



Doncaster
College | University
Centre



North Lindsey
College

DN COLLEGES GROUP

Assessment Policy (Further Education and Apprenticeships)

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To ensure that DN Colleges Group (DNCG) is facilitating learning, assessment and achievement for all students/apprentices throughout the programme to completion of their qualifications.
- 1.2 To ensure that assessment is carried out effectively and that it is compliant with Awarding Organisation requirements.
- 1.3 This policy is written in line with the DNCG Statement of Intent which identifies a commitment to core values, safeguarding, health, safety and welfare, equality, diversity & inclusion and Data Protection (GDPR).
- 1.4 This policy also sets out to establish a broad, consistent approach to the way students' work is marked so that marking is valued, and students have a clear understanding of how well they are doing, what they have currently achieved, and how they can improve.

This policy sets out to support students' attendance, retention, and achievement of a higher standard of work/higher grades through inspiring, consistent marking and feedback practices, across the DN Colleges Group.

The focus of this policy is formal, written feedback. It is acknowledged that feedback in its broadest sense, can and should take many forms. Immediate verbal feedback is always encouraged as part of everyday practice. It provides students with an immediate indication of where they are and how to develop/improve further. Verbal feedback is encouraged as a means to reduce teachers' workload associated with marking and to provide a quicker turnaround of feedback. Marking should help to motivate students to progress. This does not mean always writing in-depth comments or being universally positive. Sometimes, short challenging comments or verbal feedback are more effective. Finally, as part of considering the importance of marking and written feedback, teachers are encouraged to utilise a variety of assessment methods which will benefit the students and again, reduce the workload associated with assessment and marking overall.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to the assessment of all FE students and apprentices. The assessment of HE students is covered under the 'Assessment Policy for HE Students'. Its scope does not include summative assessment which is otherwise covered by Awarding Bodies stipulations.
 - 2.1.1 A conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual, or organisation, has competing interests or loyalties. In the case of an individual, the conflict of interest could compromise or appear to compromise their assessment decisions if it is not properly managed.
 - 2.1.2 Managers in each department are responsible for managing conflicts of interests to all relevant individuals within their areas of responsibility.
 - 2.1.3 Line managers are responsible for checking that all staff understand conflicts of interest such as staff taking qualification and relationships between staff/learners.
- 2.2 This policy incorporates Assessment for Learning where this is undertaken through written feedback. This policy focuses primarily on marking academic and vocational work and embedded literacy therein. It does not consider marking specific to mathematics, although the general principles are applicable as is its relevance to literacy for mathematics.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Role of the Tutor/Assessor/Facilitator – is to:
- Adhere to the Awarding Organisations assessment specification in the judgement of evidence towards a qualification or knowledge, skills and behaviours within an apprenticeship standard.
- 3.2 The Role of the Internal Quality Assurer/Moderator – is to ensure:
- They act as the guardian of the standards and controls the quality of assessment procedures and decisions.
 - Marking is an integral part of the teaching, learning and assessment process. It is a form of communication based on shared and stated criteria.
 - Marking promotes the full involvement of students in the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding and provides a framework in which the progress of a student can be monitored.
 - Effective, consistent and regular marking will promote student confidence and self-esteem, identify strengths – providing opportunities to praise good work and effort, identify areas for improvement and any associated needs/scaffolding, shape the formation of future targets, increase the motivation to attend, learn and raise expectations / value added, provide progress evidence to parents, guardians, employers and other staff.
 - With regards to marking and providing feedback, it is imperative that all teachers within the DN Colleges Group contribute and provide students with the very best college experience and for leaders to be able to share best practice with Ofsted and other agencies.
 - Students benefit from high expectations, engagement, care, support and motivation from teachers and curriculum managers.
 - Teachers and assessors use their skills and expertise to plan and deliver teaching, learning and support to meet each student's needs.
 - Teachers and relevant teams initially assess students' starting points and monitor their progress, set challenging tasks, build on and extend learning for all students.
 - Students understand how to improve as a result of frequent, detailed and accurate feedback from teachers and assessors.
 - Assessment feedback develops English, mathematics and employment skills.

