

Assessment and Feedback Policy

DMU Education Academy

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Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is designed to ensure the transparent, equitable and consistent practice of assessment, moderation and feedback at DMU.
- 1.2 Guidance on assessment design can be found in the associated policy documentation on course design and approval.
- 1.3 Throughout the policy, assessment and feedback practices are understood as reciprocal, enabling the learner to derive insights on their performance and progress and the teacher to derive insights on how their teaching is being experienced and might best be adapted to the learner's profile and approach.
- 1.4 For colleagues assessing on apprenticeship provision, the policy should be read in conjunction with the University's End Point Assessment (EPA) Policy.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The policy applies to all provision within the University's taught academic portfolio that leads to the award of credit, including apprenticeships, credit-bearing short courses and taught academic provision delivered at DMU Leicester, DMU London, DMU Dubai, and in collaboration with UK and Transnational Education (TNE) collaborative partners (collectively referred to as 'branch campuses and partners' in this policy).

3. Glossary

- 3.1 **Academic misconduct** is an instance where, under the University's **Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy**, a student has been found to have acted in a manner intended to evade and undermine the University's processes for rigour and fair assessment (e.g. plagiarism, cheating, collusion, copying work and self-plagiarism).
- 3.2 **Anonymous marking** is the practice of assessing students' work without the marker having access to the students' names. Some assessment tasks cannot be anonymously marked, for example performances and the production of artefacts and this should be made clear to students in module specifications and handbooks.
- 3.3 **Assessment weightings** define how much each module assessment output contributes to the final module mark. For example, a module's assessment weightings might be as follows: essay 30%, portfolio 70%.
- 3.4 **Calibration** is the process of a marking team convening at an early stage of the assessment process (e.g. when 10% of the total submissions has been marked) to sense

- check and align their marker judgements and their understanding of the marking criteria in relation to the learning outcomes.
- 3.5 **Coursework** is the generic term for assessment tasks which are not formal examinations.
- 3.6 **Double marking** is where an assessment task is marked independently (i.e. without seeing each other's and comments) by both a first and second marker.
- 3.7 **Exam/examination** – a time-limited assessment usually occurring at the end of the module. Exams can be *seen*, where students are provided with the question(s) in advance, or *unseen* and *closed book* or *open book* where reference materials are prohibited or permitted respectively.
- 3.8 **External examiners** are subject experts appointed from other universities or from industry to approve assessment tasks and review samples of assessed students' work, commenting on the operation of the assessment process and the quality of feedback provided. They ensure that the standard of the University's awards are comparable to those granted by other institutions and confirm that they comply with national threshold standards and that the assessment of students is fair.
- 3.9 **Feedback** is the process of sharing evaluative insight with students either orally or in writing on the assessments they have submitted. Feedback is intended to explain the mark which the student has achieved and to highlight strengths and areas for improvement.
- 3.10 **Feedforward** is a formative feedback approach which provides information to students to help them improve their future work. It is forward looking rather than focused on assessments which have already been completed. It is not quantified in this policy.
- 3.11 **Formative assessments** (which do not count towards a module mark) are designed to gain insight on how learning is being experienced, to help students understand areas of strength and weakness, and to identify where additional work and support are required
- 3.12 **Mark descriptors** are criteria which explain the requirements that assessed work should exhibit in order to achieve a mark in a particular band, e.g. 50-59%, 60-69%. Mark descriptors can be contextualised to make them more relevant to a specific academic subject.
- 3.13 **Moderation** is the review of marking of a particular assessment on a module. Moderation is done by a subject expert from outside the marking team to provide assurance that the marking is consistent, appropriate to academic level and to the marking criteria, and that there is an appropriate range of marks reflecting levels of achievement. Moderators should also ensure parity of quality of feedback across markers.

