ART ACADEMY LONDON

Assessment & Feedback Policy

This document has been informed by the expectations, core and common practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Assessment. This can be found at the following location and contains further guidelines, references and resources: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance

List of Appendices to this document:

Appendix A - Examples of types of assessment employed at the Art Academy

Assessment is entirely through coursework and is assessed against the learning outcomes described in the programme specification, course document(s) and module specification/ materials along with the published grading matrices (sometimes referred to as grading or marking schemes). Art Academy London believes in and employs continuous formative assessment through active learning opportunities such as one to one and group critique sessions, enabling students to evaluate and analyse their own progress and take control of their learning in order to maximise strengths and address weaknesses.

Assessment tasks (should) also follow a pattern that ensures that assessment is developmental and impacts positively on future learning. They reflect the increasing complexity and demands of successive stages in the programme.

Assessment processes should be inclusive and appropriate arrangements should be made for the assessment of students with disabilities, dyslexia and long-term medical conditions. Inclusivity in assessment practices should, however, go beyond making special provision for those students with specific needs or giving consideration of what are defined as 'protected characteristics' in law and should consider the totality of the constituency of students undertaking the assessment. Assessment processes should not (through design or omission) disadvantage any individual or group(s) of students

Assessment tasks should promote effective learning through:

- An explicit relationship between individual assessment activities and specific learning outcomes, which can be clearly articulated to students;
- the use of assessment activities, through which students can demonstrate the achievement of a range of academic and/or professional skills appropriate to the aims of their programme;
- a developmental progression that builds on previous learning and promotes subsequent learning on the course or programme, reflecting the increasing complexity and demands made by successive stages in the programme;
- fostering, through the way in which they are designed, active and inquiry-based learning and developing increasing independence and in-depth learning in the student;
- being regularly reviewed, updated, where necessary, and renewed, to ensure the active engagement of students and promote good academic practice and integrity;
- feedback that is timely, positive in orientation and constructive, in a way that guides the student in how to proceed in the future and develops the skills of self-evaluation

Assessment tasks should be fair, valid and reliable through:

- Being evaluated solely on the basis of the achievement of students against criteria and standards specifically aligned with learning outcomes;
- being designed to promote inclusivity and in such a way as not to disadvantage, either overtly or by omission, any student or groups of students;
- covering a range of assessment practices that acknowledge and cater for different learning styles

- being scheduled in such a way as to allow both staff and students to plan and manage their workloads successfully;
- clear communication to students of the purposes, timing, weighting, methods of marking and scrutiny for all summative assessments, at the start of every course.
- procedures that ensure that all staff teaching on a course share a common understanding of the purpose of assessment tasks set and associated marking criteria, with appropriate scrutiny and oversight of the marking processes.

Summative assessment is designed to build on the concept of assessment as an active learning opportunity through strategies that encourage active participation in the process (vivas, presentations and exhibitions), which engenders considered reflection on achievements and future goals. Most work (with the exception of written work) is assessed via students presenting their work to their peer group and tutors (a minimum of two who will double mark the work, in parallel). Summative feedback is always in written form, reflecting on how the student achieved the learning outcomes and identifying issues that need to be addressed through feed-forward. Assessment should be scheduled to enable feedback to feed-forward into future assessment tasks and to ensure that students have time to review and prepare their work and act on any formative feedback they have received.

In order to ensure that the design of both assessments and grading matrices (marking criteria) is clear, transparent and explicitly related to learning outcomes and to performance descriptors, the design of assessments and grading matrices must undergo a process of peer scrutiny before assessment tasks are given to students, in advance of module/ course delivery. To this end they must be approved by the Academic Quality, Standards and Student Experience Committee (AQSSEC).

The general arrangements for assessment, and the minimum requirements for the programme, are described in the programme and module specifications (within the programme handbook) as well as module assignment briefs. Students are advised in module assignment briefs about the assessment dates; formative and summative assignments are identified, and the requirements for passing the module explained. Where relevant module assignment briefs signpost academic regulations and polices (such as word count regulations, late submission penalties and the academic misconduct policy).

Feedback

Continuous formative feedback is central to the student-centred teaching and learning strategy at the Academy. Students receive verbal, formative feedback for (non-assessed) elective skills workshop courses and written formative* and summative feedback for core compulsory, assessed modules. (*written formative feedback is not provided for certain modules on the Foundation programme).

In the case of practical, studio practice, modules on undergraduate programmes, All formative feedback is primarily provided verbally and students are encouraged to document key themes/ actions from verbal feedback on the provided form/ template. Module tutors may additionally add to the shared form/template, as relevant, and will provide students with written formative feedback mapped against the learning outcomes (usually) mid-way through the module. On the Foundation programme all formative feedback for studio practice modules is verbal and not recorded. On both undergraduate and Foundation programmes, where a module requires written submissions, students receive written formative feedback mapped against the learning outcomes at relevant stages in the module(s).

