boards of Examiners;
- ensure that assessment is conducted with rigour, probity and fairness and with due regard for security;
- ensure that the amount and timing of assessment enables effective and appropriate measurement of students' achievement of intended learning outcomes;
- have transparent and fair mechanisms for marking and for (internal verification) moderating marks;
- publicise and implement clear rules and regulations for progressing from one stage of a programme to another, for accreditation of prior learning, and for qualifying for an award;
- ensure that everyone involved in the assessment of students is competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities;
- review and amend assessment regulations periodically, as appropriate, to assure themselves that the regulations remain fit for purpose
- encourage students to adopt good academic conduct in respect of assessment and seek to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities;
- ensure that assessment decisions are recorded and documented accurately and systematically and that the decisions of relevant assessment panels and examination boards are communicated as quickly as possible.

5. DEVELOPING ASSESSMENT LITERACY

The formative assessment process is central to the process of developing assessment literacy. On-line Student Handbooks and Module Specifications build familiarity with the terminology of the assessment process.

The College provides staff and student training on the interpretation and use of command verbs in assessment criteria and learning outcomes.

The student Induction programme explains the modular structure of the Programme - all of which must be passed to achieve the qualification. It further explains that each Module is divided into Learning Outcomes. The assessment criteria are characterised by the command verbs. The demystification of this language and practice is the focus of formative assessment.

6. DESIGNING ASSESSMENT

In order to ensure that learners are provided with assessment vehicles that are fit for purpose, and which enable them to prepare appropriate evidence for assessment, the College will:

- assess learner's evidence using only the published assessment and grading criteria;
- ensure that assessment decisions are impartial, valid and reliable;
- develop assessment procedures that will minimise the opportunity for malpractice;
- maintain accurate and detailed records of formative and summative assessment decisions;
- maintain a robust and rigorous internal verification procedure;
- provide samples for verification as required by the programme manager;
- monitor standards verification reports and undertake any remedial action required;
- share good assessment practice between all subject programme teams;
- ensure that awarding body assessment methodology and the role of the marker are understood by all programme staff;
- provide resources and regular training to ensure that assessment can be performed accurately and appropriately.

7. TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

7.1 Formative Assessment

This is informal assessment in that the level of achievement does not contribute to the end qualification. It allows the student and the College to track progress and the level of understanding achieved at any point in time.

A wide range of assessment methods are used, many of them time limited. The final formative assessments will help a student undertake the summative assessments which conclude the programme or the module. These formative assessments will build familiarity with the summative assessment process.

Athena Global Education (AGE) utilises the formative assessment process to positive effect, providing a range of reflective experiences that allow the student to manage their own learning, and the College to monitor progress and provide help and remedial support to individuals, as appropriate.

Students are provided with feedback on formative assessment, enabling them to reflect on performance and refine skills and knowledge to improve performance.

All staff will provide formative assessment opportunities. These formative assessments develop skills and competence related to the end summative assessment, but will utilise material unrelated to the summative assessment which follows. These assessments develop skills for employment and for further study.

7.2 Summative Assessment

This is the formal assessment process. Its purpose is to measure student understanding against a set of predefined learning outcomes as found in the module specification. It measures student competence in terms of threshold academic standards and in terms of levels of understanding above that level.

The timing of assessment is within the control of the College and will be planned and communicated to students. The distribution and submission of assignments will be spread over time in order to encourage planning and facilitate the best possible outcomes.

8. JOBS, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES WHILE MAKING ASSIGNMENT BRIEF

8.1 Faculty/ Assessor

- Before the beginning of each module, the faculty conducting the module will make the assignment brief; he/ she can take the existing assignment briefs available for the module, can modify or make a new brief.
- The assignment brief will be ready at least ten (10) days prior to the beginning of the module, as per the SOPs laid down on the deliverable dates of assignments by faculties and students.
- The assignment brief will be uploaded on LMS well before start of the module.
- Every six (6) months, the assignment brief will be reviewed for any modifications/ changes, if required.
- All latest guidelines given by the partner awarding body/ institution for making of assignments and assessments will be incorporated as per datelines given.

