

Part I: Assessment and reassessment

1 Introduction

This document details requirements relating to the assessment and reassessment of student work for the purposes of grading. These requirements have been designed to ensure that:

- all Access to HE students have reasonable and equivalent opportunities to have their achievements formally recognised
- grades, credits and Access to HE Diplomas are awarded on an equivalent basis
- the number and type of opportunities for reassessment are limited and clearly defined
- the opportunity to be reassessed does not confer an undue advantage on those who achieve only after reassessment or diminish the achievements of those who achieve at the first attempt
- reassessment opportunities do not undermine confidence in the standard of the Access to HE Diploma
- account is taken of any extenuating circumstances affecting the student
- course tutors play a central role in making decisions about reassessment and tutor decisions about reassessment are confirmed through moderation
- opportunities for reassessment do not place unreasonable or unmanageable burdens on tutors or moderators
- assessment regulations are consistent with the broader principles and procedures for the award of credits and grades on the Access to HE Diploma.

2 Context

Before deciding on the grade indicators for any individual assignment, a tutor first decides if the learning outcomes for that assignment (whether these are all or only some of the learning outcomes for the unit) have been achieved. This decision is made by considering whether specified assessment criteria have been met. (See Part E, Annex 1.) Credits for the unit are awarded only when all the individual learning outcomes for the unit have been achieved. As a consequence, a student who does not achieve a single learning outcome in one unit might be unable to achieve the credits required for the award of the Access to HE Diploma. Additionally, if a unit's learning outcomes have not been achieved, no grades can be given for that unit, even when some parts of the assessed work show evidence of outstanding performance in areas assessed by the grade descriptors. Given this context, it is important to ensure that there are formally specified opportunities for reassessment in relation to the achievement of learning outcomes. It is equally important that such reassessment opportunities should be broadly proportionate to the initial non-achievement and should not result in penalties which undervalue or misrepresent students' actual achievement.

It is also important to ensure that reassessment opportunities maintain the distinction between the award of credit and the award of grades. If reassessment is needed because learning outcomes have not been achieved, a process which affected grades would be not only inappropriate but would also, in many instances, be unworkable. This is particularly the case where the assessment of a unit is spread across more than one assignment. As learning outcomes are not mapped to the grade descriptors for a unit (that is to say, it is not the learning outcomes that are graded, but performance that relates to the selected grade descriptors, also spread across the unit's assignments), it may prove impossible, for example, to establish appropriate grade indicators for work which had been resubmitted to demonstrate that a single learning outcome had been met.

3 Assessment regulations

Each Access Validating Agency (AVA) publishes and owns a set of assessment regulations which apply to all its validated Access to HE courses. AVAs' assessment regulations include, in full, the detailed specifications set out below. If AVAs provide regulations which are additional to those provided here, such regulations will not provide greater advantages, or limit opportunities, for students' achievement on a particular course or group of courses, or within the AVA as a whole.

3.1 Formal submission

Providers will:

- operate a formal approach to the submission of student work for assessment
- specify the approach to the submission of student work in standard course documentation (for example, in a course handbook)
- detail any particular requirements which relate to the submission of individual assignments/assessment tasks in writing (for example, on assignment briefing sheets)
- set deadlines for work to be submitted for formal assessment, and notify these to students in writing before the assignment is undertaken (for example, on assignment briefing sheets)
- ensure that each of the learning outcomes for each unit is formally assessed only once in that unit. (In units assessed by a single assignment, this is inevitable. The same principle applies where the learning outcomes are spread across more than one assignment for the assessment of the unit.)

3.2 Draft submissions

Providers will ensure that:

- where the tutor decides that, for particular assignments, students are to be offered the opportunity for drafts to be reviewed and for feedback to be provided, drafts may be submitted for tutors' consideration before the formal submission date: opportunities for the submission of drafts for comment are restricted to these particular assignments
- where the opportunity for the submission and discussion of drafts exists, this is specified to all students in writing (for example, on assignment briefing sheets)
- any written feedback that is given to a student after a draft has been considered will not include predicted grade indicators, or other detailed information about possible grading judgements
- once a formal submission has been made, neither the student nor tutor can later declare it to be a draft.

3.3 Successful submissions

A submission is successful when all the learning outcomes for the assessed work have been achieved. When a submission is successful it is eligible for grading and the following apply:

- grade indicators are given; unit grade profiles are created; and the unit grade is determined (for details of this process see Part F)
- unit grades or grade indicators given by the tutor cannot be adjusted by resubmission of all or part of the assessed work for a unit.

3.4 Unsuccessful submissions

A submission is unsuccessful when one or more of the learning outcomes for the assessed work has not been achieved. When a submission is unsuccessful it is not eligible for grading and the following apply:

- the original submission is returned to the student, with written feedback which explains which learning outcome(s) has/have not been achieved, and why
- the opportunity for resubmission is explained to the student
- the original submission is retained (by the student or tutor) for moderation purposes
- the particular requirements for resubmission are specified to the student. (See below.)

