



Regionally Focused – Globally Engaged

Assessment Arrangements Policy

(This policy relates to learners requiring additional support during summative assessment.)

May 2021

History of Changes

Version	Description of Change	Authored by	Date
1.1	Introduction of a new policy and procedure document for assessment arrangements for all awarding bodies used by the College	D Killean & C Elliott	27.10.2016
1.2	Updated document to include revised Assessment Arrangements Information for Centres dated August 2017	C Elliott	29.8.17
1.3	Minor updates including the review date to be every two years. Procedure now a separate document	C Elliott	24.5.18
1.4	Updates to job roles and inclusion of revised Assessment Arrangements from SQA 2019 update	C Nairn	24.3.21

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The College's model for learning support focusses on promoting individual resilience and independence in learning and assessment. Where individuals require support the aim is always to help the individual acquire strategies for learning and assessment that help them to work toward self-reliance. We recognise independence in learning as a key skill for employment and life.
- 1.2 Lecturers/Assessors have by far the most significant role in supporting students in their learning and in preparing them for assessment. It is of great importance that they understand the specific challenges faced by their learners and are supported to adapt their teaching and assessment to the needs of those learners. An important role of learning support is to provide the specialist advice that lecturers/assessors need to adapt their teaching and assessment approaches in line with awarding body requirements while encouraging learners to use techniques that promote independence in learning and assessment.
- 1.3 This policy relates to reasonable adjustments made to internal and external assessments to compensate for a disability and/or an additional support need that does not compromise the integrity of the original assessment. It is compliant with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.4 Circumstances under which assessment arrangements can be applied are explained in this policy, as are the roles and responsibilities of members of staff who ensure the policy is applied properly. The awarding body principles and procedures must be adhered to when making the necessary assessment arrangements with internal and external deadlines met.
- 1.5 Different awarding bodies have different processes for approving assessment arrangements. It is important that staff are aware of the regulations applied by the specific awarding body for the qualification they are delivering when requesting assessment arrangements for their students.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The policy applies to any student requesting and requiring changes to the assessment conditions because of a disability or difficulty. These can be made following awarding body procedures where it is recognised that the assessment conditions are creating barriers to the student demonstrating their skills, knowledge or understanding.
- 2.2 It relates to both internal and external assessment. However, with internal assessment, adjustments can be made with reference to the unit or course specification's assessment conditions. These adjustments are made by the lecturer/assessor with approval through the College's internal verification processes.
- 2.3 All awarding bodies have regulations relating to assessment arrangements that must be adhered to when planning and seeking authorisation for adjustments to assessment arrangements for students.

3. Key Principles

- 3.1 Deciding whether assessment arrangements should be applied for a student in a particular subject is a judgement made between the Subject Specialist Lecturer/Assessor, Learning Support Specialist and Advisers. In all cases, decisions for assessment arrangements must be led by the College's Learning Support Specialist with initial evidence gathering by the subject specialist and Learning Support Advisors. Decisions about assessment arrangements are verified and signed off by the Learning Support Specialist in conjunction with Head of Student Services.
- 3.2 Application for Assessment Arrangements for external assessments is made to the awarding body by the MIS Department once the assessment arrangements have been verified, the student has agreed to the assessment arrangements and a signed off instruction has been provided by the Learning Support Specialist.
- 3.3 Assessment arrangements for internal assessments are authorised by a Learning Support Specialist and then verified through an assessment arrangements verification meeting. These arrangements are set out in the individual's learning support plan. They are only necessary where adjustments to the assessment methodology go beyond the scope of the assessment conditions set out in the unit or course specification. These often specify alternatives that can be used to gather evidence of achievement.

3.4 In making that judgement, learning support staff and lecturers/assessors must consider the four questions set out below. (Adapted from Assessment Arrangements Explained: SQA August 2019)

3.4.1 Do the proposed assessment arrangements enable the student to demonstrate their attainment, rather than compensate for a lack of attainment?

It is important that students are entered for a qualification at the right level, given their general level of ability and attainment. Assessment arrangements are designed to enable students' access to an assessment to allow them to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding. They are not designed to compensate for lack of attainment.

For example, a student may have difficulty with reading the questions in an external assessment. Assessment arrangements, such as the use of a computer with text-reading software, may alleviate this disadvantage.

3.4.2 Will the proposed assessment arrangement still ensure that the integrity of the qualification is maintained?

Assessment arrangements must be considered in the context of the assessment standards or competence standards for each qualification. Assessment arrangements must not compromise these standards or undermine the integrity of the qualification. Any qualification that is awarded must provide a reliable indication of the knowledge, skills, understanding and competence of the holder.

For example, it is not possible for a student to use a human scribe in a National Literacy unit, where writing skills are being explicitly assessed.

