

Code of Practice for Assessment and Feedback at St George's School of Health and Medical Sciences

1. Purpose and scope

1.1 The purpose of this Code of Practice is to set out core principles and related operational procedures relating to assessment and feedback for all taught programmes that lead to awards at St George's School of Health and Medical Sciences. It applies to formative and summative assessment, and to the broad range of feedback opportunities that students can expect and make use of during their studies.

1.2 The Code should assist:

- Academic staff, external examiners, and administrators who are involved with student assessment and outcomes to ensure that assessment and feedback processes are rigorous, consistent, and aligned with sector-recognised principles of effective practice.
- Students to make the most of assessment in order to demonstrate their learning and achievement, and to use the feedback provided to them for continuous learning.
- Staff and students together to develop and build upon a shared understanding of the purposes, principles and practices that underly assessment and feedback in the School.

1.3 The Code aims to complement policy documents that set out quality requirements relating to assessment within the School, by providing recommendations on framing assessment and feedback protocols that work effectively together to demonstrate achievement and support future learning.

1.4 Related policy documents include:

[Academic Integrity Procedure](#)

[Academic Appeals Procedure](#)

[Common Modular Framework](#)

[Data Protection Policy](#)

[Extenuating Circumstances Guidance](#)

[General Regulations for Students and Programmes of Study](#)

[Late Submissions Policy](#)

[Procedure for Additional Assessment and Examination Arrangements for Students with Disabilities or Specific Learning Difficulties](#)

[Quality Manual Section I: Quality Management of Assessment](#)

[Rules for the Conduct of Candidates in Supervised Examinations](#)

[Student Concerns and Complaints Procedure](#)

[Word Count Limit Policy for Assignments](#)

1.5 Each programme also has its own:

Programme Regulations, which outline regulatory arrangements relating to assessment, progression, qualification, and quality assurance.

Programme Specification, which provides a concise description of the intended learning outcomes for the programme and how these will be achieved, including approaches to assessment.

Scheme of Assessment, which specifies the full range of programme assessments by module and/or year, rules for moderation, and arrangements for the release of provisional and final marks, and progression and awards.

1.6 The Code may be used to develop programme-based communications that provide students with more detailed information about assessment and feedback on their course.

2. Assessment

2.1 Purposes of assessment

Assessment is fundamental to learning; it fulfils a number of important purposes, which can usefully be categorised into three types:

- **Assessment of learning**: this involves making judgments about students' summative achievement for the purposes of certification; it also acts as a focus for institutional accountability and quality assurance (Bloxham and Boyd, 2007).
- **Assessment for learning**: this is formative and diagnostic; it recognizes the huge benefit that feedback can have on learning, and allows for teaching and learning activities to be changed in response to the needs of learners (Bloxham and Boyd, 2007).
- **Assessment as learning**: this engages students in assessment practices so they learn to make evaluative judgements about their own work that they can use beyond their time at university (Elkington, 2019).

2.2 Principles of Assessment

The following principles reflect a balance between the various purposes of assessment in order to optimise student learning.

Assessment should:

- Be designed and implemented so that students can **achieve module or unit of study and programme learning outcomes**, which are linked to relevant professional body and/or qualification frameworks. The type of assessment should best enable students to fully meet selected learning outcomes, and should include

formative opportunities for them to prepare and practise as well as summative assessment to demonstrate learning and achievement.

- **Be staged to reflect progression through the curriculum.** Assessment should be planned to support progression or coherence across and between levels of the programme's education pathway. This might include integrative assessments, which require students to synthesize their learning from different elements of their course.
- **Be authentic.** Assessment should be oriented towards learning the knowledge, skills and competencies that students will use in real-world settings. It should promote the kind of complex learning needed for the workplace, and build self-regulatory capacity so that students learn to make judgements about their performance beyond immediate tasks and learning outcomes.
- **Be challenging.** Assessment should be directed towards engaging students with problem-solving, critical enquiry and research, and to stimulating decision-making and application of knowledge over and above recall. This might include enabling students to make appropriate and responsible use of generative AI to support learning.
- **Promote interaction.** Steps should be taken to create a learning environment in which standards are shared and discussed, so that both staff and students develop their understandings about what counts as quality in relation to learning outcomes. For students, this might include opportunities for peer-assessment; for staff, this might include calibration or benchmarking exercises.
- **Be reliable and fair.** School policies and procedures should be followed to make sure that assessment judgements about the quality of assessed work are consistently made against shared marking criteria. Assessors should have expertise appropriate to the area being assessed and should be supported to ensure their judgements are fair and measured against learning outcomes; students should be actively informed about the mechanisms that underlie assessment and the value of academic or professional judgement in making assessment decisions.
- **Provide students with equal opportunities to demonstrate their learning.** The needs of all students should be considered when designing assessments to safeguard against particular groups or individuals being unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged. Assessments should be designed and delivered to promote high standards of academic integrity and a range of assessment methods should be used to reflect the diverse strengths of students. Students should be informed about study support and guidance that is available to them, and appropriate reasonable adjustments should be made for students who have a disability or specific learning difficulty.
- **Be explicit and accessible.** Assessment policies, regulations and processes should be made available to all staff and students involved in assessment. Communications about assessments, how they are marked, and how they fit

together should be provided at the beginning of a programme and module or unit of study.