Resubmission requirements will:

a be proportionate to the degree of non-achievement

Normally, this will mean:

- **a matter of minor detail has been omitted**, so a single learning outcome has not been achieved: the resubmission requirements may ask for the submission of additional material
- **a particular skill has not been fully demonstrated**, so a single learning outcome has not been achieved: the resubmission requirements may address that one learning outcome and assess it in isolation (assessment criteria provide the means through which the achievement of learning outcomes is identified. Individual assessment criteria cannot be considered in isolation of the learning outcome to which they relate)
- **a number of learning outcomes have not been achieved**, or the non-achievement is deemed substantial in some other way: the resubmission requirements are likely to involve a full reconsideration and reworking of the assignment as a whole.

b be consistent with the way in which the learning outcome(s) were originally assessed

Normally, this will mean:

- the assessment method used for the resubmission is the same as that used for the original submission
 - **if it is not possible or practicable** for resubmission requirements to replicate the original assignment or assessment task (for example, some types of group work; or practical research), the (unmet) learning outcome(s) should be assessed through an assignment which makes comparable demands to those of the original submission
 - **if undue advantage** could be gained by resubmission of the same assignment or assessment task (for example, assessment through unseen tests or examination), an equivalent task should be devised to assess the same set (or sub-set) of original learning outcomes and/or the return of other students' work should be delayed until the resubmission has been made
 - **if the learning outcomes for a unit are distributed across more than one assignment**, the resubmission applies to the assignment for which learning outcomes have not been met, and grade indicators already awarded for any other assignments within the unit are unaffected: when the results of the resubmission are known, if the learning outcomes have been achieved, the full unit grade profile can be created and the unit grade determined
 - **if the assessment of learning outcomes for a unit is integrated** in an assignment which is also used for the assessment of learning outcomes for another unit, the focus of reassessment should be the particular unit for which learning outcomes were unmet at first submission: where learning outcomes that relate to a different unit have been achieved in the assignment, grades for that different unit are derived from the original assignment.

c be subject to a clear deadline for resubmission

Normally, this will be:

- as soon as possible after the feedback to the initial submission has been given
- practicable and reasonable for the specific resubmission requirements
- agreed and confirmed with the student
- appropriate for the stage reached in the course (wherever possible allowing reassessment to be completed before the final awards board. See Part J).

d be applied consistently in equivalent assessment situations, so that all students have equivalent opportunities for resubmission and reassessment.

e be subject to moderation

Moderation procedures relating to resubmission will:

- confirm that resubmission practices at course level are consistent with this guidance and the AVA's assessment regulations
- confirm the consistent application of resubmission practices across the provision for which the moderator has responsibility
- consider examples of resubmissions, accompanied by original submissions, and confirm consistency in tutors' assessment decisions relating to resubmission.

The same regulations apply to successful resubmissions as apply to successful first submissions, and grades are given accordingly.

3.5 Representations

The procedure for representations applies when a student asks for unconfirmed grade indicators to be reconsidered, after work has been graded but prior to moderation. (Changes made following moderation are subject to the AVA's moderation procedures.)

- If a student wishes to ask for reconsideration of one or more of the grade indicators given by a tutor for any individual assignment, he/she must do so at the earliest opportunity. This will normally be within one week of receiving the graded work.
- In the first instance, the tutor will discuss the assessed work with the student to explain the grading decisions made.
- If the student is not satisfied with the explanation and wishes to pursue a representation, the relevant student work will be considered by the internal moderator, or considered through such other alternative mechanisms as have been approved for the purpose by the AVA. A formal record of the representation will be made.
- If, as a result of this process, it is concluded that there is no case for regrading (that is, the tutor's original decision is confirmed), the student is informed of the decision, and the outcome is recorded on the formal record of the representation. Any appeal against this decision will be made through the appeals procedures that apply (see Part J, section 4.5). The formal record of the representation and its outcome will be available in any subsequent appeal.
- If the internal consideration concludes that an error of judgement has been made, the relevant assignment(s) is/are reassessed and new feedback, relating to any revised grade indicators, is provided. A copy of both the original and the revised feedback, with the revised grade indicators, must be retained. The outcome is recorded on the formal record of the representation.
- There is no prescribed format for the formal representation record, but it will include:
 - the date the representation is made
 - the nature of the representation
 - the nature of any change made

- the reason for the change or decision not to change
- the date the change is approved
- the name of the tutor responsible for the initial assessment and of the internal moderator (or other authorised person) who approved the change.
- The formal records of all representations will be considered by the external moderator, who will a) confirm that the representations process has been properly operated and b) may sample and review individual cases.

Under no circumstances may a tutor make any change to grade indicators or unit grades without the involvement of the internal moderator and without a formal record being made.

3.6 Administrative errors

This section relates to administrative errors that affect unit grades or grade indicators, which are identified prior to moderation. The circumstance in which this procedure is most likely to apply is if an error is identified by a student after graded work has been returned. A student would normally be expected to draw attention to such an error within one week of receiving the assessed work.

- If an administrative error has been made (for example, in the completion or calculation of the unit grade profile), the tutor will correct the error on the student's record (for example, assignment feedback sheet), indicating the nature of the error. The course leader (or equivalent) will provide formal authorisation for the change before the amended record is returned to the student. The correction of an administrative error and authorisation for any change will be included in the formal record of assessment outcomes.

Under no circumstances may a tutor make any change to grade indicators or unit grades, without the course leader (or equivalent) being involved and without a formal record being made.

3.7 Extensions and late submissions

Providers will ensure that:

- procedures and grounds for approval of an extension to a deadline are stated in the standard course documentation
- if work is submitted after the formal deadline has passed, and no extension has been granted (and there are no extenuating circumstances which explain the failure to request an extension), all grade indicators relating to that assignment (whether that be all or part of the assessment of the unit) are capped at 'pass'
- if an assignment is late and is unsuccessful, there is no opportunity for resubmission except via the referrals process (see Part J).

3.8 Referrals

There is only one opportunity for resubmission.¹ If the resubmission is unsuccessful (that is, the resubmitted work still does not meet the learning outcomes in full), the only means by which credit for the unit can be awarded (within the same registration period) is through referral to the awards board. Details of the referral process are provided in Part J.

¹ Except where extenuating circumstances have been identified.



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