

## **WORK SKILLS LEARNING**

### **ASSESSMENT POLICY**

**2015 / 2016**

Assessment is the process by which a learner's skills and knowledge are reviewed in order to evaluate what they have learnt or in the case of NVQs how they are performing against the competencies they are required to demonstrate. Assessment will ensure that learners are fairly, accurately and regularly assessed in a consistent manner and:

- provide diagnostic information that assists both staff and learners / candidates to provide appropriate support to enable achievement of the learning outcomes (initial assessment)
- allow learners/ candidates to monitor their own progress
- enable tutors / teachers to review and develop their learning programmes to achieve their intended learning outcomes
- provide evidence of progress and achievement to enable accreditation and progression to take place
- enable a dialogue between the learners / candidates and tutor / assessors to ensure progression within the provision (tracking)
- provide a measure of the learner's achievement on qualification based courses (grades)

#### **PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT**

All assessment in Work Skills Learning (WSL) follows the five principles below:

- **Authenticity:** All assessment activity must have in place processes to ensure that the achievement is the learner's / candidate's own work. Learners/ candidates must sign a statement to this effect. Awarding Bodies boards have their own rules and regulations about authenticity and tutors/ assessors must make themselves familiar with them and abide by them (see Appendix 1: Plagiarism policy)
- **Validity:** The method of assessment and the evidence provided must be appropriate and capable of demonstrating the achievement of learning outcomes/ competencies and related assessment criteria of the provision at the appropriate level.
- **Reliability and consistency:** The assessment results should be standardised across levels and provision. Moderation and standardisation must follow the board procedures (see Appendix 2: Internal Verification Policy)
- **Fitness for purpose:** Assessment must be fit for the learners/ candidates and the learning. The assessment strategy must be clearly appropriate for the target group of learners/ candidates in the correct context in which they are learning e.g. homework must be supportive, or initial diagnostic must not be intimidating. The criteria and methods which are being used to judge the work must be clear to the learner, staff and internal and external moderators / verifiers and meet and exceed the requirements of QCA/QAA, the awarding bodies and our learner/ candidate charter.
- **Inclusiveness:** Assessment should be based on learners'/ candidates' needs. It must allow all learners/ candidates to demonstrate their achievements regardless of individual circumstances. It must comply with the Equalities policies of the company.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all provision offered by WSL where all or part of the programme is formally assessed.

## ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Assessment will be a standing item on the agenda of all course/subject/ WSL team meetings.

Course/ subject teams will review their assessments and procedures and processes annually to ensure that they are current and valid. The WSL Management team will then update their Assessment Strategy to reflect any changes and this will feed into the overall WSL Assessment policy.

All course/ subject teams will hold a Final Examiners/assessment meeting upon completion of the assessments for the current academic year.

WSL's handbooks will contain a description of the overall approach to assessment. This will specify where relevant:

- Purpose, arrangements and choices of assessment methods
- Details of any initial or diagnostic tests
- Who will be doing the assessing
- Arrangements for recording and tracking assessment evidence
- Timing of assessment tasks e.g. a diary or table
- Volume of assessment including homework and coursework and an estimate of the time required to complete it
- Number of attempts allowed at an assignment
- Consequences of non-submission or late submission. It may only be possible to achieve a pass grade if the assignment is a late submission. It may be that a different assignment is used for any reassessment.
- Arrangements if the learner is absent for an assessment e.g. previous approval of absence, genuine reason or medical certificate
- Plagiarism policy
- Learner Malpractice in Examinations Policy (see Appendix 3)
- Arrangements for the secure retention of assessment evidence by WSL which may be required for moderation, and will normally be returned to the learner at the discretion of the WSL, and only after the completion of the external moderation process in accordance with the Awarding Body requirements (see Appendix 7)
- Nature of the moderation process demonstrating that assessment decisions are to national standards and that internal and external moderation/ verification is in place to ensure that all assessments are applied consistently for all learners and that the final assessment mark/decision is accurate, reliable and recorded.
- Results for internally assessed units are final only after internal and /or external moderation
- Written and oral feedback is given to the learners as soon as possible after assessment, (normally 3 working weeks of the official submission date for written work).
- That where an assessment takes place outside WSL it is the responsibility of the teacher/ trainer/ supervisor / assessor to ensure that adequate arrangements are made for the supervision of the assessment activity and authentication of the learner's/ candidate's assessment evidence.

