Document Q6

ASSESSMENT POLICY

Approved by Academic Board – February 2016

Last Review: March 2020

Next Review: February 2019
1 The University of Law’s Assessment Policy has been informed by the Quality Assurance Agency’s Quality Code for Higher Education, specifically the Advice and Guidance on Assessment. The QAA’s Quality Code is the definitive reference point for all UK higher education institutions and sets out how academic standards are established and maintained and how the quality of learning opportunities are assured and enhanced. This policy sits within The University of Law’s Quality and Standards Code which provides a suite of policies designed to safeguard the academic standards of The University of Law and to assure the quality of learning opportunities offered; this policy should therefore be read in conjunction with other relevant policies within the code.

**Introduction**

2 This policy covers programmes or modules provided by the University of Law (the University) which are assessed by formative and summative assessment and the phrase ‘programme or module’ is used throughout this policy to denote respectively the whole, or a part, of the programme of study.

3 The University recognises that central to this policy is the University’s responsibility for the academic standards of all awards granted in its name and the quality of learning opportunities for students. In respect of summative assessment in particular, this policy sets the framework of expectations within which the University:

3.1 uses assessments to develop and recognise programme outcomes;

3.2 monitors and reviews the procedures and practices for the design, approval, monitoring and review of effectiveness of assessments;

3.3 if necessary, makes changes to ensure that assessments are fit for purpose and effectively carried out.

4 Where an assessment or assessment practice for a University programme or module is set by a Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) or other Accrediting Body or is otherwise outside the control of the University then the University delivers the assessment and complies with the specified assessment practice to the extent that it is lawful to do so. However if that assessment or assessment practice does not meet the expectations established under this policy, the University will make representations to the relevant PSRB or Accrediting Body in respect of this policy.
Responsibility for this policy

5 Ultimate responsibility for the development of clear and effective processes and procedures associated with the maintenance of standards and quality assurance of academic provision and overseeing their application lies with the Academic Board.

Expectation

6 The University has in place equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the award.

Key aims and principles

Key Aims

7 The University aims to provide all students with the opportunities to fulfil their potential and satisfy learning outcomes through suitable forms of assessment.

8 Depending on the programme and module the University uses appropriate forms of formative and summative assessment:

8.1 to help students achieve the stated learning outcomes of the relevant programme and/or module;

8.2 to measure the level of achievement of those learning outcomes;

Key principles

9 The key criterion for using a particular form of assessment is its effectiveness in accurately assessing the learning outcomes of the programme and module. Key features of the Assessment Policy are that:

9.1 Assessment practice promotes effective learning.

9.2 Formative assessment provides students with the opportunity to understand what is expected of them in the relevant summative
assessments, and reflect on their performance and how it can be maintained or improved.

9.3 Summative assessment provides each student with the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes at the relevant FHEQ level and to comply with any necessary PSRB or other Accrediting Body requirements.

9.4 Forms of assessment are subject to regular review, are responsive to developments in learning and teaching methods and any changes to arrangements are published in good time.

9.5 Forms of assessment, either in structure or in practice, do not treat any candidate less fairly than another in respect of current discrimination legislation.

9.6 Where an award is made, students must demonstrate that they meet the required standard for the classification of the award.

9.7 The design of each assessment and accompanying assessment criteria enable markers to differentiate between different grades of student performance in that assessment.

9.8 Where appropriate all prior learning is properly assessed and credited through the University’s Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and processes.

9.9 All programmes and modules and assessments are conducted in English and/or where necessary British Sign Language unless validated otherwise in whole or in part as set out in the Definitive Course Document.

Procedural approach

Key Procedures

10 To ensure that assessment strategies and practices take into account learning outcomes, the form of assessment, and resources of the University available to deliver the assessment, and meet the key aims and principles the Academic Board ensures that effective policies and procedures are maintained for:
10.1 The design, approval, monitoring and review of the assessment strategies for programmes and awards;

10.2 ensuring each element of any assessment is fit for purpose

10.3 ensuring that common and consistent standards are applied across all elements of each assessment to ensure that standards are set and maintained at an appropriate level and that the learning outcomes are properly considered;

10.4 ensuring that principles, procedures and processes of assessment are explicit, transparent, valid and reliable;

10.5 ensuring that there are robust mechanisms for marking and moderating marks, review by external examiners, appeals and classification of awards;

10.6 ensuring that assessments are conducted with rigour and fairness and with due regard for security, anonymity and confidentiality;

10.7 evaluating how academic standards are maintained through assessment practice that also encourages effective learning;

10.8 reporting to PSRBs or other Accrediting Bodies as required.

Alignment of programme design and assessment practice

11 The University ensures that each programme has an appropriate assessment strategy ensuring both formative and summative assessment is an integral part of programme design and ensures module assessment:

11.1 is defined in the programme specification;

11.2 is approved on validation of the programme;

11.3 meets the requirements of relevant PSRBs or other Accrediting Bodies;

11.4 demonstrates that as far as possible, generic learning outcomes of the programme and specific learning outcomes for the module are explicitly and appropriately tested through a variety of suitable methods;
11.5 provides for appropriate and timely feedback to students on formative and summative assessed work (including oral assessment) in a way that promotes learning and facilitates improvement;

11.6 by itself and through individual assessment design and processes seeks to reduce opportunities for students to plagiarise, collude or commit other forms of academic misconduct as far as possible;

11.7 includes students in an evaluation of formative and summative assessment practices used on the programme (e.g. through a programme questionnaire) and reflects on such evaluation;

11.8 operates to ensure that relevant assessments and assessment practices take into account suggestions made by or through the Academic Board to ensure necessary quality standards.