- **Be feasible.** Students and staff should be given adequate time and resources to complete and mark assessments required by the curriculum. Technologies should be used to enhance practice, and streamline assessment information and administration efficiently.
- **Be reviewed and enhanced.** Quality assurance processes should be used for continuous monitoring and enhancement of assessment practices, including in relation to developments in generative AI. Successful examples of innovation in assessment should be shared, and students should be given opportunities to be involved in developments.

2.3 Submission arrangements

Students should be provided with an assessment timetable at the beginning of the academic year, which includes submission deadlines for in-course assessment and the dates and times of examinations and end-of-course assignments.

Unforeseen changes to the assessment timetable and the reasons for the changes should be communicated to students at the earliest opportunity.

All assignments submitted after the specified deadline are subject to the School's [Late Submissions Policy](#), which is designed to provide consistency and transparency for students across all programmes.

Where a student encounters circumstances which could adversely affect their performance in an assessment, they are encouraged to seek advice and consider submitting a claim for [Extenuating Circumstances](#).

3. Feedback

3.1 Purposes of Feedback

Effective feedback has a powerful influence on learning; it enables students to monitor their progress and plan for future learning against specific goals (Hattie and Timperley, 2007).

Feedback on summative assessments communicates achievement in relation to course and unit of study or module intended learning outcomes, commonly in the form of marks or grades accompanied by explanation of how the mark or grade has been determined. Often, feedback also has a formative function designed to assist students in reflecting on their current performance, developing their own judgement, and planning for improvement.

Feedback can be provided as information about performance, but it is most effective when recognised as a shared responsibility between teachers and students.

Teachers are responsible for providing quality feedback information and designing processes that enable students to make active use of feedback, and students are responsible for seeking out, making sense of, and using feedback (Carless & Winstone, 2023).

3.2 Sources and modes of feedback

Students should be encouraged to recognise that feedback information comes in a variety of forms. In addition to receiving feedback on formal assessments, they should make the most of feedback and dialogue opportunities within lectures, tutorials, practicals, placements, and other learning settings. Sources of feedback might include teachers, healthcare professionals, peers, patients and their families or carers, and technological tools, such as online quizzes, that support self-evaluation of progress.

Feedback may also be given in a range of modes, such as written, audio, oral and/or automated. Feedback information may be provided to individuals, small- or whole-groups, or generated through dialogue designed to clarify what good performance entails.

3.3 Feedback Principles

Feedback should be:

- Part of **continuous** guided learning. Feedback information should be appropriate to the task and provided regularly across a range of formative and summative assessments; students should engage with, and use the multiple feedback opportunities available to them for their own development.
- Designed to include **formative learning opportunities** that provide students with an appropriate level of challenge, and enable them to review current performance in relation to required standards. These might include class-based tests, peer assessment of a range of examples, and mock examinations.
- Oriented towards **clarifying what good performance is**, and aligned to intended course, unit of study, or module learning outcomes; intended learning outcomes should be reflected in criteria used to assess and communicate achievement.
- **Constructive** and **actionable**. Feedback should be compatible with students' prior knowledge, specific to the assessment task, respectful, and balanced to highlight strengths and areas for development.
- **Timely**. Summative feedback information should be provided so that students can monitor their achievement against required standards, and formative feedback processes should allow sufficient time for students to enhance their performance in related subsequent assessments.

- **Consistent and fair across markers.** Where multiple markers are used, training and moderation processes, along with shared feedback rubrics, should be employed to ensure consistency and fairness in how feedback is given.
- **Accessible.** Feedback should be formulated in ways that all students can access, and have student understanding at its centre. This might include giving students a choice of feedback modes.
- **Sustainable.** Strategies for providing feedback should be attainable in terms of workload and resources to support the student experience. Appropriate technologies should be available and used to facilitate the uptake of feedback information and processes.
- **Reviewed and enhanced.** Programme teams should evaluate the effectiveness and timeliness of the provision of feedback and modify local strategies to optimize learning.