3.4.3 How will the assessment arrangements be tailored to meet a student's individual needs subject by subject?

The individual needs of students should be the basis for the provision of an assessment arrangement. As part of the overall support offered to them, students should have a Learning Support Plan that details the assessment arrangements, considered subject by subject, with no assumption that the same kind or level of support will be required in every case. It is important that the assessment arrangements relate to current need and are not just replicated to provide the same assessment arrangements provided at school.

As assessment requirements vary depending on the unit or course specifications, a student's need for a particular assessment arrangement may also vary.

The inherent flexibility of internal assessments will help many students achieve the standard for the qualification. In many unit assessments, students can provide evidence in a variety of ways, using a range of assessment methods to demonstrate their knowledge, and understanding.

3.4.4 How well do the assessment arrangements reflect, as far as possible, the student's normal way of learning and producing work?

The method used to facilitate access to an assessment will generally be, though not always, the method that has been used in the learning environment. For example, if a student with dyslexia normally uses a computer with a spell checker in class to overcome writing difficulties, this should be the assessment arrangement provided in the assessment.

However, there may be situations where a student's particular way of working in the learning environment is not acceptable in an assessment. For example, a student who has a profound speech and language impairment, and who normally has someone in class explaining words and terms, would not be allowed such support in the externally-set examination question paper. For this reason, it is very important that students are aware of, and have practice in, working in a way that reflects what is going to be allowed as support in an external examination.

- 3.5 Assessment arrangements will be agreed based on the particular difficulties of the individual concerned. These are described fully in the procedures set out by the individual awarding body. A common test across all awarding bodies is that assessment arrangements must not impact on the integrity of the assessment and only adjusted to allow the student to demonstrate the skills, knowledge or understanding they possess. Examples of assessment arrangements are: large font examination papers, coloured background examination papers, braille translation, extra time allowed, electronic format with text reader, readers and scribes, prompters.
- 3.6 Assessment arrangements for both internal and external assessments are subject to an internal verification process and are signed-off. Verification is undertaken at verification meetings chaired by the Head of Student Services.
- 3.7 Adjustment to assessments beyond the assessment conditions set out in a unit or course specification cannot be made until approved through the assessment arrangements verification meeting.

4. Responsibilities

Senior Leadership Team – are responsible for approving this policy.

The Assistant Principal Quality and Development is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

The Head of Student Services – is responsible for authoring this policy, overseeing its implementation for ensuring compliance with awarding body requirements. and ensuring that the Learning Support Specialists and Advisors comply with this policy to meet awarding body deadlines.

Learning Support Specialist – leads on the operation of this policy, ensuring compliance with awarding body requirements, liaison with awarding bodies with issues relating to this policy. Manages diagnostic testing, assess for assessment arrangements, provide the necessary quality assurance checks and provide the expert advice to curriculum managers and teams.

Subject Specialist Lecturer/Assessor – are responsible for regular dialogue with the student to check that the teaching provided is adapted where possible to be supportive of the student's needs. They are also responsible for providing assessment work to demonstrate that the proposed assessment arrangement would have a positive impact. They are responsible for internal assessment and adjusting these assessments within the confines of the assessment conditions set out in unit and course specifications in compliance with the College's assessment and internal verification policies.

Learning Support Advisers –They will help to coordinate and provide learning support within the faculty working closely with faculty managers and staff. They possess knowledge of the vocational areas in which they work. They will also screen for the common problems that can be barriers to learning and assessment and provide a range of intervention that will help learners overcome barriers to be as independent in their learning as possible. They are responsible for the collation of assessment evidence from the lecturer for the student, the development of the Learning Support Plan and the relevant documentation being available in the College's Learning Support shared area. They are also responsible for ensuring the Assessment Arrangement agreement form is signed by the student and for any students under 16 years of age, this document should also be signed by a parent/guardian.

Learning Assistants – They provide support to learners on a day-to-day basis. They work closely with the Learning Support Advisers following their guidance and advice. They are deployed where needed providing a responsive model to meet need.

MIS Staff – Will make assessment arrangements with the awarding body and provide chief invigilators and their team with the necessary information and guidance to provide the assessment arrangements during external assessments.

Awarding Bodies – agrees with or rejects the application for assessment arrangements, notifies the college of their decision. Until notification has been received the college is unable to apply any alterations to the assessment conditions.

5. Related Documents

SQA Website Assessment Arrangements Pages

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html>

SQA Assessment Arrangements Explained August 2017

SQA Quality Assurance of Assessment Arrangements in Internal and External Assessments: Information for Colleges August 2017

JCQ Regulations for rest of UK awarding bodies

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

Staff should always refer to the awarding body and regulator websites rather than printed versions of these documents to ensure that reference is being made to the latest edition.

Where staff are delivering a rest of UK qualification such as a City & Guilds NVQ or a Pearson BTEC they should also check that awarding body's website for further guidance.

6. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years to update on the basis of awarding body changes and updates of external documentation. Significant changes may necessitate more frequent review.

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