

# Coventry University Group Assessment Strategy

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## Headlines

The assessment strategy sets out the purpose and value of formative and summative assessment across Coventry University Group. It is closely aligned to the Education Strategy and the Corporate Goals.

The university is committed to a course-based approach across all aspects of student education. This has proved to be very effective for the student experience and we therefore intend to include this principle in our assessment approach. Ownership and accountability for assessment is firmly placed within course teams, supported by faculty and central university services.

The principles and objectives in this strategy are to be applied by teams at course level. A course level assessment strategy will be included in all new course approval events, course reviews and added into existing courses. Ongoing modifications (major or minor) will have to provide commentary on effects to assessment.

Coventry University principles of assessment have been put into place to enable any and all students to reach their potential. The ten principles are:

1. Undergraduate student progression from assessment *as* learning in level one to assessment *of* learning at level 3
2. Every course will include one or more integrative assessment points
3. Synergy of assessment between each level of study and course stage
4. Transparent and simple assessment points with no prescribed minimum or maximum number of assessments
5. Identified course stage assessment outcomes
6. Formative and summative assessment points in all courses
7. All assessments enable equal attainment opportunities for all students; whether home or overseas and regardless of socio-economic background or ethnicity
8. Standard maximum marking turnaround times for each level of study
9. Early and ongoing feedback, including course feedback and feedforward for individual students and groups
10. The opportunity for an individual mark as a contribution of every assessment

Course teams will provide an assessment strategy that can demonstrate these principles and through the completion of a comprehensive schedule of assessment points that includes:

- Integrative assessment(s)
- Justification of the type and number of assessment points
- Online assessment opportunities to enhance a rich learning experience
- Proportion / split of formative and summative assessment points
- Application of equal attainment opportunities
- First feedback point identified (within the first four weeks of a course)
- Progress against course and level learning outcomes

Note: A course assessment strategy may apply to a single course or a cluster of courses.

The university principles of assessment are benchmarked against the QAA Quality Code (section B6) expectations and with reference to HEA publication “A Marked Improvement” and QAA “Sustainable Development” documents. Good practice has been drawn from the sector to maximise innovation provide a space to challenge convention for the next six years.

Assessment is not an end point of learning, but part of the learning process. Robust practices enable students to access feedforward mechanisms and demonstrate their skills and understanding against course learning outcomes. These are also aligned to problem-solving expectations in the workplace.

Assessment should provide opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement of graduate outcomes in the core areas of global citizenship, environmental stewardship, social justice, ethics and well-being. In this context, it is also likely to involve:

- formative tasks that enable the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- opportunities to apply these skills to real-world problems
- synoptic assessments that explore the relationship between students' main academic discipline and sustainability
- activities that encourage affective learning in the domains of values, attitudes and behaviours.

#### *QAA Sustainable Development*

Higher education provides opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills, communication, intercultural competency and team working and our assessment formats will take these into consideration to develop students beyond factual knowledge, to advance their learning and demonstrate their potential.

The most effective assessment reflects student performance across a period of time. There is a need for summative assessment points, however these must be seen as ongoing and not episodic, providing iterative loops of learning.

How students have achieved their formative and summative grades should be clearly communicated as part of feedback given to students, so that they understand how they can improve their own performance.

## **Implications**

The commitment to and application of the principles will effect a step change in some of our processes.

Areas of change or enhancement include:

- A course level assessment plan
- Staff development: in particular the development of integrative assessment points
- Feedback showing individual student progression tracked through course levels using a variety of data measures (e.g. a scorecard approach)
- Changes to developmental feedback, both in turnaround and content.
- Increased and planned formative assessments tuned to support module and course learning outcomes, diminishing as students progress through learning levels
- Clarity to students of assessments without elements
- New and innovative formats included in university standards
- A gradual transfer of responsibility for the monitoring of learning to students, so that they are equipped to become autonomous learners
- Regular opportunities for students to discuss their individual assessment achievement with academic staff

- Specific preparation activities for international students who may be uncertain of university assessment practices
- Defined course level outcomes as part of course specification and approval processes

## Student Foci

Students enrolling at Coventry University will have experienced a vast array of previous assessment methods. The perception of assessments is the driving force for the majority of higher education students and their learning is focussed on compliance with assessment requirements. They fully understand that to achieve their award, they must understand the university assessment regime.

