Assessment and Feedback Policy

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1 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of the policy and procedures is to ensure that all assessments in programmes offered by the Engineering College of Technology (ECT) are conducted fairly and consistently without bias in order to ensure that academic standards are upheld and are trusted by students and the broader ECT community.

1.2 This Policy sets out the core principles and operational rules that ensure fairness in assessment at ECT.

2 Scope

2.1 The policy and procedures apply to all forms of summative assessments and formal formative assessments used to assess whether the students are making good progress and have successfully achieved the learning outcomes of modules of ECT programmes for the award of credits and ultimately, the award of the degrees.

2.2 The policy and procedures apply to all ECT academic staff involved in the assessment and internal moderation of ECT's higher education programmes, external examiners involved in moderation, academic support staff, and ECT structures tasked with ensuring the quality and fairness of assessment.

3 Fundamentals and principles of fairness in assessment

3.1 Fairness in assessment is a multifaceted concept that emphasises the equitable treatment and unbiased evaluation of the students' achievements in assessment tasks. It is characterised by treating individuals equally, impartially and justly, free from prejudice, favouritism and bias, and without undue advantage or disadvantage of individuals or groups of students.

3.2 The objective of fairness in assessment is to create an inclusive educational environment in which:

- All students have equitable opportunities to demonstrate their acquired knowledge, understanding and skills
- Assessment methods, instruments and processes are appropriate to the learning outcomes assessed, and accommodate the specific needs and circumstances of individual or groups of students, where reasonable
- Assessment requirements and processes are clearly articulated and understood by students, lecturers, assessors and others involved in the assessment and moderation processes
- Students have equal opportunities to access guidance, support and constructive feedback to assist them to demonstrate their achievements to the required standards in order to achieve their educational objectives
- Internal and external scrutiny ensure the fairness, quality and continuous improvement of assessment outcomes and processes.

3.3 ECT is committed to ensuring fairness in assessment by adhering to the following principles in the assessment, moderation and external scrutiny of the students' achievements across the range of programmes offered by ECT:

- Equity and inclusivity
- Reasonable adjustments
- Impartiality
- Explicitness
- Validity
- Reliability

- Academic integrity
- Sufficiency, currency and authenticity of evidence.

3.4 ECT's approach to fairness in assessment is informed by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, the expectations of the Office for Students, and relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), and is benchmarked against sector practice for blended and online delivery.

Equity and inclusivity

3.5 Equity in assessment should ensure that assessment methods and processes are fair and inclusive to accommodate diversity in the student group. Assessment strategies should consider the students' diverse backgrounds, unique circumstances, and learning and support needs. This will create a fair learning environment where all students have the opportunity to succeed.

3.6 The following principles apply

- Assessments that are designed to reflect diverse perspectives and contexts relevant to the students to ensure that no individual or group is unduly advantaged or disadvantaged
- Diversity in assessment methods and formats that allows for a more comprehensive evaluation of students' achievements, catering to different learning preferences through a variety of written, oral and practical assessments
- Identifying and addressing barriers that may hinder student performance, such as the student's socio-economic factors, cultural differences, and personal challenges through flexible assessment conditions and tailored support, that create a more equitable learning environment
- Making provision for assessment retakes, deferred assessments, modified assessments, extensions to deadlines where there are mitigating circumstances or other conditions that warrant special arrangements to accommodate students' needs, while maintaining the integrity of the assessment

3.7 ECT will implement these principles in line with its ***Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy***, ***Student Support Policy*** and ***Mitigating Circumstances Policy***, which set out detailed processes for requesting and approving specific arrangements.

Reasonable adjustments

3.8 Modifications should be made to create equitable assessment environments to accommodate students with disabilities or specific learning needs to ensure that they will be able to demonstrate the achievements of the learning outcomes effectively without disadvantage. Adjustments should be made without compromising the integrity of the assessment process, altering the fundamental requirements of the assessment, or give any student an unfair advantage over others.