- 3.14 **Module descriptor** is the approved document that sets out the content, assessment forms and assessment weightings of a module.
- 3.15 **Module learning outcomes** are the skills, knowledge and behaviours which students should be able to demonstrate on successful completion of the module. They inform the module assessment tasks which assess students' ability to meet the learning outcomes.
- 3.16 **Peer assessment** is an assessment task, either formative or summative, in which students provide feedback and/or an indicative mark on the work of other students and reflect on their own contribution.
- 3.17 **Programme learning outcomes** identify what a student should know and be able to do when they finish the programme.
- 3.18 **Second marking** is where an assessment task is marked by both a first and second marker. The second marker normally has access to the marks and feedback given by the first marker.
- 3.19 **Self-assessment** is a student's opportunity to reflect upon and evaluate their own attainment and progress.
- 3.20 **Standardisation activities** enable marking teams to ensure they are all interpreting marking requirements and assessment criteria in the same way.
- 3.21 **Summative assessments** (which count towards a module mark) are designed to gauge the extent to which a student has met the module learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria.
- 3.22 **Turnitin** is a piece of software which integrates with the virtual learning environment (VLE). It detects whether electronically submitted work includes material copied from sources in its database, and to what extent. Turnitin provides students with an opportunity to learn about their paraphrasing and referencing skills and thus improve their work; it assists academic staff in the evaluation of academic practice.

4. Responsibilities

Academic Board

- 4.1 The University's Academic Board is responsible for overseeing the scholarly activities of the University. This includes responsibility for the policies and procedures for the assessment of the academic performance of students, including the appointment and removal of internal and external examiners, oversight of the academic standards and

quality of the University's taught academic provision, and oversight of the content of the University's curriculum.

Academic Quality Committee

- 4.2 The University's Academic Quality Committee is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the University's Assessment and Feedback Policy and monitoring the observance of marking and moderation procedures.

DMU Education Academy and Academic Quality Services

- 4.3 The University's Education Academy, in collaboration with Academic Quality Services, are responsible for the development and maintenance of the Assessment and Feedback Policy and the provision of staff development in relation to assessment and feedback practices.

Education Committee

- 4.4 The University's Education Committee is responsible for overseeing the University's performance on student outcomes and identifying, highlighting and promoting innovations and best practice from across the University in learning, teaching and assessment.

Faculties and branch campuses

- 4.5 The University's faculties and branch campuses are responsible for administering marking and moderation procedures and ongoing interactions with external examiners.

Academic Staff

- 4.6 All academic staff involved in assessment and feedback processes.

5. Policy statements

Assessment

- 5.1 **Formative and summative assessment should form an integral part of the student learning experience**
- 5.1.1. Summative assessment tasks should always be preceded by a formative assessment opportunity in which students have ample time to reflect on their

attainment and the feedback provided and to plan their next steps towards the summative submission.

- 5.1.2. Opportunities should be provided for students to develop their own formative assessment literacy by peer marking, collective discussion of assessment criteria, and student marking of exemplars.

5.2 **Assessment information should be accessible, transparent and anticipatory of any reasonable adjustment requirements**

- 5.2.1. Information about module assessments will be published on the virtual learning environment (VLE) module shell. This information should match the approved module descriptor and include the assignment topic, weighting, submission and feedback return dates, and whether the work is subject to an agreed exemption from anonymous marking.
- 5.2.2. Faculties shall maintain and monitor a database of all assignment deadlines and return dates.

5.3 **Assessment briefs and guidance should encourage good academic conduct**

- 5.3.1. Assessment briefs and guidance should encourage good academic conduct. They should provide guidance on whether AI usage is permissible in the assessment, and if so, what constitutes responsible AI usage in this context including the distinction between facilitative tools (such as for the checking of grammar and punctuation) and generative tools which create content.
- 5.3.2. Written coursework will be checked for originality using Turnitin. This includes all submissions with a written component, including presentations, that are normally submitted via the VLE. Failure by students to submit written coursework to Turnitin will be regarded as a non-submission where they are normally expected to do so.