- Arrangements for learners who are unable to demonstrate attainment through the standard assessment arrangements (Appendix 5).
- Awarding Body requirements/ regulations.
- Learner Appeal Against the Assessment of Performance (Appendix 6)

The assessment strategy enables learners/ candidates to know that:

- Open and transparent methods are used to assess.
- They are expected to spend a designated amount of time outside the classroom each week completing assessments and that this will be part of WSL's homework policy.
- There is feedback on the process and results of assessment.
- Learners have the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved the outcomes of their programme of learning.
- Learners are allowed to resubmit work under appropriate and agreed assessment regulations in line with the Awarding Body regulations, in order to achieve to their best ability/ capacity
- Where work is part of external assessment then a record of the development process - e.g. first submission - feedback, second submission - feedback, third submission – feedback must be clearly signed and dated and photocopied and a review of this is part of the standardisation/moderation process
- Assessment is relevant and integrated into the learning process
- Learners will normally be permitted an initial attempt and one further summative attempt at an assignment. A third summative attempt may only be offered where there are appropriate circumstances as agreed by the subject leader/ personal tutor and manager.
- Learners have the right to appeal against assessment decisions which may adversely affect their academic achievement, if they feel there are just grounds such as error, inconsistent judgement, misinterpretation or unfairness (see Appendix 6: Learner Appeal Against the Assessment of Performance).
- Failure to submit coursework to the required standard and / or deadlines or to achieve summative assessments or failure to meet the agreed requirements of any support or recovery plan may lead to the Learner Disciplinary Procedure being implemented, and consequently a reduced grade being awarded.
- Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are not tolerated (see Appendices 1 and 3)
- Progress as monitored by assessment will be reflected and tracked in the Individual Learning Plan

### **FORMS OF ASSESSMENT**

- Initial/ Diagnostic assessment usually takes place at the start and is used to identify the current learning needs in order to provide appropriate support.
- Formative assessment is developmental, supportive and encouraging and ongoing throughout the course. It is used to give feedback and support to the learner on progress to date and to inform the learner and tutor of action to take to maintain or improve performance.
- Summative assessment takes place at 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 learner has achieved all or some of the learning outcomes for a given level.
- Formal assessment is structured and usually takes place in clearly stated conditions, e.g. the completion of a practical task, or presentation. It may be undertaken by the whole group or by an individual. It is usually summative in nature and may be assessed externally.

- Informal assessment is ongoing integrated and flexible. It is varied and may be recorded by the learner and the tutor/assessor. It can include self-assessment or verbal feedback given by the assessor. It can be formative or summative or both. If it is summative it must be recorded although NVQs record formative assessments to demonstrate competency over time.

### **ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES**

Any assessment will include a variety of assessment activities or methods, formal or informal mapped to the learning outcomes/ performance indicators or criteria. These may include where applicable (please note some qualifications do not recognise some activities):

- observation of activities such as role plays, simulations, practical activities, performance etc
- discussion ranging from unstructured informal conversations to guided discussions This can be used in a group with a clear set of conditions for recording individual achievement, or on a one to one basis;
- question and answer sessions, oral or written, formally or informally structured e.g. worksheet, quiz, IT based activities, photographs where appropriate etc
- structured tasks such as a research project, experiment, essay, or case study, or workplace task or presentations (individual or group)
- examinations and tests, either seen or unseen, with a formal structure and time constraints

### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSESSMENT**

The assessment strategy for each programme/ course outlines who is responsible for making and recording judgements.

1. Tutors: The tutor is responsible for:

- Planning the assessment strategy in accordance with the Awarding Body's guidelines and ensuring that it complies with the WSL assessment Policy (see Appendix 2)
- Including assessment details of assessment on the Scheme of Work
- Notifying learners of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria before the assignment is undertaken
- Giving guidance to the learner when there are choices regarding assessment
- Ensuring that assignment briefs have been verified before they are given to the learner
- Using the criteria equitably and fairly.
- Recording the assessment either in the Record of Work Book, the ILP or other agreed tracking sheet.
- Setting appropriate homework in line with WSL Policy on Assessment including homework
- Returning marked homework in a timely manner in line with WSL's Service standards by which date all learners will have had the opportunity to complete the assessment.
- Retaining coursework in accordance with the Awarding Body guidelines and the WSL Records Management Policy (Appendix 7).
- Participating in the moderation process by keeping all the necessary records, attending moderation meetings and submitting marked learner assessments as requested (see Appendix 2).
- Ensuring that provisional assessment decisions are internally verified before they are given to the learner, and explaining that they may change after external moderation. This should be clearly stated on the assignment brief.
- Keeping all assessment records secure.

- Giving on-going feedback which is not just a word like "good" or "excellent" but specifically identifies the achievements of the learner and very clearly what learners have to do to improve.
- Ensuring that all learners have equal opportunities for their achievements to be assessed
- Ensuring that Plagiarism and cheating are detected (see Appendix 1).

2. **Learners:** Evaluating their own work it helps learners to improve. This is a skill which is developed in tutorials and communications classes. Work based candidates may have reflective accounts.

### 3. NVQ Candidates

- Attend workshops as per the programme requirements
- Familiarise themselves with the standards for their qualification (NVQ and/or Key Skills)
- Negotiate and develop a personal action plan with their Assessor
- Complete and sign their ILP with their Assessor
- Build a portfolio of evidence in accordance with Awarding Body and Centre requirements, mapping evidence against standards on Evidence Grids
- Be available to discuss assessment evidence with Internal and/or External Verifier if requested

### 4. Peers:

Peer assessment involves learners in formal or informal situations, either as groups or individuals giving feedback in assessment. Assessment by other learners in the group can encourage evaluative skills and increase group cohesion. This sort of assessment must always be supported and moderated by the tutor/assessor (see Appendix 2)

