



Assessment & Verification Policy & Procedures

Aims and Objectives of the policy

Aims

European College of Law is committed to ensuring that standards of assessment are consistent, transparent and in line with the requirements of our awarding organisations. The way students' work is assessed must serve to achieve the stated learning objectives of the programmes we offer and facilitate the achievement of our students' qualification and their wider development.

Objectives

To assess students' work with integrity by being consistent and transparent in our assessment judgments and processes so that the outcomes are fair, reliable and valid.

To ensure that assessment standards and specifications are implemented fully so that no risk is posed to the reputation of the awarding organisations or the qualifications we offer.

To establish quality control and recording mechanisms for assignments and their assessment through a system of sampling, internal verification as appropriate to the requirements of the programmes.

Range and scope of the policy

The range of the policy covers all programmes for Level 3 and beyond.

Assessment

Internal Assessment is defined as the process where staff makes judgments on evidence produced by learners against required criteria for the qualifications awarded by relevant awarding organisations. All assessment materials must be internally verified before being issued to students.

Completed assignments will be assessed and internally verified. External verification takes place once in a year by the awarding respective awarding organisations.

Any grade awarded will be subject to internal and/or external verification and the release of certification rests with the awarding organisation subject to a successful EV report.

The Assessor is responsible for ensuring that assessment processes are consistent and transparent, that evidence is valid, sufficient and authentic and that judgment of evidence is valid and reliable.

Formative feedback is given on the sample work of students. This helps student to be confident that they can produce their work at the right level or make an improvement if the formative feedback identifies some weaknesses or not at the level of achieving at least a pass grade.

Students submit their assignments to the College by the deadlines set at the start of the course. Anybody failing to submit their assignment on time they must follow the late submission guidelines to avoid any disappointment of their work is not assessed. Each student signs the declaration form to confirm that the work is their own.

Responsibility of teachers/assessors

Set tasks which allow students to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do. Give students opportunities to achieve the highest possible grades on their courses.

Perform assessments and provide constructive feedback to students that they meet the requirements of the assessment criteria and learning outcomes of the assessed module;

Provide accurate, timely and informative assessment feedback to inform students of what was evidenced that they met the assessment criteria and also notify what they need to do to improve further in particular areas of weakness.

Use learning/command verbs in their assessment feedback appropriately to notify that the students have achieved the assessment criteria correctly

Record assessment decisions correctly and systematically using an agreed template of feedback sheet.

Be aware of and keep up-to-date with awarding organisation guidance in respect of assessment, standardisation and verification

Ensure that the quality of assessment is assured by following the guidance in the College assessment and internal verification policy.

Internal Verification

The Internal Verification is at the heart of the quality assurance. This is to ensure that the assessment is done consistently to meet the academic standards and can also lead to staff development and quality improvement.

Each course will have an identified Internal Verifier (IV) who is not otherwise involved in the assessing or setting of work for the course.

Internal Verifiers will have the knowledge and expertise for which they are responsible to enable accurate judgments to be made with regard to the assignment brief and the student performance in relation to the assessment guidelines.

Internal Verifier (IV)

The Internal Verifiers verify all sampled assignments, record their comments and passed onto the assessors. The Internal Verifiers including the Lead Internal Verifier sit in the exam board and share any concerns or training needs and make recommendation to the Academic Committee.

The College has developed an internal pro-forma for assessment and feedback. The effectiveness of the feedback must meet the needs of the UK Quality Code for HE (Section B6 and its indicators). For the internal verification, the marked assessments, along with a copy of the assessment guidelines and the assessment pro-forma are submitted to the internal verifier. Internal Verifiers are given criteria for verification based upon the awarding organisation's requirements and the College's assessment and internal verification policy.

The internal verifier checks that the assessors have used the appropriate assessment criteria and methodology as required by the College and awarding organisation. The internal verifier samples the assessments for compliance and also checks for any discrepancies in the awarding of marks for individual assessments between assessors. In the event that there are discrepancies or non-compliance with guidelines, the Internal Verifier will seek to resolve the issues with the assessors. The Internal Verifiers report to the Lead Internal Verifier (if applicable), and refer any unresolved matters to them as part of the Internal Verification report.

Once the assessments have been internally verified, they are presented to the Examination and Assessment Sub Committee for approval. Once it is approved they are then recorded on the progress report spreadsheet. The final assessments are then submitted for external verification by the awarding organisation, in the required formats.

Role of Internal Verifier

Planning

Monitor that the IV schedule covers all units and all assessors on a programme

Co-ordinate assessment arrangements

Internally verify all assignment briefs before issued them to students.