5.4 **All assessment should be fair and transparent and should operate through the consistent application of clearly published assessment criteria:**

- 5.4.1. Each assessment must have specific assessment criteria, which align to the University's generic mark descriptors (Appendix A) and which clearly articulate the task requirements.
- 5.4.2. Markers should undertake a standardisation activity before commencing marking.
- 5.4.3. Programme teams should engage in calibration activities to help ensure fair, consistent and transparent marking.

- 5.4.4. Final-year undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations and traditional research projects (i.e. those involving one-to-one tuition) are normally **double marked**.
- 5.4.5. Feedback on coursework should be individualised to provide students with the opportunity to understand the mark awarded and enable them to evaluate their own performance and motivate them to act on their performance through guided and constructive feedback and feedforward comments.
- 5.4.6. Schools must ensure that all staff involved in assessment and feedback attend relevant training and engage with available support.
- 5.5 **The mechanism for submitting, assessing and feeding back on students' work should normally be the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)**
 - 5.5.1. The VLE should normally be used for the submission of work, with submissions usually timed for 12 NOON local time on the date of submission. Students should have the opportunity to submit multiple submissions to enable them to gain familiarity with the assessment submission portal and to receive feedback on similarity reports.
 - 5.5.2. The requirements for the submission of non-written coursework, such as performances or objects, will be communicated at a subject discipline level.
- 5.6 **Students are treated consistently where work is submitted late.**
 - 5.6.1. Where extensions or deferred assessment deadlines have been granted, academic staff must ensure that appropriate assessment links have been set-up and communicated to students. Students will not be penalised for the late submission of work if there is a technical failure in the mechanism for submission (e.g. the VLE). Screenshots should be taken of the technical failure and communicated to the Module Leader. If necessary, an alternative method of submission will be made available and/or a new deadline set.
 - 5.6.2. If an assessment is submitted up to 24 hours past the deadline for submission, the mark for the work will be capped at the pass mark of 40 per cent for undergraduate modules or 50 per cent for postgraduate modules (or Level 7 of an Integrated Masters).
 - 5.6.3. If an assessment is submitted more than 24 hours late the work will receive a mark of zero per cent.
 - 5.6.4. If an assessment which is marked as Pass/Fail rather than given a percentage mark is submitted later than the deadline, the work will immediately be marked as a fail.

- 5.6.5. Unauthorised late submissions are not permitted for reassessments and will thus receive a mark of 0% Fail.

Moderation

5.7 All assessments will be subject to internal moderation to ensure that marking is fair, valid and reliable and that the assessment criteria have been consistently applied

- 5.7.1. Internal moderation takes place through sampling. The minimum sample size should include the assessment(s) marked highest and lowest plus a sample from across the spread of marks, including fails. It might also include any problematic assessments (e.g. where there has been disagreement between first and second markers).
- 5.7.2. For cohorts of up to 100 students, the sample size for internal and external moderation will normally be a minimum of 10 assessments (this would require all items in the case of very small modules). For cohorts over 100 students, the minimum sample size should be the square root of the number of assessments (e.g. if the cohort size is 260 the sample will be 16 items).
- 5.7.3. Internal moderation of 'live' assessments (e.g. presentations, vivas, seminars, performances, exhibitions etc.) can be either synchronous or asynchronous and must be recorded so that the sample can be made available to the internal moderator and the external examiner.
- 5.7.4. Where possible, internal moderation should be conducted by a relevant subject expert who is not a member of the marking team.
- 5.7.5. Students will be provided with an agreed indicative mark once internal moderation has taken place.
- 5.7.6. Internal moderation processes will be documented and evidence of this will be made available to external examiners including samples of work and the full mark sheet.