3.9 Depending on the student's needs, reasonable adjustments could include:

- Providing learning materials and assessment requirements in formats that are accessible to the student, such as audio, and making these available to students in advance to allow sufficient time to work through the material
- Alternative assessment methods to ensure equitable assessment practices and processes for students with a disability or other special need, such as allowing oral presentations instead of written submissions, the use of special equipment, or the support of a scribe
- Assisting students to access and use assistive technologies such as screen readers, speech-to-text software, and Read and Write Texthelp software

- Allowing additional time for submitting assignments and writing examinations
- Physical environments that ensure accessibility to venues where students need physical access to ECT's premises
- Any modifications suggested as suitable for a particular student by a qualified healthcare professional such as a Disability Officer, medical or health practitioner.

Impartiality

3.10 Students' work should be assessed objectively to accurately measure student learning without bias to ensure that no student is advantaged or disadvantaged in the evaluation and grading of assessments. Impartiality will be achieved mainly through:

- Anonymity in marking practices, where feasible, by using identifying student numbers rather than students' names
- Qualified, competent and impartial assessors and moderators who are trained to recognise and mitigate unconscious bias in assessments, such those related to gender, ethnicity or other characteristics.
- All staff involved in assessment must declare and manage any potential conflicts of interest
- Structured internal and external moderation and examination processes for reviewing marked work to ensure consistency with established marking criteria and standards.

Explicitness

3.11 Assessment requirements should be clearly, unambiguously and explicitly communicated to ensure that the students, assessors, moderators and examiners have a common understanding of the learning outcomes students are required demonstrate to ensure that assessments cover stipulated criteria. Explicitness will be achieved mainly through:

- Comprehensive programme specifications with module descriptors that provide the module details needed by students and all involved in the assessment, moderation and external examining processes, including the aims, learning outcomes and assessments, as well as the weighting of each assessment and how final marks and grades are determined
- Assessment guides and assessment briefs made available to students at the beginning of each teaching period that clearly articulate the following for each piece of assessment to ensure transparency on the requirements:
  - The learning aims, learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria and the mapping to relevant graduate attributes
  - Tasks to be completed, the marking criteria to test the learning outcomes, marking guides and rubrics that explain how the assignment will be assessed
  - The format, instructions and due dates for submissions/completion
  - References to any additional resources or support available to assist in completing the assignment
  - For all modules, assessment briefs, marking criteria and deadlines will be made available via the approved virtual learning environment in an accessible format, and any subsequent changes will be clearly notified to students within that environment.
- Assessment Marking Guide for each grade, indicating the mark range (in percentage), with assessment guidelines on the knowledge, understanding and skills students are expected to demonstrate in each grade to enable students to understand how their performance will be assessed and graded and how these relate to specific learning outcomes

- Level Descriptors for each academic level of the programme that defines the learning outcomes, the depth and complexity of each level, as well as the expected level of academic skills students are expected to demonstrate.
- Briefing newly enrolled students on the internal / external moderation and external examination processes and assessment requirements as stipulated in the Assessment Marking Guides, and at the start of each new study period
- Training of and communication to lecturers, assessors, internal/external moderators and external examiners on the assessment requirements, the expected demonstration of learning outcomes and relevant ECT policies and procedures to ensure a common understanding and adherence to requirements
- Explicit, specific, timely and constructive feedback to students on assessments in written and/or oral format that assist students to understand their strengths and development areas and enable them to review their learning progress and develop strategies for improvement.

Validity

3.12 Every assessment should accurately measure what it sets out to measure and should be appropriate, fit for purpose and meaningful so that assessments effectively evaluate students' knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to the specified learning outcomes. Validity will be achieved mainly through:

- Using appropriate assessment procedures, methods and instruments that are relevant for what is being assessed.
- Using a variety of assessment formats and methods in each module
- Clear links between the learning content that is being assessed, the learning outcomes and the assessment instrument.
- Assessments that remain within the parameters of what is required and not assessing more or less than what is stipulated in the learning outcomes.
- The type and amount of evidence required that is appropriate to the outcomes that have to be achieved at the particular programme level.