Specifically, college leaders will be looking for evidence that students understand how to improve, because of, frequent, detailed, and accurate feedback from staff following assessment of their learning.

- 3.3 A judgement will be made on:
- The extent to which students understand their progress towards their learning goals and what they need to do to improve
 - How well learning objectives are understood by students and progress is recorded in feedback to students, and grades on the assessment tracking.
 - The feedback on students' work, such as the accuracy and consistency of marking, and the correction of spelling, grammatical errors and inaccuracies.
 - Students' understanding of what they must do to improve their skills and knowledge, which is checked and reflected in subsequent tasks and activities.
- 3.4 This policy was written by the DN Colleges Group Quality team and approved by members of the Senior Leadership Team.

4 Definitions and/or Relevant Legislation

4.1 This policy is written in the context of:

- The current College Corporate Strategy
- The College Strategy for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, 14-19 and Health and Wellbeing,
- All current legislation that is relative to Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding, Prevent and Health and Safety
- Where appropriate the College policies for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Safeguarding and Health and Safety and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

5 The Policy

5.1 Principles of Assessment

All assessment follows the five principles below:

- 5.1.1 Authenticity: All assessment activity must have in place processes to ensure that the achievement is awarded against the student's own work. Students must sign a statement to this effect. Awarding Organisations have their own rules and regulations about authenticity and tutors/ assessors must make themselves familiar with them and be compliant with the guidance. (Template to be attached to this policy and given to all areas for students to sign, this will include use of AI)
- 5.1.2 Validity: The methods of assessment and the evidence provided must be appropriate and capable of demonstrating the achievement of safe learning outcomes, competencies and subject mastery. This must be judged against the assessment criteria at the appropriate level. Evidence will be assessed for currency and sufficiency.
- 5.1.3 Reliability and consistency: the assessment results should be standardised across levels and provision. Moderation and standardisation must follow the College and Awarding Organisation procedures. Standardisation is included in the IQA policy.
- 5.1.4 Fit for purpose: Assessment must be fit for the student and the planned learning experience. The assessment strategy must be clearly appropriate for the target group of students in the correct context in which they are learning e.g. homework must be supportive, blended learning must be inclusive. The criteria and methods which are being used to judge the work must be clear to the student and internal and external moderators/verifiers and meet the requirements of the awarding organisations.
- 5.1.5 Inclusiveness: assessment should be based on individual students' needs. It must allow all students to demonstrate their achievements regardless of individual circumstances. It must comply with the Equality policies of the College.
- 5.1.6 All assessments should be safeguarded against plagiarism and misuse of AI in line with the JCQ guidelines and DNCG AI Policy, Framework and Principles

5.2 Forms of Assessment

- 5.2.1 Initial and Diagnostic Assessment takes place at the start of the programme and is used to identify the current learning needs in order to plan effectively and provide appropriate support.
- 5.2.2 Informal assessment is on-going integrated and flexible. It is varied and may be recorded by the student and the tutor/ assessor. It can include self-assessment or verbal feedback given by the tutor/assessor. It can be formative or summative or both. If it is summative assessment it must be recorded although formative assessments will demonstrate competency over time.
- 5.2.3 Formative assessment is contextual, developmental, supportive and encouraging and on-going throughout the course. It is used to give feedback and support to the student on progress to date and to inform the student and tutor of action to take or improve performance.
- 5.2.4 Summative assessment usually takes place towards the end of a course and counts towards a final assessment decision. It is used to measure how much learning has taken place. It is a

judgement on whether the student has achieved all or some of the learning outcomes for a given level.