5.8 External moderation must also be undertaken in accordance with the requirements set out for internal moderation.

- 5.8.1. The external examiner has the right to see any worked scripts and other assessed assignments, including coursework, projects, dissertations which contribute to the module mark. Examiners shall have discretion to sample material which will allow them to render a judgement as to the:
- Overall suitability of the assessment methods in practice
 - Coherence of the assessment strategy

- Consistency of internal marking

- 5.8.2. The external examiner may conduct viva voce examinations in such exceptional cases as shall be determined by the Chair of the Assessment Board in consultation with the external examiner.
- 5.8.3. External examiners will be partially involved in the external moderation of reassessed work in specific circumstances to uphold academic standards and ensure fairness. Such circumstances include but are not limited to: a requirement from a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB), a direct request from the external examiner, concerns raised by students, staff or the assessment board, identified issues with the module, marking or moderation procedures or where reassessment differs significantly in format from the original assessment.
- 5.8.4. Any proposed involvement of the external examiner in the moderation of reassessments should normally be formally agreed at the main assessment board and clearly recorded in the minutes. However, there may be instances where the examiner involvement is agreed at a later date.

5.9 Internal markers and moderators should make every effort to resolve any queries about the reliability of the marking.

- 5.9.1. Where resolution of disagreement between internal markers and moderators cannot be reached, prior to the Assessment Board, the Chair will provide oversight to ensure that one of the following is undertaken:
- Second marking of a larger sample
 - Use of a third assessor
 - Remarking or adjustment of marks for the whole batch of scripts
- 5.9.2. External examiners will not be asked to adjudicate in cases of disagreement between internal markers and moderators.

5.10 Marks will be formally confirmed at module level through the assessment board following completion of marking, moderation and external examiner scrutiny.

Feedback

5.11 The return of marked work to students should only take place once internal moderation has taken place.

- 5.11.1. When marks are returned to students this must be with the caveat that they are provisional until they have been ratified by the appropriate assessment board.

5.12 Students should receive timely feedback on summative coursework

- 5.12.1. Feedback should normally be provided no later than 15 working days after the submission deadline, for work submitted on time (and to a comparable period where possible for work submitted under an extension).
- 5.12.2. Where there are circumstances that mean an extension to the 15 working days is unavoidable, a new return date must be agreed with the Associate Dean Education, or nominee, and communicated to students as soon as possible.

5.12 Programme teams should adopt a consistent feedback approach for each assessment type (e.g. a pro forma) to ensure consistent presentation and detail of written feedback between modules and across the programme

- 5.12.3. This should include consistent cross-referencing to learning outcomes and assessment criteria, especially when explaining the mark awarded; specific comments on areas of strength and areas for development.
- 5.12.4. Feedback should normally be provided via the VLE which has the facility for both audio (sound file) and written feedback. Any feedback provided by other means should be clear and accessible. Feedback should always be dated and include the name of the marker.
- 5.12.5. Students can request access to a copy of their exam scripts and/or arrange a tutorial discussion with an academic member of staff for further feedback.
- 5.12.6. It is good practice for generic exam feedback to be provided via the VLE.

6. Monitoring and review

- 6.1 This policy and its operation will be monitored by the University's Academic Quality Committee and Academic Quality Services team. A full review of the policy will take place every three years with policy revisions considered and approved by the University's Academic Board.

7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 7.1 Equalities considerations are key in the design and delivery of assessments and as indicated in the principles and guidance above, module teams must have full regard to the accessibility and inclusivity dimensions of the assessments on their modules and programmes. In addition to seeking feedback and guidance on inclusive assessment

design at course development and approval stage (including by means of completing the Inclusive Education Prompts form), module teams should give close consideration to equalities considerations when reviewing marks profiles and distributions, remaining vigilant for any correlations between disadvantaged student groups and differential outcomes.

8. Sustainability

- 8.1 The design and operation of assessments should have due regard to sustainability considerations. This extends to any assessment guidance in respect of the responsible use of artificial intelligence, where the considerable carbon footprint of Gen AI platforms is well attested and must be weighed against the learning gain associated with its use.

