

# **Assessment & Internal Verification Policy & Procedures**

## **Aims:**

Thames College of Professional Studies is committed to ensuring that standards of assessment are consistent, transparent and in line with the requirements of our awarding bodies. The way students' work is assessed must serve the stated learning objectives of the programmes we offer and facilitate the achievement and wider development of our students.

## **Objectives:**

- To assess students' work with integrity by being consistent and transparent in our assessment judgements and processes so that the outcomes are fair, reliable and valid.
- To ensure that assessment standards and specifications are implemented fully, so that no risk is posed to the reputation of the awarding bodies or to TCPS.
- To establish quality control and recording mechanisms for assignments and their assessment through a system of sampling moderation and internal verification.
- To provide learner-centred approaches to assessment, that provide opportunities for students to achieve at levels commensurate with the demands of their course.

## **Assessment:**

Internal Assessment is defined as the process where staff makes judgements on evidence produced by students against required criteria. All College devised assessment materials must be internally and/or externally verified before being issued to students.

- Completed student assignments will be assessed internally, be subject to internal verification and external moderation by the awarding body.
- Students must be left in no doubt that any grade awarded will be subject to internal and/or external scrutiny, (moderation) and that ultimately the final decision rests with the awarding body.
- The Assessor is responsible for ensuring that assessment processes are consistent and transparent, that evidence is valid, sufficient, and authentic and that judgement of evidence is valid and reliable.
- Students will be given an interim deadline for each assignment. Following feedback a new deadline will be set after which the work is assessed and the outcome entered on the student study sheet. The assessment decisions are then internally verified according to the procedure outlined below. There is a further opportunity to improve assignments before the final deadline.
- All coursework must be handed in on the stated date. If work is handed in late, a decision about whether it should be marked will be taken by the Course Leader in accordance with the policy.

## **Role of the Assessor:**

The role of the Assessor is to

- Set tasks which allow students to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do so that they have opportunities to achieve the highest possible grades on their courses.
- Ensure that learners are clear about the criteria they are expected to meet in their assignments and that they are fully briefed on the skills which need to be demonstrated in the coursework.
- Encourage students by giving detailed feedback and guidance on how to improve work.
- Set interim deadlines for coursework and advise students on the appropriate amount of time to spend on the work.
- Mark and return drafts within two weeks of submission.
- Adhere to the Awarding Body's specification in the assessment of student assignments.
- Record outcomes of assessment using appropriate documentation. Outcomes will be held secure for three years, measured from the point of certification.
- Ensure each candidate signs to confirm that the work is their own and that it is endorsed by the teacher after marking the work. A completed original document must be securely attached to the work of each candidate and to that of each sample request.
- Provide accurate records of internally assessed coursework marks to the Exams Office in a timely manner for transfer to the awarding body.

## **Internal Verification:**

- The Internal Verifier is at the heart of quality assurance. The role is to ensure that internally assessed work consistently meets appropriate standards but can also lead to staff development and quality improvement.
- Each course will have an identified Internal Verifier (IV).
- Internal Verifiers will have the knowledge relevant to the qualification(s) and other competence-based award(s) for which they are responsible to enable accurate judgements to be made regarding candidate performance in relation to competence criteria.
- Provision will be made for communication between course teams to share 'best practice' and areas of concern.

## **The role of the internal verifier:**

### **Planning:**

- Monitor that the internal verifier (IV) schedule covers all units and all assessors on a programme.
- Advise on the interpretation of National standards.
- Co-ordinate assessment arrangements including multi-sites and consortia as appropriate.
- Internal verifier goes through all assignments in brief before issue to learners.

## **Implementation:**

- Ensure an effective system of recording learner achievement is in place.
- Advise on opportunities for evidence generation and collection.
- Keep records of the verification process for 3 years after certification.
- Liaise with external verifiers.

## **Assessment / Internal verification:**

- Provide advice and support to assessors on a regular basis.
- Advise on the appropriateness of assessment evidence with regard to level, sufficiency, authenticity, validity and consistency.
- Use subject specialism to sample assessed work to verify assessors' judgements.
- Check the quality of assessment to ensure that it is consistent, fair and reliable.
- Ensure own assessment decisions are internally verified by another person.
- Give feedback to assessors and identify action to be taken where appropriate.

## **Follow up:**

- Ensure appropriate corrective action is taken when assignment briefs are not fit for purpose or when assessment decisions are not accurate.
- Take part in the formal stages of any appeal.
- Advise programme team on any training needs.
- Provide feedback on aspects of the assessment system to the programme team, senior management.
- Standardisation of assessment must take place when there is more than one assessor engaged in delivery and assessment of an assignment or unit.
- Standardisation meetings can be used to develop quality and consistency of assessment across assessors involved in different units across different programmes.

## **Internal verification of assessment decisions**

A sample of assessed work in every unit and every assignment must be internally verified to check the accuracy of assessment. Internal verification of assessment decisions is carried out ideally by a staff member who is familiar with assessment and has subject knowledge of the programme area. Internal verification of assessed work should be recorded. If action is required, the assessor should complete this and return it to the internal verifier for sign off.

Internal verification of assessment decisions should not be end-loaded. It is important that it is undertaken as soon as possible after assessment as this will improve the quality of assessment and not disadvantage learners.

Please note that all assignment briefs should be internally verified before being distributed to learners.

- On each assignment students must sign that the work submitted is their own and teachers / assessors should confirm that the work assessed is solely that of the candidate concerned and was conducted under required conditions.
- If the student hands in an assignment and teachers suspect it is not the student's own work, the matter should be reported to the Program Coordinator, who must proceed in accordance with the College's coursework policy.

## **Responsibilities:**

### **Responsibility of teachers:**

It is the responsibility of teachers to:

- Provide assessment processes that are fair and meet the requirements of students and of the qualification;
- Provide students with a schedule of assessment;
- Provide accurate, timely and informative assessment feedback to inform students of their individual progress and tell them what they need to do to improve.
- Record assessment decisions regularly, accurately and systematically, using agreed documentation,
- Comply with the College and Awarding Body guidelines regarding work that is submitted after the submission date and work that is re-submitted following referral decision;
- Familiarise themselves and learners with the College Assessment Appeals procedure(s);
- Be aware of and keep up-to-date with Awarding Body guidance in respect of assessment, standardisation, moderation and verification;
- Ensure that the quality of assessment is assured by carrying out internal standardisation, moderation or verification as required by the College and Awarding Body.
- Record internal standardisation, moderation and verification decisions accurately and systematically using agreed documentation,
- Provide special arrangements for learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities according to the regulations of the awarding body.

### **Responsibility of Internal verifiers:**

Internal verifiers are responsible for:

- Verifying assignment briefs prior to distribution to learners
- Verifying a sample of assessment decisions
- Developing the skills of assessors, especially those new to assessment
- Maintaining the consistency of assessment decisions by holding standardisation meeting of assessors