Reliability

3.13 Each time an assessment is conducted, similar assessment-related judgements should be made by different assessors across similar contexts and times to ensure the consistency and dependability of assessment outcomes which accurately reflect students' learning achievements. The reliability of assessment will be achieved mainly through:

- Using the same or similar assessment procedures, methods, instruments and practices each time the same assessment is conducted
- The same or similar conditions prevailing each time the assessment is administered
- Using clearly defined benchmarks in the assessment tools that are written in accessible language
- The consistent application of clearly articulated marking criteria and grading schemes at stated performance standards by all assessors across all students
- Comparing the assessment of learning achievements by different assessors to ensure uniform assessment outcomes
- Monitoring the consistency of assessment through internal and external moderation.

Academic integrity

3.14 ECT expects all assessment activity to be conducted with honesty, transparency and professionalism. Students' work must represent their own learning, and staff must apply assessment processes consistently and ethically.

3.15 Allegations of plagiarism, collusion, contract cheating (including inappropriate use of artificial intelligence tools), falsification or any other form of academic misconduct are investigated and adjudicated under the Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy and related procedures. That Policy sets out definitions, processes, penalties and students' rights, and should be read in conjunction with this Policy.

Sufficiency, currency and authenticity of evidence

3.16 Students should provide enough evidence that confirms their own current competence to enable assessors to make valid and reliable judgments about the achievement of learning outcomes and assessment criteria at the level of the course.

3.17 The completed assessment must adequately cover all the required learning outcomes and assessment criteria to enable the evaluation of the students' knowledge, understanding and skills. To achieve this, ECT will consider the following at the programme design stage:

- Well-designed assessments that include multiple sources and methods for gathering evidence which reflect different levels of complexity and cover the breadth and depth of the learning content.
- Assessment tasks that encourage critical thinking and analysis for measuring the students' ability to understand, analyse and synthesise information and concepts at the level required within the programme.
- Using different types of formative, summative and self-assessments that enable students to demonstrate their learning achievements through various means, such as written/oral responses, problem-solving tasks and practical demonstrations.

3.18 The completed assessment should reflect recent competence in current contexts. ECT will achieve this through:

- Stipulating the timescales for the evidence submitted for assessment, for example in applications for credits for certificated learning.
- Designing assessments that require students to demonstrate learning achievements in current work contexts (where applicable or appropriate).
- Where there are concerns about the authenticity of work, ECT may use appropriate methods such as text-matching software, analysis of digital artefacts, comparison with previous work, or viva voce discussions, in line with the Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy.

Word Count Requirements

3.19 Each assessment will clearly specify the required word count and the expected level of detail. While there is no formal penalty for submitting below the word count, students who do so may fail to address all required elements, which could impact their grade. It is the student's responsibility to ensure their submission meets the stated word count.

3.20 Students must declare the word count on the front page of their assessment submission.

3.21 If a marker suspects that the declared word count is inaccurate, they may request the assessment in a format that allows verification (e.g. Word or Excel). If the declared word count is found to differ from the actual word count, the student may face a

misconduct allegation.

3.22 Unless otherwise stated, the following elements are excluded from the word count:

- Cover page
- Declaration page
- Reference list
- Appendices
- Figures
- Diagrams

3.23 Students are permitted a margin of ±10% of the stated word count without penalty. Where the word count exceeds this margin, the penalty applied will be determined by the Programme Leader, exercising academic judgement and taking into account the nature and purpose of the assessment.

Online examinations

3.24 All online exams are monitored using IRIS invigilation software, which records video, audio, and screen activity for the duration of the examination. Prior to beginning an exam, students will be required to verify their identity using the approved authentication process. Examination instructions will clearly outline which resources are permitted during the assessment (for example, approved calculator models, data sheets, formula booklets, or handwritten notes). Any item or resource not explicitly listed as permitted will be considered unauthorised.

3.25 If the use of calculators or specialist equipment, is required for a particular examination, the acceptable models and associated security or configuration requirements will be detailed in the Programme Handbook and explained by the Learning Support Officer (LSO) in advance of the exam.