9. Related policies and standards/documentation

- 9.1 [Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy](#)
- 9.2 [External Examining Policy](#)
- 9.3 [Apprenticeship Assessment Policy](#)
- 9.4 [Programme Approval and Management Policy](#)
- 9.5 [Using Generative Artificial Intelligence - LibGuides at De Montfort University](#)
- 9.6 [Office for Students \(OfS\) Regulatory Framework](#), particularly the B Conditions of Registration for quality and standards.
- 9.7 [Quality Assurance Agency \(QAA\) UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#), particularly the Advice and Guidance for Assessment and External Expertise.
- 9.8 [Skills England](#), as appropriate to the University's apprenticeship provision.
- 9.9 Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements, as appropriate to the University's professionally accredited and regulated provision.

10. Appendix A: Generic Mark Descriptors

- 10.1 Modules are marked on a range of 0-100%. Mark descriptors are given in the table below.

- 10.2 When marks are awarded in one band, it will be assumed that the work has met the requirements of the band below.
- 10.3 When marking an individual piece of work, there is an expectation that it will clearly demonstrate most of the criteria within each band.
- 10.4 When marking using an electronic rubric, the scale will align to the mark descriptors below.
- 10.5 Where faculties have developed specific mark descriptors for their academic disciplines, and they are provided in programme handbooks issued at the start of the session, these take precedence over the generic mark descriptors provided below.

Undergraduate marking descriptors

A mark below 40% indicates a Fail grade (the shaded boxes).

Mark range	Classification	Criteria
90-100%	First class honours	- Displays exceptional degree of originality. - Exceptional analytical, problem-solving and/or creative skills. - No fault can be found with the work other than very minor errors, for example minor typographical issues.
80-89%	First class honours	- Work of outstanding quality, evidenced by an ability to engage critically and analytically with source material. - Likely to exhibit independent lines of argument. - Highly original and/or creative responses. - Extremely wide range of relevant sources used where appropriate.
70-79%	First class honours	- Responds to all of the assessment criteria for the task. - An extremely, well developed response showing clear knowledge and the ability to interpret and/or apply that knowledge. - An authoritative grasp of the subject, significant originality and insight. - Significant evidence of ability to sustain an argument, to think analytically, critically and/or creatively and to synthesise material. - Evidence of extensive study, appropriate to task.
60-69%	Upper second-class honours	Responds to most of the assessment criteria for the task.

Mark range	Classification	Criteria
	(2:1)	• A detailed response demonstrating a thorough grasp of theory, understanding of concepts, principles, methodology and content. • Clear evidence of insight and critical judgement in selecting, ordering and analysing content. • Demonstrates ability to synthesise material, to construct responses and demonstrate creative skills which reveal insight and may offer some originality. • Draws on an appropriate range of properly referenced sources.
50-59%	Lower second-class honours (2:2)	10.6 Responds to most of the assessment criteria for the task. 10.7 An effective response demonstrating evidence of a clear grasp of relevant material, principles and key concepts. 10.8 An ability to construct and organise arguments. • Some degree of critical analysis, insight and creativity. • Demonstrating some conceptual ability, critical analysis and a degree of insight. • Accurate, clearly written/presented.
40-49%	Third class honours	• Responds to some of the assessment criteria for the task. • A response demonstrating an understanding of basic points and principles sufficient to show that some of learning outcomes/assessment criteria have been achieved at a basic level. • Suitably organised work demonstrating a reasonable level of understanding. • Covers the basic subject matter and is appropriately presented but is rather too derivative and insufficiently analytical. • Demonstrates limited conceptual ability, levels of evaluation and demonstration of creative skills. • Demonstrates adherence to the referencing conventions appropriate to the subject and/or task.
30-39%	Fail	• Overall insufficient response to the assessment criteria. A weak response, which, while addressing some elements of the task, contains significant gaps and inaccuracies.