- 5.2.5 Formal internal and external assessments are structured and usually take place in clearly stated conditions, e.g., the completion of a practical task, synoptic assessment, presentation or examination. It may be undertaken by the whole group or by an individual. It is usually summative in nature and may be assessed externally

5.3 The Role of the Tutor/Assessor – is to

- 5.3.1 Ensure students are fully briefed on assessment methods, procedure and qualification standards. This will include both synchronous and asynchronous learning using a well-planned combination of face to face and blended learning.
- 5.3.2 Students with special assessment requirements are identified and supported appropriately. Tutors must ensure awarding organisations are notified of access arrangements.
- 5.3.3 Involve students in the assessment planning process and agreement of assessment occasions, how the assessment will be carried out and the most cost-effective use of time and resources at the commencement of the programme.
- 5.3.4 Involve students in the agreement of assessment deadlines and feedback from the assessor.
- 5.3.5 Identify evidence which is valid, sufficient, authentic, reliable, fit for purpose and fair and from which competence can be inferred. Students must be advised on the Appeals process.
- 5.3.6 Assess evidence presented from prior achievements or experience using the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.
- 5.3.7 Adhere to the Awarding Organisations assessment specification in the judgement of evidence towards a qualification.
- 5.3.8 Give constructive written and verbal feedback to students on formative and summative assessment including English, mathematics and IT developments as appropriate.
- 5.3.9 Record outcomes of assessment using appropriate documentation.
- 5.3.10 If the student fails to demonstrate expected knowledge, skills and behaviours against the specified criteria, a revised assessment plan will be mutually agreed.
- 5.3.11 Assist students in the presentation of evidence for final assessment and verification.
- 5.3.12 Ensure students are fully briefed on their responsibilities of ensuring evidence produced is their own and not plagiarised and/or solely AI generated

5.4 The Role of the Internal Quality Assurer/Moderator – is to ensure

- 5.4.1 They act as the guardian of the standards and controls the quality of assessment procedures and decisions.
- 5.4.2 Tutor/Assessor duties are clearly allocated, and they follow the assessment specification given.
- 5.4.3 Tutor/Assessor training needs, advice, guidance and support are met.
- 5.4.4 Tutor/Assessors are advised on arrangements for students with special assessment requirements and on appropriate referral of disputes and appeals.
- 5.4.5 Assessment practice and decisions are regularly monitored and sampled to ensure that the decisions are valid, authentic, reliable, current, sufficiency, safe and fit for purpose.
- 5.4.6 Tutor/Assessor receive prompt, accurate and constructive written and oral feedback.
- 5.4.7 Student achievement records are accurate, up-to-date and regularly monitored and that all student information is stored securely and remains confidential as appropriate.
- 5.4.8 Systems and documentation for assessment and internal quality assurance meet the standard required by the College and the Awarding Organisation.
- 5.4.9 They liaise with the External Verifier/Quality Assurer/Moderator to progress Awarding Organisation accreditation of students' evidence and award of certificates, and to make recommendation for Awarding Organisation action to maintain quality of assessment.
- 5.4.10 In the event of irregularities or malpractice they, along with the quality management team, instigates utilising the Malpractice Policy and the Malpractice Procedure.

5.5 Assessment Evidence

- 5.5.1 The evidence must always be linked to the assessment method e.g. if 'tutor observation' is the method there must be a 'tutor observation checklist.'
- 5.5.2 Evidence should comply with the principles of assessment and must always be sufficient, i.e. there must be enough evidence to enable a reliable judgement on achievement.
- 5.5.3 Where the only source of evidence is written work, a secondary method of sampling and checking student understanding should be used such as questioning.

5.6 Recording Assessment

Assessment records for a vital component of evidence for the following purpose:

- 5.6.1 To demonstrate the students' progress towards the achievement of learning outcomes.
- 5.6.2 Evaluating the student's progress towards the achievement of learning outcomes.
- 5.6.3 Presentation to internal and external moderator/ verifiers/ assessors as evidence of achievement
- 5.6.4 Assessment records map evidence of progress through the programme. It is the tutor/ assessor responsibility to record assessed achievement and to track this against the learning outcomes. Students must be fully advised and aware of any assessment requirements or regulations, including opportunities to re submit.
- 5.6.5 The assessment record must be available to students and staff for review throughout the duration of the course programme.
- 5.6.6 Evidence can be recorded in a number of ways, but must be:
 - Tracked against individual student and achievement for relevant outcomes
 - Clearly structured
 - Available for internal/external moderators/managers/quality at any point throughout the year.