8.2 Internal Verifier (IV)

- There will be a distinct IV nominated to do the internal verification of the assignment brief made by a faculty and will fill up the Assignment Brief IV Form with his/ her comments and feedback.
- The IV will discuss the assignment brief with the faculty/ assessor and if any modifications are to be made, will get them done and then send the assignment brief, along with the IV form to the Lead IV for his/ her feedback.

8.3 Lead IV

- The Lead IV will go through the assignment brief along with the feedback form and give his/ her comments and feedback on the assignment brief in the feedback form.
- Once the Lead IV has ratified the assignment brief, the same can thereafter be issued to the students. This will be completed at least three (3) days prior to commencement of the module.

9. DELIVERY OF CLASSES

- The earmarked module leader will make his/ her lesson plan, update the class presentations, the content available on AGE platform, and ensure that from the module kit available, all case studies and other training aids/ activities desired to be available in the module are up to date and can be accessed by all students.

- The classes will be delivered through pre-shot videos of short duration, and relevant notes and content will be available on AGE LMS for all students going through these videos.
- Videos will also be made on assignment briefs to help students understand the assignment and assessment requirements. Videos will also be made on guiding students on correct referencing using the Harvard Referencing System (HRS).
- Regular webinars will be held by Course and Module Leaders to support the students with their academic requirements.
- Students will be encouraged to send their draft work before the submission/ resubmission deadline dates for a review by the assessor/ faculty.
- Feedback will be taken by the respective Course Administrators after each module from all concerned students.

10. SUBMISSION OF STUDENTS WORK

The following guidelines will be observed for submission of students work.

- (a) Work submitted for summative assessment cannot be amended by students after submission, or re-submission.
- (b) It will be ensured that all work is submitted on LMS before midnight (UAE Time), after which the LMS will close and again will be opened during the resubmission date line 21 days after the first submission deadline.
- (c) Student requests for extensions to assessment deadlines will not be approved unless made in accordance with AGE's guidelines. Extensions can be granted due to extenuating circumstances after reviewing on a case to case basis.
- (d) Where coursework is submitted late and there are no accepted extenuating circumstances, it will be penalised in line with the Submission Policy guidelines given by AGE.

- (e) Students who fail to submit work for assessments or attend examinations shall be deemed to have failed the assessments components concerned and will be marked as Zero or Fail.

11. DETERMINING MODULE OUTCOMES

- (a) The overall module marks/ grades shall be determined as per the assessment strategy detailed in the module specification and published in the Students Handbook.
- (b) A student who passes a module shall be awarded the credit for that module. The amount of credit for each module shall be set out in the programme specification and published on the AGE platform.
- (c) In order to pass a module a student must achieve the requirement of the module as set out in the module specification and published on eth AGE platform.
- (d) Where a student is registered only for a module (rather than a qualification), the resit and retake provisions will apply.

12. PROVISION FOR VIVA VOCE EXAMINATION

Exceptionally, viva voce examinations may be required by a Board of Examiners/ Academic Faculties:

- (a) to confirm the progression/result status of a student;
- (b) to determine the result status of unusual or borderline cases;
- (c) when there is conflicting evidence from the various assessment components;
- (d) as an alternative or additional assessment in cases where poor performance in assessment is the result of exceptional circumstances verified through due processes.

13. MARKING AND MODERATION

13.1 Learning Outcomes

Individual lesson/lecture plans identify learning outcomes for each session related to the Scheme of Work, and specific measurable learning outcomes linked to those objectives.

The learning objectives and outcomes provide a mechanism for both students and tutors to track progress. They provide an objective student focused mechanism to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of individual teaching approaches.

The learning outcomes for individual lectures assist students to demonstrate the extent to which they meet the assessment and progression criteria of the course in respect of both subject knowledge and required skills. They are readily available for all modules on the Intranet.

13.2 Assessment Criteria

The College seeks to ensure best practice for assessment and compliance with the relevant indicators across all courses and validating organisations. All work is marked and feedback provided. The internal verifier (IV) will subsequently review 25% of marked assignments.

The College best practice for assessment requires markers to provide constructive feedback to students against the assessment criteria to promote and encourage effective learning.

Feedback given to students will:

- be provided in a timely and efficient manner – within 10 working days of submission;
- highlight areas of achievement, areas for improvement, and areas of concern, on the part of the student;
- indicate areas for further development that could have earned additional marks;
- offer comments on style and/or structural issues that are restricting achievement;
- be related to each specific Learning Outcome in the assessment;
- reflect the marking scheme and/or levels of performance issued to the students.

13.3 Expectations

13.3.1 At Masters Post Graduate Level, students are expected to demonstrate all the qualities of critical analysis, sound judgment in interpretation of information, creative synthesis of information and arriving at conclusions and recommendations. At Under Graduate Level also students are expected to demonstrate all qualities of good evaluation and analysis in interpretation of acquired information. All these qualities are expected to

be demonstrated to achieve the minimum requirement of demonstrating the learning objectives and assessment criteria.

13.3.2 Students need to prove that they have achieved all the learning objectives and their respective assessment criteria to be declared as a minimum Pass for the Unit. Students will be advised to get a copy of the Unit Specification for the Unit being studied, and study the Learning Outcomes to be achieved and the criteria for proving achievement of the Learning Outcomes. This is essential to ensure that the student does not miss out on delivering the requirements for obtaining at least a Pass in the Module.

14. ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES AND EVIDENCE

Assessment may be conducted using various methods and it may be formative or summative. Tasks will be linked to specific assessment criteria and result recorded accordingly. Assessment methods may include but are not limited to:

- question and answer sessions;
- written assignments e.g. essays and reports;
- tests or examinations.

The Course Administrator is responsible for keeping assessment records up to date by updating assessment tracking records and keeping copies of all assessment feedback forms, internal verification reports, observation sheets and other paperwork that records students' achievements. Assessment records are available throughout the duration of the course to student, staff, and internal and external verifiers.

Students' work is retained in the College until certification is approved and released. Work is retained in electronic format. Assessment records in the form of feedback forms, observation record sheet, internal verification records and other paperwork should be retained, in electronic form, for at least three years after certification.

15. ASSESSMENT ENVIRONMENT

The assessment of all students' submissions will be done through the indigenous AGE Learning Management System (LMS). The back-end resources are available for technical maintenance of LMS in India, as per the specific requirements from AGE, changes in LMS will be made to cater to the faculties, assessors, students' specific requirements. The

resources for maintaining LMS at work site in UAE will be done with the help of all Course Administrators. The check list to ensure that all resources and processes are in place and actionable at any given time, is as given below:

- The LMS as an integral part of submissions of students' assignments' will be maintained by the IT Team in India.
- Back-up server for safety and security of all students' assignments and other data will be maintained by the Indian Team.
- Students will be oriented to LMS by the concerned module leader/ course administrator once a new student is enrolled and username and password provided to the student.
- All documents, learning materials and assignments, including feedback will be preserved on LMS at all times.
- On completion of the module and requirement of submission by the student, he/ she will upload the assignment on LMS as per the account provided to him/ her.
- In case of a technical problem with LMS, the Course Administrator will help out the student to upload the assignment by due date.
- Once the assignment has been assessed by the faculty by downloading all assignments from LMS, the concerned faculty/ assessor will provide feedback and grades, as per the assignment requirements, and upload the same back to LMS.
- The IV will sample 25% of the assessments, verify and approve the assessment decisions made by the assessor. He will fill up the requisite IV forms and upload these on LMS. Once approved by IV, all the students' assessments will get released which the students can access and view now on LMS.
- A student will be able to check on his/ her marks including feedback, and in case of any query/ complaint can get back to the module leader, or as per the complaint procedure specified in appeals and complaints processes.
- Desired reports will be generated through LMS showing at all times, the current status of assignments submitted and reviewed by the faculty/ assessor.
- All LMS resources in India and UAE will ensure that LMS is functional at all times and action taken immediately in view of changes desired, or solving the technical glitches that may occur from time to time.
- No other site will be used, except the main site of LMS, for preserving all documents, materials, assignments and students' feedback.
- All assessment materials and students' assignments will be preserved on LMS, including the back-up server. The LMS access will be available only to the Academic and Administrative Teams concerned personnel. Access to LMS will

be strictly through passwords and security of all the material will be responsibility of the Academic Head and the Software Developer in India.

16. DISABLED STUDENTS

The College is fully aware of its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and will make every effort under the requirement of 'reasonable adjustment' to ensure that all assessment opportunities are fully inclusive and do not discriminate against any disabled student.

17. EXAMINATION BOARDS AND ASSESSMENT PANELS

17.1 Progression and Assessment Panels

Assessment Panels are convened as required to discuss any assessment issues arising from internal and/or external moderation of assessment.

Assessment panel meetings are recorded and reported to the College Management Team.

The College references the relevant awarding organisation's regulations regarding student progression within a given course of study. Decisions on student progression between individual courses of study are taken with reference to the awarding organisation regulations for each course.

17.2 External Assessment and Moderation

Learner submissions will be internally marked and internally moderated.

External Examiners liaise with the relevant Course Co-ordinators and internal verification teams. The External Examiner also monitors the consistency and validity of the College's assessment and internal verification processes. External Examiners are given access to all pertinent documentation for the assessment, as well as the opportunity to discuss concerns or good practice with individual students and academic staff.

External examiners provide a report each year following the summer Examination Board.

17.3 Submission of written work

The Course Administrator is responsible for checking all online submissions for plagiarism using Turnitin. When work is within acceptable similarity range it will be forwarded to markers for marking. If not, it will be investigated in further detail and student will be informed of the result of investigation.

17.4 Composition of Board Of Examiners/ Assessment Board

The Board of Examiners will be constituted with members as follows:

- Academic Head - Chair
- 1 Course Leader
- 1 Faculty
- 1 Independent member
- 1 External Examiner

17.5 Role of External Examiners

The role of External Examiners appointed by the University/ Awarding Body for a validated programme or group of modules is to ensure that justice is done to the individual students and that the standard of the University's/ Awarding Body's validated awards is maintained. In order to carry out these responsibilities, External Examiners will:

a. moderate and approve the final draft of each examination paper or end-of-module assessment, together with the related marking scheme or notes for the guidance of markers. This activity should include scrutinising the form and content of examination papers, coursework and other assessments that count towards the award in such a way as to enable the External Examiners to judge whether students have fulfilled the aims and learning outcomes of the programme and reached the required standard. This activity should include alternative assessments and adjustments made for students with declared disability or impairments, in order to

ensure that all students will be assessed fairly in relation to the programme syllabus and regulations.

b. be consulted about and agree to any proposed changes to the approved assessment regulations or assessment strategy which will directly affect students currently on a programme.

c. have access to all assessed work, and see samples of the work of students proposed for each category of award and for failure, in order to ensure that assessment criteria have been interpreted correctly and that there is parity of assessment across the cohort.

d. consider the reliability of the mode of monitoring the marks/ grades of module assessments and the final end-of-module component (e.g. examination/ assessment) and report to the board of examiners on such revisions as they consider necessary.

e. have the right to moderate the marks/ grades awarded by internal examiners where this is within the regulations for the programme and does not bias the overall assessment or cause unfairness to individual candidates.

d. have the right to meet students and, where appropriate, conduct a viva voce examination of any candidate.

f. ensure that the assessments are conducted in accordance with the approved programme regulations.

g. attend the meetings of the board of examiners at which decisions on recommendations for award are made and ensure that those recommendations have been reached by means in accordance with the University's/ Awarding Body's quality requirements.

h. participate as required in any review of decisions about individual students' awards taken during the examiner's period of office.

i. report back to the University/ Awarding Body and the partner institution on student performance and academic standards, as well as on the effectiveness of the assessments and any lessons to be drawn from them.

j. external examiners will be involved in all assessment that counts towards the recommendation of an award, including progression from one stage of the programme to the next.

k. the approved board of examiners will be responsible for the reassessment or deferred assessment of students.

17.6 External Verification Action

- Regular External Verification will be done by the awarding body/ university external examiners, within prescribes time frames.

- All arrangements for External Examiners (EE) will be done as per the qualitative specific requirements laid down by external auditors.
- IV Plan made for all courses will be sent in advance to the EE, along with the registered students names and the grades/ marks achieved by them.
- The EE may select candidates out of the registered students list whom he would like to audit as part of the whole process.
- The selected candidates list, along with their assignments feedback and IV Forms will be sent to the EE through mail/ put up to him if he/ she visits the centre.
- The responsibility to send all materials of assessment, accurately reflecting the current status of each student will be responsibility of the Academic Head of AGE.
- All reports from external verification thereafter will be discussed at the next team meeting after the EE visit.
- The same practice will be followed for systems/ processes reports.
- It will be ensured that all previous recommendations/ essential points will be implemented before the subsequent audit visit.
- The Academic Head will be responsible for coordinating and conducting a smooth external verification process, including ensuring that all recommendations and essential points are fully implemented after the EE visit.
- All actionable points will be allocated to concerned staff and these will be monitored for completion.