Mark range	Classification	Criteria
		- Indicates an answer that shows only weakly developed elements of understanding and/or other skills appropriate to the task. - May contain weaknesses in presentation that constitute a significant obstacle in communicating meaning to the assessor.
20-29%	Fail	- Overall insufficient response to the assessment criteria. A poor response, which falls substantially short of achieving the learning outcomes. - Demonstrates little knowledge and/or other skills appropriate to the task. - Little evidence of argument and/or coherent use of material.
10-19%	Fail	- Overall insufficient response to the assessment criteria. A very poor response demonstrating few relevant facts. - Displays only isolated or no knowledge and/or other skills appropriate to the task. - Little adherence to the task.
0-9%	Fail	- Overall insufficient response to the assessment criteria. - Displays virtually no knowledge and/or other skills appropriate to the task. - Work is inappropriate to assessment task given.

Postgraduate marking descriptors

A mark below 50% indicates a Fail grade (the shaded boxes).

Integrated Masters at Level 7 will also use these marking descriptors.

Mark range	Classification	Criteria
90-100%	Distinction	10.9 Demonstrates an exceptional ability and insight, indicating the highest level of technical competence. 10.10 The work has the potential to influence the forefront of the subject and may be of publishable/exhibitable quality. Relevant generic skills are demonstrated at the highest possible standard.
80-89%	Distinction	10.11 Demonstrates an outstanding ability and insight

Mark range	Classification	Criteria
		based on authoritative subject knowledge and a very high level of technical competence. 10.12 The work is considered to be close to the forefront of the subject and may be close to publishable/exhibitable quality. Relevant generic skills are demonstrated at a very high level.
70-79%	Distinction	- Demonstrates an authoritative, current subject knowledge and a high level of technical competence. - The work is accurate and extensively supported by appropriate evidence. It may show some originality. Clear evidence of capacity to reflect critically and deal with ambiguity in the data. - Relevant generic skills are demonstrated at a high level.
60-69%	Merit	- Demonstrates a sound, current subject knowledge. No significant errors in the application of concepts or appropriate techniques. May contain some minor flaws. - The work is well developed and coherent; may show some originality. Clear evidence of capacity to reflect critically. - Relevant generic skills are demonstrated at a good level.
50-59%	Pass	- Demonstrates satisfactory subject knowledge. Some evident weaknesses; possibly shown by conceptual gaps, or limited use of appropriate techniques. - The work is generally sound but tends toward the factual or derivative. Limited evidence of capacity to reflect critically. - Relevant generic skills are generally at a satisfactory level.
40-49%	Fail	- Demonstrates limited core subject knowledge. Some important weaknesses; possibly shown by factual errors, conceptual gaps, or limited use of appropriate techniques. - The work lacks sound development. Little evidence of capacity to reflect critically. - The quality of the relevant generic skills do not meet the requirements of the task.
30-39%	Fail	- Demonstrates inadequate subject knowledge. - The work lacks coherence and evidence of capacity to reflect critically. - The quality of the relevant generic skills do not meet the

Mark range	Classification	Criteria
		requirements of the task.
20-29%	Fail	• Demonstrates seriously inadequate knowledge of the subject. • The work contains minimal evidence of awareness of relevant issues or theory. • The quality of the relevant generic skills do not meet the requirements of the task.
10-19%	Fail	• The work is almost entirely lacking in evidence of knowledge of the subject. No evidence of awareness of relevant issues or theory. • The quality of the relevant generic skills do not meet the requirements of the task.
0-9%	Fail	• The work presents information that is irrelevant and unconnected to the task. • No evident awareness of appropriate principles, theories, evidence and techniques.

11. **Appendix B: List of Associated Procedures**

11.1 This policy is implemented via the following associated procedures:

- Marking and Moderation Procedure

12. Document and version control information:

Version control information heading	Details
Policy number	TBC
Owner	DMU Education Academy
Author	DMU Education Academy
Approved by	Academic Board
Date of approval of this version	24/06/2026
Next review date	Not to exceed 3 years after approval date
Version number	001
Applicable statutory, legal, or national best practice requirements	Not applicable
Equality impact assessment completion date	23/03/2026
Data protection impact assessment completion date	23/03/2026
Coverage	DMU Leicester, DMU London, DMU Dubai, and collaborative partners (including Transnational Education)