12 Each assessment (including the relevant assessment criteria and guidelines) for a programme/module is designed in accordance with policies and procedures to ensure that:

12.1 it is designed by a member of the academic staff trained and competent to do so;

12.2 it complies with the requirements of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and other external benchmarks;

12.3 it is consistent with the assessment strategy for the relevant programme or module;

12.4 it is accurate and assesses the programme outcomes

12.5 it takes into account any data collected by the Academic Registry as to the effectiveness of the assessment and the relative level of difficulty

12.6 it meets production processes and scrutiny standards.

13 Suitable training and development is made available to all staff to enable them to perform their duties in accordance with the key aims, procedures and principles set out in this policy.
Publication of information relating to assessments

14 To ensure principles, procedures for and processes of assessment are explicit, valid and reliable the University ensures that this policy and the following appropriate information is made available to students, staff, markers and external examiners on each programme and module on a timely basis; the learning outcomes to be assessed and the level at which each assessment element is to be assessed within the FHEQ and any relevant PSRB or other Accredit Body descriptors.

15 The Academic Board makes available a report as to the conduct of assessments and the reports of the external examiners for any programme or module via the virtual learning environment on at least an annual basis.

16 The use and application of these policies and protocols is regularly monitored and any material breaches acted upon. They must also be reported to the relevant Board of Examiners or Awards Board and to the Academic Board, which if necessary investigates to ensure that any necessary action has been taken to ensure as far as possible that such a breach does not occur again.

Assessment and award regulations

17 The University publishes clear regulations for progressing through each programme and qualifying for an award.

18 The Academic Board ensures that the policies and protocols are reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure the maintenance of standards and to respond to relevant comments from students, external examiners, tutors, markers and others which in the opinion of the Academic Board merit it. All updates are approved by the Academic Board.

19 As a minimum, a set of Assessment Regulations, together with explanatory information and advice, is published to each student upon joining the programme in the Student Handbook and is also accessible via the virtual learning environment thereafter.

20 The Assessment Regulations:

20.1 are approved by the Academic Board on validation and/or
Assessment Policy

20.2 are approved as a minor or major modification to the programme in the event of any changes to the type of assessments to which the Regulations relate.

21 Assessment Regulations are reviewed annually by the Academic Registry, working with programme teams, to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. The review takes into account evaluation received from students, University staff and external examiners as well as relevant guidance through other relevant sources including the QAA and relevant PSRBs or other Accrediting Bodies.

22 The University takes reasonable steps to ensure that students are notified of all amendments via the virtual learning environment on a timely basis.

23 All Assessment Regulations and policies, procedures and protocols relevant for assessment are made available to University staff on a timely basis via the virtual learning environment.

Feedback on assessments

24 Students receive appropriate and timely feedback on assessed work that promotes learning.

25 The nature, extent and timing of feedback for each designated formative assessment task are made clear to students in advance.

Boards of Examiners and Awards Boards

26 The University implements effective, clear and consistent policies for the membership, procedures, powers and accountability of assessment panels, Boards of Examiners and Awards Boards and publishes that information.

27 All interim marks, assessment results and awards must be approved by a Board of Examiners and/or Awards Board, the composition, membership and conduct of which meet the requirements set out in programme assessment regulations and protocols determined and approved by the Academic Board, and which meet all PSRB or other Accrediting Body requirements.

28 Full details of the composition and membership of the Boards of Examiners and Awards Boards are available to all students and staff through the virtual learning environment.
The Academic Board, working with the Academic Registry, is responsible for the maintenance of Board of Examiners and Awards Board protocols and for programme Assessment Regulations, which define the role and responsibilities of Boards of Examiners and Awards Boards. Anonymity of candidates is maintained at all Boards of Examiners and Awards Boards.

Conduct of assessments

The University seeks to ensure that students adopt good practice in respect of assessment and seeks to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities.

Students are informed of their responsibilities regarding conduct in assessments and the consequences of breach (i) at the beginning of the course in the Assessment Regulations, (ii) in the Student Discipline Regulations supplied on enrolment, and (iii) subsequently as necessary in advance of particular assessments by email and/or on the virtual learning environment.

The University, as necessary and appropriate, uses plagiarism detection systems to monitor and investigate collusion or plagiarism in non-supervised written assessment submission, and all students are informed of this.

The Academic Registry is responsible for maintaining the student record database, ensuring that information relating to awards is properly calculated and recorded and undertakes such reasonable checks as are necessary.

The Academic Registry is responsible for the prompt publication of results to students.

Responsibility for Monitoring and evaluation of the provision

Responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Assessment Policy rests with the Academic Executive.

Date for next review

February 2019
# Assessment Policy

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