18. MARKING AND STANDARDISATION

Where a Module is delivered and assessed by more than one person, a standardisation of expectations and agreement occurs. Athena Global Education (AGE) organises for each individual Module, a meeting of all staff contributing to the teaching of that unit. They will, using the marking grid, mark a series of unseen and unmarked assignments, discussing each one in turn to determine the grade to be awarded. This process will continue until there is broad agreement on the mark awarded.

All standardisation meetings are formally recorded and staff feedback sheets retained for each standardisation script. Where there is concern about an individual's marking, this will affect the later size of the IV and EE sample. This deficiency will then be the subject of training under the staff development policy.

All marking must be undertaken in compliance with the agreed marking scheme. Lecturers are responsible for initial marking of the assignments for their course. Marks will be awarded and noted on the assignment. Any queries or discrepancies will be referred to the Programme Leader for a final decision.

19. SAMPLING

The College will quality check samples of marking from all units and each lecturer. For experienced tutors the College will usually sample 25% of their marking, with a minimum of 15 assignments sampled. For intermediate tutors the College will usually sample 40% of their marking, with a minimum of 15 assignments sampled. For new or inexperienced tutors the College will usually sample a minimum of 50% of their marking, with a minimum of 15 assignments sampled. In addition to the appropriate sample, all fails will be revised by the external examiner.

The College will ensure that:

- candidates - every student will be the subject of sampling at some point in their studies;
- markers - every marker will be sampled for every unit/module;
- methods of assessment - every assessment method will be subject to sampling;
- elements of the qualification - every element will be subject to sampling.

20. ENHANCEMENT OF ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

The assessment process provides excellent opportunities for enhancement as the staff (and students) share ideas and experiences. This occurs not only as part of annual review of effectiveness of assessment practice, but also as part of staff peer observation and student feedback.

Staff meetings are a key opportunity to share ideas and experiences. In order to ensure that enhancement is a central theme of College development it is a standard agenda item on all committees.

Engagement with all key stakeholders also ensures that 'Assessment and feedback practices are informed by reflection, consideration of professional practice, and subject-specific and educational scholarship' (QAA). The College accepts its responsibility in creating and promoting a process to facilitate enhancement by sharing ideas.

21. CONFLICT OF INTEREST OF FACULTY/ ASSESSORS, IVS & COURSE ADMINISTRATORS

- Conflict of interest may occur between the Faculty/ Assessors, the IVs and Course Administrators, wherein any one entity may try and help a student unreasonably due to vested interests.
- The role of Lead IV and Examination Board here will assume great significance, since they will be responsible to see that there is no unreasonable advantage given to any student during assessment or IV or during upkeep of records.
- If any discrepancy is found in relation to conflict of interest of any one or more members of the staff dealing with students' assignments, the matter will be taken up with the Examination Board. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, as advised by eth Board, if such a connivance is found, also it will be ensured that no student has been disadvantaged in the bargain.
- If there is a disagreement between the Faculty/ Assessor and the IV, it will be resolved internally by Lead IV and the final outcome recorded in the IV Forms.

22. CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- No-one with a personal interest in the outcome of an assessment will be involved in the assessment process. This will include any/ all personnel having conflict of interest while assessing or verifying a student's assignment, who is related or a close friend of the faculty/ assessor, or the internal verifier or any invigilator.
- If a faculty/ assessor, or the internal verifier or any invigilator feels that he/ she has a conflict of interest in assessment/ verification/ invigilation of a student's assignment, he/ she should immediately inform the AGE Academic Head about the same.

23. RELEVANT ASPECTS OF THE (REVISED) UK QUALITY CODE

23.1 Expectations for Standards: Core Practices

- The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualification frameworks.

- The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.
- The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.

23.2 Expectations for Quality: Core Practices

- The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.
- The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
- The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
- The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.

23.3 Common Practices

- The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.
- The provider's approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.
- The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.