Implementation

Ensure an effective system of recording learner achievement is in place.

Advise on opportunities for evidence generation and collection.

Keep records of the verification process for 3 years after certification.

Liaise with external verifiers.

Assessment / Internal verification

Provide advice and support to assessors on a regular basis.

Use assessment guidelines to verify assessors' judgments and the quality of the feedback.

Check the quality of assessment to ensure that it is consistent, fair and reliable.

Give feedback to assessors and identify action to be taken where appropriate.

Follow up

Ensure appropriate corrective action is taken when assignment briefs are not fit for purpose or when assessment decisions are not accurate.

Take part in the formal stages of any appeal.

Advise programme team on any training needs.

Standardisation

Standardisation of assessment must take place when there is more than one assessor engaged in assessing assignments of one unit.

Standardisation meetings take place at the beginning of each semester where the standards and processes are discussed to maximise consistency between courses and their assessments. The objective of the standardisation of the marking of assessments is to determine standards associated with designated criteria.

Standardisation meetings are used to develop quality and consistency of assessment across assessors involved in different units across a programme or different programmes. Provisions are made available to share examples of 'best practice' and areas of concern.

Assignment Briefs

The Course tutors will draft initial assignment briefs for relevant modules and submitted to the Internal Verifier and/or Lead Internal Verifier for approval. Internal Verifier may refer initial briefs back to tutors for clarification and/or amendment where appropriate. For ATHE the College will use the ATHE assignment briefs.

An assignment brief is produced based on the content and the defined learning outcomes of the module. This is then internally verified by the named internal verifier to check if this is developed in line with the learning outcome and assessment criteria and therefore the brief is fit for purpose.

This is then distributed to the students and explained to them in the class to ensure that they are clear about the criteria they are expected to meet and that they are fully briefed on the skills which need to be demonstrated in their assignments.

College records the outcomes of assessment on a progress record sheet. Assignments, assessments and the associated records will be held secure for at least three years. Associated IV records should also be kept, to support and verify the decisions that were made for the cohort.

The assessment decisions are discussed at the Examination and Assessment sub Committee and Academic Committee meetings for necessary action and/or approval. Once learners achieve their desired grade their certifications will be claimed from the relevant awarding organisations.

All assignment briefs must conform to the requirements of the awarding body and College procedures. This process will ensure each brief is fit for purpose and that:

- the tasks and evidence will allow the learner to address the targeted criteria;
- it is written in clear and accessible language;
- the learner's role and tasks are vocationally relevant and appropriate to the level of the qualification;
- equal opportunities are incorporated.

Lead Internal Verifier

The lead Internal Verifier will act as the point of sign-off for the assessment and internal verification of all assignment based programmes.

Lead Internal Verifiers' Responsibility

The Lead Internal Verifier will:

- be responsible for authorising the final version of the assignment brief;
- Ensure that there is an assessment and verification plan for the programmes are fit for purpose and meet awarding organisation requirements;
- Undertake some internal verification and/or assessment for individual units within at least one of the programmes, where possible;
- Ensure that records of assessment and samples of learner work are being retained for use with External Verification if necessary;
- Liaise with the External Verifier to ensure that appropriate sampling takes place, if and when sampling is required;
- Make arrangements for handover to a deputy or replacement if unable to carry out the role.

The Internal Verifier has the responsibility for ensuring that the briefs are distributed to the students in accordance with the agreed timetable. It is also the responsibility of the Internal Verifier for the College, to act as a conduit for information from awarding organisations to course teams to ensure standardisation of processes and documentation across the programmes.

Assignment Submission Procedure

For the assignment based modules, learners are required to submit their assignments within the submission window as mentioned in the Academic Calendar. They need to submit through the anti-plagiarism software. The College will not accept any assignment with more than 20% similarities recorded in the device.

Students, who fail to submit their assignments within the set deadline of the submission window, are not allowed to submit them unless they provide the College with valid reasons and proper evidence.

Submitted assignments will be assessed within the period ear marked in the Academic Calendar.

If students get "referral" for a module, they need to resubmit their revised/amended assignment(s) at the following submissions dates together with the assignments for other

units. The revised improved version is to be produced in line with the suggested assessment feedback and submitted within two weeks. Only one re-submission is allowed for a unit.

Late Submission

Students submitting their assignments late will be subject to a fine and cannot be awarded a merit or distinction grade. Students submitting late are required to pay a late fee of £100.00 (one hundred pounds). Referred students will pay £30.00 (Thirty pounds) per subject.