Feedback sheets (Student Assessment Record Form - SARF) contain grades and/ or performance standard descriptors where appropriate. For undergraduate, Open University validated, programmes, formative feedback sheets should contain indicative performance standard descriptors only (no grade). Where written formative feedback is proved (on both undergraduate and Foundation programmes), feedback sheets must contain a disclaimer (that final, summative, grades and performance standard descriptors may be lower). In the case of Open University validated programmes it should be expressly made clear to students that grades are subject to confirmation by the Exam and Progression Board at the end of the academic year.

Feedback should provide a student with a clear explanation of how the marks have been derived or allocated, through mapping against learning outcomes and a clear understanding of how they can improve their work in the future (feed-forward). It should encourage learning and impact positively upon progression.

Feedback should:

- Clarify how good performance is recognised, through clear description of the goals of assessment, the criteria used to evaluate it and differential standards of achievement;

- foster the development of reflection and self-assessment in learning;
- encourage dialogue about learning (peer-student and tutor-student);
- act as a motivation to learn, developing self-esteem and a clear appraisal of the potential for improvement;
- provide opportunities for feedback to be acted on, enabling students to develop;
- provide information that tutors can use to help shape their teaching and the further guidance they offer to students.

The scheduling of formative feedback on drafts and interim assessment points for practical work will be dependent on the nature of the assessment task, and the timing for returning the feedback will be at the discretion of the module tutor. Clearly, however, the tutor will need to ensure that students have sufficient time to act on any feedback received, and ought not to accept drafts from students at the last minute, close to an assessment deadline.

Feedback should be returned in a timely manner, and the extent, nature and timing of feedback for each task must be made clear to students in advance so that they can make the best use of the feedback.

With regard to summative feedback, all assessment and standardisation must be completed and results/ feedback sent to students within twenty one (21) calendar days of the module deadline.

Assessors should design feedback so that it:

- is prompt, constructive and improvement-oriented, as an entitlement (including prior notification, discussion and exemplification of grading criteria and/or assessment methods);

- uses methods that are most suitable for student development and make use of appropriate technologies, which could, for example, include feedback that is recorded but not necessarily written.

Policies and documents that supplement and reference this document:

Quality Handbook
Tutor Handbook
Teaching and Learning strategy
Alternative Assessment Policy
Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Document name	Assessment and Feedback Policy	Document owner	Darren Nairn
Date originally created	May 2017		
Version	4	Review date	March 2024
Author of amendments	Darren Nairn	Next review date	March 2028
Changes (list sections)	Throughout		
Approved by	Academic Board	Date of approval	March 2024

Appendix A - Examples of types of assessment employed at the Art Academy

Essay: Classically, the discursive presentation of an argument, in a relatively short piece of work (typically between 1,000 – 5,000 words). The term 'essay' can, however, be used to cover such things as a photographic essay, in which a connected series of images are put together, with or without linking text.

Dissertation: A more sustained piece of argumentation embodying an extended analysis, usually the result of a small research project (empirical or theoretical) typically between 5,000 – 20,000 words, depending on Level.

Portfolio: This is typically, but not exclusively, a collection of creative pieces of work designed to showcase skill in a way which is synoptic. It can be used in a variety of productive ways and for a range of purposes, and could combine formative and summative assessment (for example, by gathering together work which had previously been given formative feedback and improved to be submitted for summative assessment).

Typical portfolios for the studio practice modules at the Art Academy contain sketchbooks which evidence the design process; a body of research; contextual research (which can be presented in a variety of ways relevant to the student's individual area of investigation and project, but will typically contain evidence of analysis of exhibitions, works of art and texts/ articles). It may also include a written artist statement which sets out the students intentions and underpins their practice.

Report: Normally a written text intended to convey information, a report is usually intended to convey the results of an investigation or inquiry, tailored to a specific audience. Report-writing can often be useful in giving students a means to rehearse work-related activities, providing a simulation of something they may later be doing in their professional lives. A report, for example, might report on interaction with a client in a commission situation.

Review: A detailed review of a single book, article, text, artwork or performance of the kind that might be found in the book review section of a journal, arts magazine or quality newspaper. Used with academic texts, this can be a very useful way of developing in students the skill of identifying and evaluating arguments.

Case Study: Usually an analysis of one or more individuals, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, etc., considered holistically, possibly from a number of different vantage points or using a range of methods, to provide a picture 'in the round'. Like the report, this can be especially useful as a rehearsal for students, related to their future professional lives. The case study could be selected by the student or provided to them by the teaching team.

Presentation: This involves the student(s) in demonstrating and explaining the content of a topic or the development of their project/ body of work.

Extended research project: Usually for the Professional Development module, this involves students investigating an area of interest (of professional practice, e.g working as a portrait artist) and producing a portfolio of evidence and report based on primary and secondary research. This could include case studies, reviews and reports.

Viva Voce: This is an oral rather than written form of examination and typically employed during the final studio practice project at the end of the programme in support of the students exhibition and final major project. Students are usually required to speak about their work including their intentions, their approach and their influences and will then be required to respond to a series of questions from the assessors/ examiner.