Regent College London

Formative Assessment Policy – Higher National Courses

1   Purpose

1.1   To provide a policy, set of guidelines and examples of different types of formative assessment for academic staff to use in the classroom to enhance student learning, support preparation for summative assessment, support student engagement and help to increase student achievement.

2   Background

2.1   Often the focus of assessment for staff and students is on summative assessments (assignment briefs) associated with each of the subject-specific Units that make up the Pearson HND Business and its various pathways. Whilst formative assessment does take place in the classroom it needs to be more consistent across different Units and different tutors.

2.2   The profile of our students shows that they are mature students, most within the age range 25 to 45, and have had a significant gap since their last experience of formal education. Student achievement for the first Units of study on the HND in their first semester shows a relatively high referral rate for summative assessment tasks and a relatively high rate of non-submission or late submission of assessed work for the first assessment deadline.

2.3   Regent College London has put in place a number of measures to support students in their academic studies including: tutorial support, study skills and academic writing sessions, attendance policy and pastoral support through the Cohort and Programme Leaders.

2.4   Adopting and implementing an enhanced and more consistent approach to formative assessment will further complement the academic support the College provides to students and help them gain more confidence in the preparation and writing of summative assessed work.

3   QAA Quality Code and Pearson

3.1   QAA Quality Code

This Policy aligns with the UK Quality Code core and common practices in

Expectation for Standards:

The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.

The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.

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

• Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.

- The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.

- The provider reviews its core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.

Expectations for Quality:

Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.

From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

• 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.

- The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.

- Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.

- The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.

- The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

- 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.

This Policy also incorporates the following Guiding Principles set out in

the Advice and Guidance for Assessment:

• 1. Assessment methods and criteria are aligned to learning outcomes and teaching activities

• 2. Assessment is reliable, consistent, fair and valid

• 4. Assessment is inclusive and equitable

• 5. Assessment is explicit and transparent

• 6. Assessment and feedback is purposeful and supports the learning process

- 7. Assessment is timely

- 9. Students are supported and prepared for assessment

- 10. Assessment encourages academic integrity

3.2 Pearson/BTEC guidelines

The Pearson BTEC Assessment and Verification tools include

BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Assessment 2018/19
(https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/BTEC-Firsts/news/Guide_to_Internal_Assessment_for_BTEC_Firsts_and_Nationals.pdf

and

RQF - Assessment and Feedback Guidance for Centres
(https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/BTEC-Higher-Nationals/Business/2016/teaching-and-learning-materials/hn-assessment-feedback-guidance.pdf)

Detailed guidance is given concerning helping students prepare for summative assessment tasks, providing feedback, and resubmissions and retakes. In supporting students in their preparations for summative assessment, formative assessment is regarded as supporting learning, and application of knowledge and skills. Formative assessment is intended to:

'...provide students with a sense of their progress and support them to improve and develop their work toward summative (final) assessment. The feedback associated with formative assessment is often the most challenging and critical element. Tutors must seek to provide students with a clear understanding of their progress and how to continue to improve, but must avoid coaching the student.'

As such, BTEC advise that formative assessment should not be used specifically and only to produce drafts or draft sections of a summative assessment. This is consistent with the definition and guidance on the use of formative assessment given below. It is assumed that students who learn, understand and apply their knowledge will be in a better position to produce good quality summative assessments.

4   Purpose of formative assessment

4.1 To understand better the difference between formative and summative assessment the following distinctions are helpful:

Formative assessment is developmental for students' learning but does not contribute to their formal, recorded achievement level. Formative assessment may be regarded as assessment for learning.

Summative assessment results in a final grade which reflects the standard of achievement of the student work against intended learning outcomes. Summative assessment may be regarded as assessment of learning.

4.2 Formative assessment provides students with feedback and information during teaching sessions, to support student learning and whilst learning is taking place. It can be used to measure student progress with learning and also provide the tutor with information about the effectiveness of their teaching strategies and approaches, especially with topics that students generally find challenging or difficult to understand. Formative assessment can help both students and academic staff identify topics or areas where enhanced learning is needed.

4.3 Formative assessments are often not graded, although they can be, and are designed to act as a gauge to student learning and teaching effectiveness.

5   Policy, strategy and guidelines for effective formative assessment

5.1 The College has the following policy with respect to formative assessment:

All tutors should include formative assessment opportunities in their teaching, explain the value of formative assessment to students, engage students with formative assessment activities in each teaching session and provide mechanisms for students to receive feedback that is constructive and supports student learning.

5.2 The above policy statement is designed to ensure that formative assessment becomes established as a routine part of teaching and learning in the classroom, that students understand the value of formative assessment and that the College creates a culture of engagement, by both staff and students, around formative activities and feedback.

5.3 The key to the success of any formative assessment activities or strategies is **student engagement**. Student engagement with formative assessment is essential and to achieve this students must see the benefits and value of undertaking formative assessment activities and must engage with such activities in a serious and full manner. A key factor for students valuing formative assessment is **constructive feedback**. Additionally, students view formative assessment as valuable when they see that it directly contributes towards helping them with summative assessment tasks. This means that the tutor must make the value of formative assessment explicit to students. Academic staff should always discuss the benefits and purpose of formative assessment with students and not provide formative assessment activities for students without such explanations. Making direct links to the Unit assignment brief will also be beneficial for student engagement with formative assessment. Providing students with clear, specific and constructive feedback for a formative assessment task will also significantly enhance student engagement.