Mitigating Circumstances

Students may apply for special consideration if their performance in an assessment item was seriously affected or they were seriously disadvantaged when the assessment item was attempted. Circumstances might include illness, accident, disability or bereavement.

An application for special consideration is applicable only where the assessment item has been attempted. Where a student is unable to attempt the assessment item, the student may apply for deferred assessment or an extension of time to submit an assignment. The application will be assessed at the Academic Committee to obtain an approval.

Requests for special consideration must be made in writing and accompanied by appropriate documentary evidence. The request must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the date of the final submission.

Internal verification of assignment briefs

This is to verify the brief is fit for purpose by ensuring:

The tasks and evidence will allow the learner to address the targeted criteria.

It is written in a clear and accessible language.

The tasks are relevant to the learning outcomes and appropriate to the level of the qualification.

Equal opportunities are incorporated.

The Internal Verifier should check that the assignment brief:

- has accurate unit details
- has accurate programme details
- has clear deadlines for assessment
- shows all relevant assessment criteria for the unit(s) covered in the assignment
- indicates relevant assessment criteria targeted against each task
- clearly states what evidence the learner needs to provide
- is likely to generate evidence which is appropriate and sufficient

- is set at the appropriate level
- has a time period of appropriate duration
- uses suitable vocational language
- has a clear presentation format.

The outcome of internal verification should be recorded on the form and if any action is identified by the internal verifier, the assessor should complete this and return it to the internal verifier for sign off. Once the assignment is verified as fit for purpose, it is issued to the students.

Internal verification of assessment decisions

A sample of assessed work from every unit, every student and every assessor must be internally verified to check the accuracy of assessment.

Relevant internal verification templates are used showing accurate record of programmes, unit and assignment title, assessor and learner names, and include the following questions:

- Which assessment and grading criteria has the assessor awarded?
- Have the learner and assessor confirmed the authenticity of the evidence?
- Do the assessment criteria awarded match those targeted by the brief?
- Has the work been assessed accurately?
- Does the assessment feedback to the learner:
 - Link to relevant assessment criteria?
 - Justify each assessment criterion awarded?
- Does the assessment decision need amending?

Sampling

The College performs quality check samples of marking from each tutor. The College usually samples at least 30% of the assessed assignments taking into consideration that each student, each module and each assessor is covered. On top about 80% extra samples are taken from the higher grades of merits and distinction if they are not covered already within the sampled assignments. This is more than enough to cover for intermediate assessors although the College uses only experienced assessors to maintain the quality.

The internal verifiers need to ensure that they implement the requirements of

- every student are the subject of sampling for each assessment cycles;
- every assessor are sampled for every unit/module; Plus
- 80% each higher grade achievers are sampled if they are not already covered.

Authentication of Candidate's Work

On each assignment students must sign that the work submitted is their own and teachers / assessors should confirm that the work assessed is solely that of the candidate concerned and was conducted under required conditions.

If the student hands in an assignment and teachers suspect it is not the student's own work, the matter should be reported to the Internal Verifier, who must proceed in accordance with the College's Academic Misconduct policy guidance.

Internal verifiers are responsible for:

Verifying assignment briefs prior to the distribution to students

Developing the skills of assessors, especially those are new to assessment

Maintaining the consistency of assessment decisions by holding standardisation meetings, if required

The responsibility of Admin Office

To facilitate the IV process

To meet the deadlines for registering students with the awarding organisation

To ensure that awarding organisation database is kept up to date with timely withdrawal or transfer of learners

To claim certificates as soon as appropriate

To claim unit certification when a learner has not been able to complete the full programme of study

External Verification Process and Dealing with the EV Reports

Learners submit their assignments at the specified time in line with the Academic Calendar and Curriculum Plan at the end the planned taught course. These assignments are then assessed by our assessors/teachers based on the marking scheme as set up by the awarding organisations. Assignments are then sampled for internal verification to ensure that the assessments are correct reflecting the learning outcomes. The results will be recorded in a database to track student progression.

The nominated external verifiers from the awarding organisations are invited to make a visit to conduct the external verification process. This is to make sure that the centre complies with the awarding organisation requirements on assessment. After the visit, the External Verifier (EV) produces a report for the centre.

The report is discussed in detail with the assessors and at the Academic Committee. An Action plan is developed to deal with the issues raised by the EV and the actions are implemented according to the plan. This is then reported back to the Academic Committee and the EV at the following visit.

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Version 2