



CAMBRIDGE MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP SCHOOL

ASSESSMENT AND MODERATION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Cambridge Management and Leadership School (CMLS) makes a commitment to the clear articulation of academic standards and expectations, and emphasises that learning is facilitated and rewarded by adopting appropriate assessment practices. The relevance and quality of the centre's awards are also enhanced by ensuring that assessment practices are a valid and reliable means of determining whether course and programme objectives have been met.

One of the centre goals is 'to pursue excellence in curriculum, teaching and life-long learning to a standard befitting an international centre and in a manner that will challenge and develop the capabilities, potential and intellectual independence of our students'. In pursuance of this goal, the following principles and guidelines describe expectations in relation to the assessment of students at the CMLS.

In articulating these principles and guidelines, the centre also acknowledges and accepts the diversity of its awards and, consequently, the diversity of assessment practices throughout the institution. As a result, there may be instances where, for sound academic reasons, a particular guideline might not be appropriate.

It is also recognised that the theory and practice of assessment evolves over time, and staff are encouraged to take advantage of advances in technology and changes in the field of assessment design. These guidelines should not be seen as a constraint or discouragement against the use of innovative assessment practices.

POLCY STATEMENT

PRINCIPLES

In order to be valid, fair and reliable, assessment at the Cambridge Management and Leadership School (CMLS) is guided by the following principles. Staff at the School must be cognisant of these principles when they plan, implement and review assessment tasks and assessment processes.

- **Validity and reliability.** Individual assessment tasks should be chosen to maximise validity and reliability, and the learning (formative) purposes of assessment should be considered alongside the grading (summative) purposes.
- **Fairness and manageability.** The workload associated with assessment requirements should be reasonable and manageable, and the assessment tasks should be described early in the course so that students have adequate opportunity to plan for them alongside their other commitments.
- **Relevance.** Assessment should centre on the knowledge, skills and competencies relating to the stated learning outcomes of the course.
- **Transparency.** Students and staff should be fully informed of centre policies and departmental/programmes practices and procedures in relation to assessment.
- **Life-long Learning.** Assessment in all courses should give explicit emphasis to skills for life-long learning, such as the development of written and oral communication skills, research skills and thinking skills.

GUIDELINES

The following section seeks to set in place centre assessment practices and procedures which are valid, reliable, fair, manageable, relevant and transparent.

1. Staff Development

- All staff should receive a copy of this assessment document before beginning teaching and assessment duties.
- Departments/programmes should ensure that all tutors receive appropriate guidance and training related to the marking of student work before marking is undertaken.
- Each year, the school provides opportunities for new and established academic staff to discuss assessment practices and enhance their assessment skills and procedures in line with the provisions of this document.

2. Assessment Design

2.1. Procedures for approving and reviewing assessment practices

- i. The principles and guidelines outlined in this document must be considered as part of course approval or review process. These activities should occur at departmental/programme and centre levels.
- ii. It is expected that proposals for new courses include information about learning outcomes, together with a rationale for the proposed assessment procedures in light of these outcomes.

2.2 Methods of assessment

- i. Methods of assessment should be selected which give a valid indication of students' achievement in relation to all the learning outcomes of the course. The valid assessment of knowledge, skills and competencies may therefore require a variety of different assessment methods. These may include, but are not limited to, essays, projects, assignments, oral/seminar presentations, performance, portfolios, case studies, take-home tests, class tests and final examinations.
- ii. Assessment tasks should vary to reflect the learning outcomes of a course, as well as course size, level and duration.

2.3 Relative weightings given to different learning outcomes and each assessment task

- i. Assessment in all courses should give substantial weighting to deep learning - that is, the development of conceptual understanding and skills in applying knowledge to new situations - while not neglecting to give credit for learning core factual material.
- ii. The weightings given to different assessment tasks should be decided by the examiner to best describe students' capabilities and performance at the end of the course, and should be related to the amount of work involved in each task and the relative importance of each learning outcome.

3. The Provision of Resources required by Assessment Tasks

- 3.1 Where assignments require computer or library resources, the libraries and providers of resources should be notified of core material required.
- 3.2 In the case of library resources, course co-ordinators must endeavour to place material needed for assessment tasks on restricted loan as soon as is practicable and also in response to student need.

4. Assessing Student Performance

4.1 Grading student performance

- i. Final course grades should indicate demonstrated achievement at the end of the course, through an accumulation of appropriate evidence from course work and/or final examination.
- ii. Grades for individual pieces of assessment should be awarded only on the basis of demonstrated achievement in the task being assessed.

- iii. Students' achievement in a piece of assessment should be judged on its own merits (standards-based) rather than judged normatively (i.e. by ranking students' achievement).
- iv. The grading scale should be consistent within a programme and adhered to by all the examiners within that programme.

4.2 Feedback on course work

If students are to gain maximum benefit from assessment they need feedback which is timely, sufficiently detailed and constructive.