5.7 Retention of Assessment Evidence

- 5.7.1 Assessed evidence should be retained in accordance with the Awarding Organisation guidelines.
- 5.7.2 If direct claims status is held student work should not be returned to them until the next Awarding Organisation Verification or Moderation visit has been undertaken.
- 5.7.3 All assessment records and tracking documents must be retained for a minimum of 3 years.

5.8 Good Practice in Assessment

- 5.8.1 Assessment is not carried out exclusively for accreditation purposes – it is used to measure progress, build up self-confidence and review student achievement and success.
- 5.8.2 Assessment has to consider the learning needs of the individuals and target groups.
- 5.8.3 Assessment tasks are internally moderated before use.
- 5.8.4 Assessment documentation includes the requirement that students state the authenticity of their own work.
- 5.8.5 Assessment procedures are explicit and public.
- 5.8.6 Assessment procedures are varied, flexible and may be negotiable, while assessment criteria are fixed for different levels.
- 5.8.7 Methods of assessment are creative, innovative and varied.
- 5.8.8 Assessment procedures allow students to work at and be assessed at the correct level.
- 5.8.9 Assessment builds the self-esteem of the student.
- 5.8.10 Assessment encourages self-esteem by students to promote independence.
- 5.8.11 Students are encouraged to evaluate the assessment procedures to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.

5.9 Feedback and marking guidance

Marking must be timely. The typical timescale for marking turnaround should be 15 working days.

Marking must be regular. Each student should receive written feedback on their work at least 4 times per term – this includes formative assessment.

Marking must be consistent and focused on student learning and helpful to students in relation to making progress and improvements. Marking should always acknowledge:

- Strengths demonstrated in a particular piece of work.
- Progress against targets.
- How marks have been achieved.
- How further improvements can be made – unless against awarding body rules.

Written feedback must always include specific guidance and how the work could be improved and / or grade could be raised, within awarding bodies guidelines.

It is expected practice to include the previous target at the beginning of the next piece of marked work in order that subsequent progress can be assessed.

This applies equally to teacher-marked work and self and/or peer-assessed work. If self/and peer assessment is to be used, students should be coached in identifying strengths and providing constructive feedback which supports improvement.

Students should be given planned opportunities to read and respond to feedback.

Marking must be based on shared learning objectives:

- Marking should be undertaken against set criteria and should provide feedback on achievement of the learning objectives of the work.
- Students should know what they are trying to achieve before they attempt the work.

Marking should be accessible to all students:

- Written comments should be legible and comments should be clearly visible. The student's reading ability should be considered when constructing written feedback and, depending on the student, it may be necessary to supplement written feedback with a verbal explanation.
- Marking and feedback should not be written with red ink. The key factor is that feedback is clearly visible.
- When providing written feedback to students, teachers should be particularly vigilant in relation to their own written English. Marking comments which contain errors undermine both the feedback itself and the credibility of the marker. All written feedback must be checked and free from spelling errors.

Marking must be positive in tone and mindful of student self-esteem:

- Over marking can lead to student demotivation and lessens the beneficial impact of marking. Marking should normally be limited to that which was agreed in the assessment criteria. Written feedback should be concise.
- Best practice should be that the student should respond to spelling corrections by adding the correctly spelled words in their English glossary.
- A list of commonly misspelled words is provided in Appendix 1.

Marking must be relevant to the current / target level:

- Marking should match the level the student is currently at and/or working towards; students' work should not normally be marked against expectations which are higher than this. This applies to both academic and vocational level and the student's level of literacy.
- Indicative literacy skills at each level are outlined in Appendix 2.

Marking must be standardised and checked for authenticity

- Samples of marking should be standardised by another/other teaching staff to check consistency
- Student work must be checked for authenticity – to counteract the possible use of AI technology, teaching staff should ask students questions about the work they have submitted to check their understanding

Continuous professional development:

- DN Colleges Group is wholly committed to supporting staff in the implementation of this policy.
- Teachers who do not feel confident in understanding and implementing this policy should discuss this with their manager and make contact with the Learning Enhancement Team for individualised support.