### 5. External assessors:

This may include NVQ assessors, work placement coordinators and supervisors in the workplace. They must have full access to the WSL assessment policy and the assessment strategy of the provision. They are responsible for:

- ensuring that each candidate is aware of his or her responsibility with regard to the collection and presentation of evidence;
- ensuring that the candidate is fully briefed and understands the NVQ and, if appropriate, Key Skills standards;
- advising the Centre if a candidate has any special assessment requirements that are not advised at the beginning of the programme but have subsequently come to light;
- completing the Individual Learning Plan with the candidate;
- assessing the candidate against the performance criteria, range statements and underpinning knowledge associated with elements of competence;
- contributing to the candidate's ongoing assessment plan to identify valid and sufficient evidence and assessment;
- judging all evidence against performance criteria range statements and underpinning knowledge to identify candidates achievements;
- identifying gaps in evidence and discuss/agree remedial action with the candidate;
- carrying out regular observations of the candidate within their workplace and provide written reports;

- providing the candidate with written feedback on assessment and action planning;
- signing and dating the candidate's assessment/action/training plans, all evidence and any other documentation;
- using the Centre documentation for all records relating to the assessment process;
- following the Centre Guidelines for reporting assessment and candidate progress;
- following the assessment guidance given by the Awarding Body and Internal Verifier;
- attending standardisation meetings as required and liaising with the Internal Verifier and other assessors, Centre co-ordinator as necessary;
- explaining and discussing special assessments or problems with the Internal Verifier;
- maintaining records of their candidates' achievements and feeding back to the co-ordinator and Internal Verifier;
- carrying out appropriate risk assessment of where the candidate is working to ensure they are working in a safe and healthy environment
- being mindful of the data protection act and the candidates' rights to see any information recorded about them.

#### 6. NVQ Internal verifiers:

Internal Verifiers work under the direction of the NVQ Centre Co-ordinator in accordance with the QCA guide "Internal Verification of NVQs" (QCA, March, 1998) and Joint Awarding Body Guidance on Internal Verification of NVQs and contribute to the Centre's compliance with the NVQ Code of Practice (2008). They will:

- Develop a plan for internal verification of the programmes for which they are responsible in line with the NVQ Centre Strategy for Internal Verification.
- Carry out ongoing and summative sampling of portfolios according to the IV Strategy and plan and feed back to the Assessor.
- Observe assessments by Assessors, as directed by the Centre Co-ordinator.
- Interview candidates.
- Support and guide Assessors.
- Ensure fair, reliable and consistent assessments.
- Deal with Appeals in accordance with the NVQ Centre Appeals Policy and under the direction of the Centre Co-ordinator.
- Attend and contribute to Standardisation Meetings.
- Maintain Centre records, as required. (Updating Candidate Progress Records, completing Internal Verification Reports, Internal Verification Summary Sheets and Reports on Observations of Assessors.)
- Attend meetings with the External Verifier, when requested by the Centre Co-ordinator.

## **ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE**

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'.

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
- Current, i.e. up to date with the demands of the curriculum and able to demonstrate that the learner is competent at the time
- Valid, i.e. directly related to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- Authentic, i.e. the result of the learner's own work.
- Validated by internal moderation/ standardisation and Awarding Bodies.

3. Evidence will be generated by the learner throughout the course and may be:

- Paper based: notes, reports, learning journals, essays, examinations etc..
- Non-paper based: evidence of role plays, videos, audio, witness statements, computer programmes, performance, oral questions and answers etc. There must be a transparent process for recording the evidence which clearly shows how judgements were made.
- A portfolio which is a collection of assessed evidence used to demonstrate achievement. This may be electronic if the relevant awarding body agrees.
- It will always be flexible, varied and appropriate.

## **RECORDING ASSESSMENT**

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

- to demonstrate the learner's progress towards the achievement of learning outcomes
- evaluating the learner progress ( useful to both learner and tutor)
- presentation to internal and external moderator/ verifiers/ assessors as evidence of Achievement

2. Assessment records map evidence of progress through the programme. It is the tutor's / assessor's responsibility to record assessed achievement and to track this against the learning outcomes. Learners must be fully advised and aware of any assessment requirements or regulations, including the opportunities to resubmit and of the appeals procedure.

3. The assessment record must be available to learners and staff for review throughout the duration of the course / programme

4. Evidence can be recorded in a number of ways but must be

- Tracked against the individual learner and achievement of the relevant outcomes
- Clearly structured
- Available for internal and external moderators at any point throughout the year

## **RETENTION OF ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE**

1. Retaining examples of assessment enables the monitoring of standards over a period of time (see Appendix 7 Retention of Records Containing Personal Data)
2. A minimum of 2 pieces of assessed work (or portfolios) per programme should be retained for a minimum of 3 years. Ideally these should be electronic copies and not the original work.
3. The work should be representative of the sampling and standardisation process used for internal moderation initially and subsequently submitted for moderation. They should be supported by internal and external moderation records to evidence the processes of sampling and standardisation.
4. Where retention of the assessed sample is impractical e.g. for Art and Design courses suitable photographic or equivalent records should be retained.

## **GOOD PRACTICE IN ASSESSMENT**

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