- i. Assessed work (other than final tests or final reports) must be returned to students, normally within four weeks of the date of the test, or within four weeks of the date on which it was submitted. The work will be accompanied by sufficient oral or written feedback to allow the students to form an accurate appraisal of their performance. If possible, all assessed work should be returned to students before the final examination or test so that feedback may be utilised in revision for the final exam or test.
- ii. Where two or more assessment tasks in a course are similar in nature and intended to count towards the final course grade, sufficient time should be allowed between due dates for feedback from the earlier task to be incorporated into the later task.
- iii. In addition to receiving a mark or grade, students should, where appropriate, receive an indication of the strengths and weaknesses of their work, normally accompanied by guidance on how to perform the task or a similar task better (this could be in the form of student-specific comments, a model answer and/or a general commentary on common errors demonstrated by the class).
- iv. Students should be provided with an indication of the distribution of results for the class when each assessed item is returned.

4.3 Assessment of group work

- i. Performance in group tasks is an acceptable component of student course grades. The percentage contribution from group tasks should be related to the learning outcomes of the course.
- ii. Before individual grades are finalised, the lecturer(s) should seek and take account of additional information about the contributions of individuals to team efforts, particularly if group tasks contribute significantly towards the final course grade.

- iii. When using group work for assessment, lecturers should ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to support students working in groups.

4.4 Assessment of oral and performance achievement

In the case of a formal test or examination based on an oral or performance presentation, two examiners, or an examiner and an independent witness, should be present. A video camera may be substituted for an independent witness.

4.5 Academic integrity

- i. It is of critical importance that examiners are assured that the work being assessed is the work of the student to whom credit will be given. To this end, staff must provide students with clear guidelines as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, particularly in relation to plagiarism, and what actions are taken in the event of academic dishonesty being suspected
- ii. It is the responsibility of staff to ensure that the consequences and implications of academic dishonesty are explained to students. Staff may find cover sheets (declaring that the work submitted is the student's own) are useful in drawing students' attention to the importance of academic honesty.

4.6 Academic grievances and disputes about assessment

- i. Students with concerns about assessment processes should be advised to speak with the relevant lecturer. If the matter cannot be resolved, then the student should discuss the matter with the Course/Programme Leaders.
- ii. Departments/programmes should have committees, with student representation when appropriate, to provide a mechanism for monitoring, reviewing and resolving problems in relation to assessment, including the timing of assessment and student workload.

5. Moderation

5.1 Internal Moderation

- i. Staff should consult appropriate peers when setting assessment tasks (including examination questions) and when deciding how to grade student responses to assessment tasks.

- ii. Where two or more staff (including tutors) shares the marking of an assignment or examination question, these activities must be moderated for consistency of marking standards and quality of feedback provided.
- iii. Where students are offered a choice of examination questions, the marks awarded for the different options should be compared and adjustments made if necessary to allow for variations in question difficulty.
- iv. At examiners' meetings, departments/programmes should monitor the distribution of final grades in courses at each year level, making adjustments if necessary to ensure reasonable consistency/comparability of course grades from year to year, and between courses, and to best reflect the calibre of student achievement in that year.

5.2 External moderation and accreditation

- i. Departments/programmes must undertake external moderation of their postgraduate courses on a regular basis.
- ii. Certain professional courses are subject to accreditation and moderation of assessment by external bodies. In such cases assessment must also comply with any requirements of these bodies.

6. Notifying Students of Assessment Policies and Procedures

- 6.1 In each course, students must receive specific, clear and early information about course assessment requirements, e.g. due date, weighting, length, presentation. If it is not appropriate to provide this information in the Course Outline, it should be provided in a separate assignment handout. An exception may also occur when the lecturer believes it is appropriate to negotiate some aspects of the assessment programme with students.
- 6.2 The type, dates, times and weighting of assessment must be entered into the Student Records Management System not later than two weeks after the start of the course.
- 6.3 If minimum levels of attendance or completion of practical or other specified work are required before a final examination can be sat, or a course grade awarded, these requirements should be detailed in course information. There should be a clear rationale for such requirements and they should be communicated clearly to all students to whom they apply.
- 6.4 Students should be notified of the school assessment policies and department/programme practices and procedures. To this end, departments/programmes will provide the following information in a timely manner to students and staff through notification in Handbooks, Course

Outlines, web pages or any other appropriate means, e.g. noticeboards, handouts:

Department/programme

- Grading practices including the grading scale, explanation of grading criteria, scaling of marks and grades, and moderation
- Policy on the granting of extensions of time for submitting assessed work
- Penalties imposed for the late submission of work

Centre

- Special consideration and aegrotat provisions and procedures
- Provisions and procedures for reconsideration of grades
- Appeal provisions and procedures
- Provisions for students with disabilities, particularly in relation to the sitting of tests and exams
- Expectations regarding academic integrity, especially in relation to plagiarism and including procedures in the event that dishonest academic practice is suspected

6.5 Once a course has started, any change to the conditions of assessment may be determined only after agreement is reached with all the class. All students in the class must be notified in writing and/or by class email. If there is no objection from any member of the class by a specified date the assessment may be changed (students may respond anonymously). If there is any objection, the conditions of assessment will not be altered

6.6 If student have failed an exam taken in one academic term, they can resit in this exam either in the end of next academic term or according to the notice placed by the Centre . Students will attend additional classes and pay for examination fees as per rules and regulation implemented the awarding body.