Monitoring:

Adherence and compliance to this policy will be monitored via:

- Regular Curriculum Area sampling conducted by Curriculum Managers/Leads
- Themed inspections including sampling of marked work by the Quality Team
- Regular sampling conducted by the LET members.

6 Relevant Policies and Procedures

- 6.1 Internal quality Assurance Policy
Quality Assurance. Note: THIS POLICY SHOULD BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE AWARDING ORGANISATIONS ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES AND THE RELEVANT QUALIFICATION HANDBOOKS

Appendix 1: Commonly misspelled words – aide memoire.

Appendix 2: Written English – Guidelines for marking particular levels.

7 Who to contact with Queries

- 7.1 Vice Principal for Quality of Education

8 Communication

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Quality team and updated on a 3-year cycle.
- 8.1.1 The effectiveness of the Policy will be reviewed through the Curriculum, Performance & Quality Group and informed by:
- Awarding Organisation Verification Reports
 - Self-Assessment Reports and Quality Improvement plans
 - Analysis of achievement data
 - Teaching, learning and assessment findings
 - Student focus groups
- 8.1.2 Adherence to this policy will be reviewed through the internal quality assurance process.
- 8.1.3 This policy will be disseminated to Staff and Students through the induction process.
- 8.1.4 Access to the policy is via the Staff Intranet.

9 Authorisation

Policy Holder: Vice Principal Quality of Education
Union Approval & Date: (if applicable)
SLT Approval & Date: 6 March 2024
Governor Committee/ Board Approval: (if applicable)
Next Review Date: March 2027

*Policies will be reviewed on a 3-yearly basis unless there is a specific requirement to undertake the review annually.

APPENDIX 1

Commonly misspelled words – aide memoire

Acceptable	Equipment	Library	Referred
Accidentally	Exhilarate	Lightning	Reference
Accommodate	Exceed	Maintenance	Relevant
Acquire	Existence	Manoeuvre	Religious
Acquit	Experience	Memento	Restaurant
A lot	February	Millennium	Ridiculous
Amateur	Foreign	Miniature	Rhythm
Apparent	Fourth Gauge	Mischievous	Secretary
Argument	Generally	Noticeable	Schedule
Because	Grammar	Occasion	Scissors
Believe	Grateful	Occasionally	Sensible
Calendar	Guarantee	Occur / occurred	Separate
Category	Harass	Occurrence	Special
Cemetery	Height	Official	Success
Changeable	Hierarchy	Parallel	To / too / two
Collectible	Ignorance	Parliament	Tomorrow
Committed	Immediate	Pastime	Their / they're / there
Conscience	Independent	Pigeon	Twelfth
Conscientious	Indispensable	Possession	Tyranny
Conscious	Intelligence	Preferable	Until
Definitely	Its / it's	Principal / principle	Vacuum
Disappear	Judgement	Privilege	Vicious
Disappoint	Knowledge	Questionnaire	Weather
Drunkenness	Leisure	Receive	Weird
Embarrass		Recommend	You're / your

APPENDIX 2

Written English - Guidelines for marking particular levels

Literacy level	Entry 1	Entry 2	Entry 3	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Drafting			Emerging	Developing	Competent	Proficient
Paragraphs			Emerging	Developing	Competent	Proficient
Writing for purpose and particular audience				Emerging	Developing	Competent
Proofreading			Emerging	Developing	Competent	Proficient
Writing in sentences	Simple	Simple	Compound sentences	Compound sentences	Complex	Complex
Grammar		Use adjectives	Use pronouns	Correct verb tense / correct verb agreement	Consistent use of tense and subject verb agreement in complex sentences	Consistent use of tense and subject verb agreement in complex sentences
Punctuation	Capital letter and full stop for sentences	Question marks, capital letters for proper nouns	Exclamation marks, commas	Use punctuation to aid meaning.	Complex use of punctuation to aid meaning	Proficient use of punctuation to aid meaning
Spelling	Personal key words and familiar words	Majority of personal details and familiar common words	Common words and key words for particular courses	Words used commonly in work, study and daily life.	Also includes familiar technical words	Advanced spelling