Course teams must improve the clarity and explicit intentions for every assessment point. Student can then apply themselves to the assessment task to maximise their opportunities for success. They will study most effectively when they understand what is expected of them.

In their first year at the university, assessments can be used to give reassurance and motivation, with a number of small assessment points and a greater proportion of formative assessments to familiarise students with our expectations. Computer-based assessments are able to provide instant feedback to enable a student to learn and improve.

The assessment methods selected for the course should be used across all levels, again allowing students to improve and show learning gain. Therefore, course teams should not introduce a new assessment method in the final stages of a course.

As students progress through a course they move towards assessment of their learning, skills and knowledge. There is an expectation that assessment has a value and meaning, is clear and unambiguous, authentic and relevant. Students will engage with assessments that illuminate 'hot topics' and can be applied to solving real-world problems. In the final stages of their course, an assessment point emphasises deep learning and is relevant to their professional futures. It is expected that the proportion of formative assessment points will decrease and the number of assessments will be fewer.

The assessment strategy has been developed to support the principal pillars of transformative learning which are:

- Research inspired teaching
- Embedded employability
- Creativity and Enterprise
- Intercultural and international engagement
- Community contribution and responsibility
- Innovation and digital fluency

This focus can be applied at course level to achieve the university targets of:

- NSS maintained at least at 92% and within the top decile
- DHLE moving from 72% to 85% of our students in graduate level employment
- Students declaring at least 75% of their classes to have been taught passionately
- Attainment across all socio-economic and ethnic groups to be equal
- Student engagement with the wider university community for career enhancing purposes to have reached 95%

## Quality Code

## Mapping of Assessment Strategy

The application of effective and efficient assessments at course level reinforces the course approach that the university subscribes to and maximises our resources without compromising academic rigour, integrity or course quality. The objectives of the strategy ensure that assessment is central to the excellent education experience of our students and that they can demonstrate their achievement and learning gain against standard higher education benchmarks.

Assessment	QAA Part B: Chapter B6 Indicators
1. Undergraduate student progression from assessment <i>as</i> learning in level one to assessment <i>of</i> learning at level 3	5, 7, 8, 9
2. Every course will include one or more integrative assessment points	8
3. Synergy of assessment between each level of study and course stage	5, 8
4. Transparent and simple assessment points with no prescribed minimum or maximum number of assessments	6
5. Identified course stage assessment outcomes	5, 8
6. Formative and summative assessment points in all courses	7, 9
7. All assessments enable equal attainment opportunities for all students; whether home or overseas and regardless of socio-economic background or ethnicity	10
8. Maximum marking turnaround times agreed at each level of study	8, 9
9. Early and ongoing feedback, including course feedback and feedforward for individual students and groups	6, 7, 8, 9
10. The opportunity for an individual mark as a contribution of every assessment	6

### QAA Part B: Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning

Indicator 5	Assessment and feedback practices are informed by reflection, consideration of professional practice, and subject-specific and educational scholarship.
Indicator 6	Staff and students engage in dialogue to promote a shared understanding of the basis on which academic judgements are made.
Indicator 7	Students are provided with opportunities to develop an understanding of, and the necessary skills to demonstrate, good academic practice.
Indicator 8	The volume, timing and nature of assessment enable students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes.
Indicator 9	Feedback on assessment is timely, constructive and developmental.
Indicator 10	Through inclusive design wherever possible, and through individual reasonable adjustments wherever required, assessment tasks provide every student with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievement.