

Assessment Policy

1. Policy Statement

The policy provides a comprehensive statement of the principles and processes that govern the design and management of learner assessment within GSS. It establishes principles, processes and good practice in all aspects of the management of Learner assessment. It is, therefore, an essential reference point for course teams, particularly in relation to the design of assessment strategies at course and module level, and the quality assurance of assessment from the approval of items of assessment through to the standardisation and moderation of learner work. The policy indicates those matters where responsibility is devolved to Awarding bodies – usually within a framework of minimum requirements, and those matters where GSS determined processes apply.

2. Principles and Objectives

GSS believes that assessment is an integral part of effective learning process, and has established the following principles for the design and management of assessment practice.

- Each module/unit or course element will have an assessment strategy which is aligned with the intended learning outcomes and learning activities
- Assessment practices should be inclusive and support equality of opportunity. They shall cater for both individual and group diversity. In addition inclusive language shall be used, avoiding gender, racial, cultural or other language bias.
- All stated learning outcomes for a module/unit/course element will be summatively assessed via assessment activities that are reliable, valid and authentic and take into consideration different learning styles
- Assessments will enable learners to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes of the module(s)/units/course elements and the overall aims and learning outcomes of their course or programme of studies and achieved the standard required for the award
- Courses delivered will include a variety of assessment types and an appropriate balance of assessment for summative and formative purposes
- Evidence of having achieved all the learning outcomes that make up eg; each OCN accredited course will be generated by the learner and assessed by the tutor
- There can be many different forms in which evidence may be presented for assessment such as:
 1. Notes of tutor observation
 2. Completed questionnaires
 3. Essays
 4. CD/DVD
 5. Web/blog or social media pages
 6. Case studies
 7. Photos or creative evidence

- Information about assessment, including the details of assignments and due dates for submission, schedules for examinations, assessment or grading criteria, plus assessment regulations and arrangements for publication of results where these are course specific, will be published at the start of the academic year or semester (or other defined teaching period) in which the course commences using appropriate media. This information will also include information on feedback on the processes and results of assessments.
- All courses will ensure learners are provided with opportunities to develop an understanding of, and the necessary skills to demonstrate, good academic practice
- The scheduling and amount of assessment will be manageable for students and assessed regularly for this.
- Constructive, timely and relevant feedback will be an integral part of the assessment process
- Assessment processes and regulations will be transparent, consistent and equitable across courses
- Assessment processes and outcomes will be monitored and evaluated through the annual monitoring process.
- All course participants have the right to appeal against assessment decisions as set out in GSS Appeals Policy.

3. Assessment Management

GSS will ensure that the process of assessment will be managed in accordance with the requirements of the accrediting body and in line with any Government restrictions regarding health and safety.

Staff responsible for a course assessment must exercise their professional judgement in using a variety of assessment methods that are relevant, valid, fair and appropriate to the aims and objectives of the course.

The planning, management and assessment strategy utilised by staff must match the information given in any relevant qualification guide

GSS Management team must ensure that records of learner achievements are logged and maintained in accordance with GSS Confidential and Data protection policies. Assessment records are confidential files and will be retained by GSS for 5 years then disposed of securely. Please also see '*GSS IT and Data Security Policy*'

Trainers will be responsible for sharing the learning outcomes and assessment criteria with learners, recording assessment, giving on-going feedback and for ensuring that all learners have equal opportunities for their assessments to be assessed.

Trainers will give guidance to the learner where there are choices regarding assessment to help encourage and develop their opportunities.

4. Recording and archiving of Assessment Results

Assessment results will be held in accordance with the Awarding bodies recommendation and in conjunction with GSS Information and Data Security Policy and Confidentiality Policy.

Learners hold the intellectual property inherent in all work produced for assessments, but the material produced by Learners for assessments is the property of GSS and may be retained pending confirmation of marks awarded by the Awarding body, possible appeals and quality audits.

GSS will however endeavour to return to all Learners assessed work whenever a learner explicitly requests this.

All information will be kept for a minimum of 3 years in accordance with the Data protection policy and the information and Data Security Policy.

5. Assessment Plans

Learners will take a gradual and cumulative step to learning with qualitative changes taking place throughout the process. For this reason assessment plans for courses should enable the teaching staff to engage in both formative and summative assessments.

There may be different types of assessment as outline under the Principles and Objectives, however there are five broad assessment types most commonly used

- Examinations
- Assignments
- Observational assessments
- Assessments based on performance, presentation, creation or discussion
- Assessment based on research

With each of the above assessment types a number of details assessment types can be used in course assessment plans which must be specified at the outset for the learner.

Assessment types must be equivalent when the course is offered in different learning modes.

The assessment plan for a course must include the assessment type, number, due date and assessment and marking criteria for each item of the assessment criteria and must be shared with the learner.

Assessment plans, activities and materials will be designed in conjunction with the awarding body and will follow strict guidelines as determined by them. GSS's Management team will take responsibility for ensuring that the criteria given by the awarding body is adhered to and will work in conjunction with the Quality team and Course Manager(s) to ensure the structure, processes and implementation of the assessment plans meet the protocols given.

6. Assessment/Moderation Processes

Learners will be provided with written assessment guidelines describing the nature of the task, the format of the presentation and the assessment criteria for all items of assessment/moderation. This would normally take the form of an assignment or assignment brief and will provide clear instructions/information to the learner on what they are expected to do, how they are expected to go about this and how their work will be marked.

Assessment criteria should be subject to internal and external scrutiny in order to assure academic standards are consistent

GSS will operate a variety of practices in relation to assessment/moderation to ensure accuracy and consistency of marking including:

- **Marking standardization exercises** - a group of assessors all independently mark a sample of pieces of learners work and assign grades using agreed criteria, compare and discuss the outcomes.
- **Blind double marking** – Two separate assessors each independently assess a piece of learner work, assigning a mark and providing comments which justify the marks in relation to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Both examiners record their marks and comments separately and then compare marks and resolve differences to produce an agreed mark.
- **Non-blind double marking** – an assessor will mark and comment on a piece of work and then a second assessor also assigns a mark and comments.
- **Second Marking/Verification** – An assessor marks and comments on a piece of work and then a second assessor the reviews the mark and comments in order to confirm (or not) the mark awarded.

GSS will ensure consistency as much as possible by encouraging and facilitating Assessor meetings, discussions, training and sharing materials to encourage the assessment of learner work at the same level.

Students who believe that their assessment performance has been affected by mitigating circumstances of that feel they have not been marked in accordance to GSS's and the awarding bodies assessment criteria may bring forward claims for consideration by a Mitigation committee or GSS Management. Such claims must be submitted and considered according to the procedures detailed in the 'Appeals Policy'.

7. Sharing Work

Learners will be encouraged to share ideas and derive mutual support when preparing non-assessed work but this should be managed so that work for formal assessments only shows the individual learners work.

Learners will be advised that plagiarism should be avoided and should acknowledge all sources of external work as they go along and that all work completed is their own.

If a Trainer, Assessor, or verifier or moderator suspects that a piece of work submitted is not the learners own the trainer shall meet with the learner to talk through the discrepancies in the first instance. The meeting should be recorded and outcome in writing should be submitted to the internal verifier and or Management for their thoughts and recommendations.

If it is found that a learner has plagiarised another's work they may be invited in to re-do and re-submit that particular piece of work for assessment, or depending on the circumstances may be further investigated with regard to possible malpractice (please see GSS Malpractice policy)

GSS will investigate all cases of alleged 'cheating' and where upheld will impose penalties as appropriate which may include preclusion/removal from the course, non-marked work and or exclusion from GSS run courses in their entirety.

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9. Assessors/Teaching Qualifications

In line with GSS own Staffing Policy all staff must be duly qualified to the recommended standard as per the awarding body in order to be able to assess any work as given by the Learner.

All Teaching staff will be required to hold a national teaching qualification such as

- PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education)
- AET, DET or equivalent (Pttls or Dttls) or higher
- QCF Level 3 Assessor qualification or equivalent or higher

External Verifiers must also be duly qualified and accredited by the awarding body to the appropriate verification level.

(Please see point 5. Recruitment of Staffing Policy)

10. Monitoring and Reviewing this Policy

This policy will be reviewed in response to changes in legislation and within the setting

Outside of the above point this policy will be reviewed annually and objectively and any changes, made will be disseminated to all staff equally.



Signed Sonia Benjamin-Leach
(Director)
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