5.4 To create a culture of student and staff engagement with formative assessment at the College the following guidelines should be taken into account and acted upon, as appropriate:

   a) It is essential that the tutor is committed to and understands the benefits of formative assessment as an approach to support student learning.

   b) It is important that the tutor believes in the value of the assessment tasks and communicates this clearly to students.

   c) Formative assessment tasks and feedback are a good place to indicate the connections to students between formative and summative assessment.

   d) It is good practice to design and include formative assessment tasks into the Unit guides so that students know from the beginning when these will take place and when work is due. Tutorial sessions and are ideal places to provide feedback on formative assessment tasks.

   e) It is not necessary to use the term *formative assessment* all the time. Terms such as *practice assessment* or *practice activity* may equally be used.

   f) Incorporate formative assessments into class work including lectures, seminar type activity and tutorial sessions.

   g) Adopt a *just in time* approach in terms of when you expect students to undertake formative assessments in class, which often works best rather than setting such tasks as homework.

   h) Plan time in your teaching for the session to accommodate formative assessment for students.

   i) Provide guidance and ongoing support by using both peer and self-assessment as well as tutor assessment and feedback.

   j) Devise a series of formative assessment tasks that students can keep as a portfolio to inform their preparation of a summative assessment.

k) Incorporate feedback activities into the formative assessment, for example, get students to rephrase the feedback obtained and create an action plan to incorporate the feedback. Encourage active use of the feedback by the student.

6 Formative assessment activities

6.1 There are a wide range of activities that can be undertaken in the class room setting that represent formative assessment tasks. Some are listed below and Annex 1 expands on some of these to provide more detail and who could provide feedback to the students. The following are examples of formative assessment tasks:

- Tests – diagnostic, progress, multiple choice and quizzes
- Draft plans and proposals
- Reflective writing and/or learning journal
- Role play
- Informal or semi-formal discussion
- Individual and/or group presentation – posters, case study, etc.
- Online discussion, blogs, etc.
- Two stage or multi-stage submission of assessment
- Cumulative coursework, for example, portfolio, log, workbook.
- One minute papers
- Class tests
- Peer teaching
- Interviews
- 'Storying' – creating narrative from data or case study
- Resource recycling – use same resource for different tasks
- Students prepare revision questions for the whole class or group

6.2 It is worthwhile experimenting with a wide range of different types of formative assessment tasks. There are two main reasons for this: first, so that the tutor gains confidence in the use of formative assessment to aid student learning. Second, to find out which types of formative assessment tasks students themselves find valuable. It may be that different topics or subjects are more amenable to specific formative assessment tasks.

Author	Head of Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement
Version	Version 2.2
Update	Revised October 2019
Approval	Academic Board November 2019
Review Date	August 2020

Annex 1: Detailed description of formative assessment tasks

Type of formative assessment task	Comment	Provision of feedback
Tests – one minute papers	Near the end of a teaching session or at a logical break point, students are asked key questions relating to important topics covered in the session. Tutor provides 'model' answer for students to compare their responses to. Benefits: aids active learning, questioning and easy to administer.	Self, peer, tutor, computer
Draft plans or proposals	May be used to help students think about and plan for their summative assessment. Could focus on just one or two learning outcomes specified in the assignment. If done a number of times may help the student to build up a portfolio in preparation for the total assignment. Benefits: will give students more confidence when preparing the full assignment by having broken it down into manageable chunks.	Self, peer, tutor or use of Turnitin
Reflective writing or learning journal	Create short time slots in the teaching session to allow students to write in their own words some of the key points that have been covered. Encourage students not to look at their notes – active thinking aids learning. Students could do this in a separate booklet to build up a learning journal. Benefits: helps students to express ideas, concepts, arguments, etc. in their own words	Self, tutor
Role play	This could be used in a small group setting using, for example, a case study and getting students to role play the key personnel in the case study – or make up key personnel. Time should be given to allow students to prepare their role, then role play itself and discussion of learning. Benefits: gives students insights into the case study by getting each student in the group to see it form a different perspective.	Self, peer and tutor
Informal and semi-formal discussion	Break off at key points in the teaching session to get students in groups of two or more to discuss a key point, concept, criticism, etc. amongst themselves. Follow this with some time to get the students to summarise what they have gained and learned from the discussion.	Self and peer

	Benefits: encourages critical thinking and going over material in their own words to promote deep learning.	
Individual or group presentation	This may be to the whole class or to sub-sets of the class group. Students sometimes find it Intimidating the first few times to present to a large group. Presentations to small groups with the tutor going round the groups may be a good way to ease students into this type of activity. Constructive rather than critical feedback may be best to build confidence. Benefits: develops presentation skills and the opportunity to gain feedback	Peers in small or large groups, tutor
'Crits'	Groups of students present their work-in progress for preparation of the summative assessment. Comments received from fellow students and tutors. As with the above, need to be careful not to be too critical or negative but constructive and helpful. Benefits: helps develop critical awareness of their work and presentation skills.	Peers and tutor
Debates with opposing sides	Set up a number of sets of two groups of students. One group given the task of opposing a point of view, theory or idea and the other group of supporting it. Each group tries to persuade the other group to their point of view. Benefits: promotes building arguments and allows students to appreciate that differing points of view each have their merits	Peers and tutors
Interviews	Brief interview of a student by a small group of other students. Interview may be about, for example, knowledge for particular kind of job related to the topics of study in the class Benefits: Both interviewee and interviewers have to formulate questions and answers. Interviewer develops verbal communication skills.	Peers
'Storying'	Students are given a short case study and asked to produce a story around the case study. Students should be encouraged to embellish the case study whilst keeping it reasonably realistic. Students present their story to a small group of students or just to one student. Benefits: Gets students to think creatively about a case study and encourages deeper understanding of the case.	Peers and tutors