3.4 Communicating feedback

The following information should be communicated to students so that they can plan their learning and make active use of feedback available to them:

- Expected timescale norms for the return of formal feedback should be published in the assessment timetable at the beginning of the academic year.
- Where students can expect feedback on a formative assessment task, an expected timescale should be given so they plan to make use of the feedback opportunity before subsequent assessment.
- Students should be given clear information on the marking criteria that have been applied to each assessment so they can assess their own progress against goals.
- In exceptional circumstances when publicized timescales for the provision of feedback cannot be met, students should be contacted as soon as possible and given a revised date that is within a reasonable time period.
- Feedback, including marks and grades, that is provided before a Board of Examiners meeting, will be identified as:
 - Provisional
 - Subject to further moderation
 - Available to External Examiner scrutiny
 - Subject to possible change and approval by the Board.

3.5 Guidance on determining norms for receiving summative feedback information

In setting timescales for the return of marks and feedback on summative exams and written assignments, programme teams should give priority to ensuring quality of feedback and adopting feedback strategies that are sustainable in terms of both workload and supporting the student experience. Other factors that impact on provision of feedback include:

- Type and format of the assessment task, its size and complexity
- Requirements for internal and external moderation
- Timing of the Board of Examiners
- Proximity to holidays and religious festivals

Recommendations for provision of assessment feedback are:

- A maximum of 20 university working days for the return of marks and feedback on all summative exams and written assignments.
- A maximum of 35 university working days for lengthy end-of-course assessments such as final year projects and dissertations.
- Where an assessment is shared across modules, the feedback turnaround time should be consistent for the whole cohort.
- Where the same assessment is run on multiple days – for example clinical or practice exams – the feedback timescale should be based on the day of the final iteration.
- Where assessment decisions are based on student performance in more than one type of assessment – for example students may progress from one year to the next based on their achievement in a written and a practical examination – the feedback timescale should be based on the end of the assessment period.
- Students should expect to receive continuous informal feedback during clinical or practical placements, and formal feedback should be provided on or by the final day from the placement assessor.
- In the case of late submission, feedback might need to be provided at a date outside of the published schedule but should still be within the programme norms.

3.6 Return of Examination Scripts

Students have rights of access to information relating to assessment in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. This includes comments made on examination scripts provided in the form of a transcript, but not the scripts themselves.

A programme may choose to release examination scripts to students to offer guidance and/or tutorial support.

In circumstances where it is necessary preserve the integrity of assessments for future students, exam scripts are not returned to students following an examination, and should not be shared by students without permission.

Any student who fails an exam is eligible for one-to-one feedback with the responsible examiner or equivalent, who will review the student's scripts and marksheets as appropriate before the meeting.

3.7 Appeals and remarking

Students wanting to ask for an assessment mark, grade, result or classification to be reviewed, should refer to the [Academic Appeal Procedure](#).

3.8 Complaints

Students can use the [Student Concerns and Complaints Procedure](#) to raise concerns about delays in providing feedback.

Glossary of Terms

Academic integrity: commitment to being honest in academic work, and making sure that inclusion of knowledge and ideas based on other people's work is formally recognised and referenced.

Benchmarking: activities which involve multiple assessors meeting prior to final grading in order to agree consistent standards in the allocation of marks.

Calibration: activities which involve assessors reviewing and comparing student work in order to develop individual academic judgement and share good academic practice.

Diagnostic assessment: designed to evaluate how well a learner is prepared for a given unit of study; aimed at identifying any strengths, gaps or shortfalls in knowledge or skills.

External examiner: an independent expert appointed by an institution to comment on student achievement in relation to established academic standards and to look at approaches to assessment.

Formative assessment: designed to help students learn more effectively and find ways to maintain and improve their progress through feedback; does not usually contribute to the final mark or grade.

Generative AI: artificial intelligence capable of generating text, images, or other media; it uses models that learn the patterns and structure of initial data and generate new data that has similar characteristics ([QAA, 2024](#)).

Integrative assessment: combines learning from multiple modules or units of study into a single assessment; looks for understanding of connections between topics.

Learning outcomes: descriptions of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a unit of study.

Professional body: an organisation that oversees the activities of a particular profession and represents the interests of its members.

Self-regulatory capacity: how effectively students can use and monitor strategies directed towards attaining their own learning goals without external control.

Specific learning difficulty: neurological conditions that can affect how information is learned and processed, and have a significant impact on education and learning.

Summative assessment: formal assessment of students' work that contributes to the final result.

References

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Elkington, S. (2019) Assessment: understanding the basics in Marshall, S. (Ed.) *A handbook for teaching and learning in higher education: enhancing academic practice*. Taylor and Francis Group.

Hattie, J. & Timperley, H. (2007) The Power of Feedback, *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1).

QAA (2024) [Generative Artificial Intelligence](#).