3.26 Unless specifically authorised within the examination instructions, students must not:

- Communicate with any other person during the exam
- Use additional devices or software
- Share exam content in any format
- Seek or receive assistance from any individual or online service

3.27 The use of artificial intelligence tools is governed by **ECT's Guidelines for AI Use Policy**, and students are expected to familiarise themselves with these regulations before undertaking any assessment.

3.28 Any technical issues that arise during an online exam must be reported immediately using the designated support channels. These procedures, along with contact details, will be provided by the Learning Support Officer before the examination period.

3.29 Breaches of examination regulations—including but not limited to unauthorised resource use, communication with third parties, misuse of AI tools, or falsification of identity—will be investigated under the ***Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy*** and may result in formal disciplinary action.

Feedback

3.30 Assessment results and feedback must be provided to students within the following timeframes:

- Formative assessments: immediate feedback on assessments completed through the electronic learning platform and feedback within 10 working days for other assessments
- Summative assessments: feedback within 21 working days
- Examinations: feedback within 21 working days
- Final Thesis (master's degree): 30 working days

3.31 Where feedback cannot be provided within these timescales due to exceptional circumstances, students will be informed of the revised timescale and the reason. Monitoring of turnaround times will form part of the annual evaluation of assessment practices.

4 Moderation of Assessment

Pre Assessment Moderation

4.1 All summative assessment briefs, including those from level 4 (coursework and examinations), must be subject to moderation and scrutinised internally by a Programme Leader from a different course of study prior to first use.

4.2 Examination papers and assessment briefs for all modules must be sent to the external examiner for comment accompanied by model answers, which must be sufficient to provide the guidance needed to inform the external examiner on the kind of answers expected. The following should be considered:

4.2.1 Adherence to the assessment as stated in the module descriptor
4.2.2 Clarity and accuracy of the assessment rubric
4.2.3 Clarity of the questions
4.2.4 Appropriateness of any mark allocation within the question
4.2.5 Provision of a grading scheme for exams
4.2.6 The provision of indicative answers for use by markers, moderators and external examiners
4.2.7 That the standards are appropriate to the level and type of assessment
4.2.8 That the type of assessment instrument is appropriate to test the learning outcome(s)
4.2.9 For examination papers, that current questions are sufficiently distinct from those in recent past papers.

4.3 The scrutiny process must be documented, and copies of logs must be kept in the appropriate repository. The Programme Leader must ensure that assessment briefs are prepared and scrutinised according to the date stated in the module guide or assessment schedule.

4.4 Any expectations from Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, where accreditation has been secured, will be adhered to.

Post-assessment moderation

4.5 All summative assessments will be subject to an element of independent internal moderation by a member of staff (moderator) from outside of the programme team. A sample of marked work will be second marked to ensure that the first marker/assessor has applied the marking criteria appropriately and fairly. The moderator will be a lecturer other than the lecturer/assessor of the assessment task. This process is designed to ensure fairness and consistency in assessment and to ensure that appropriate academic standards are maintained.

4.6 The sample shall reflect the number of students completing a particular assessment, but, in all cases, shall meet the minimum of 10%. The minimum sample size is normally six and the maximum sample size is 30. The sampled work should, if possible, contain an example from each classification band, including borderlines, and marginal fails. The moderator should ensure that the marking criteria has been accurately and consistently applied. Where marks are moderated based on a sample of work, rather than the work of an entire cohort, no individual student mark may be changed by the moderator, unless errors in calculation or omissions are identified. In such cases the work of the entire cohort should be returned to the original assessor to be reassessed based on the report from the moderator.

4.7 Projects and dissertations will be double marked, meaning that two independent markers will assess the student's work without seeing each other's comments or grades, and without knowing the student's identity. For oral examinations and presentations at least two assessors will be present, or the process will be recorded to ensure fairness in the moderation process.

4.8 Where work is double marked, the markers will be asked to agree on a final mark. Justification must be given on the mark sheet as to how the agreed mark was reached. If the marks differ by more than 10 percentage points and the two markers cannot agree on a final mark, a third marker will be appointed. The third marker will blind mark the work. The three markers, in consultation with the Programme Leader, will then decide on the appropriate mark based on the three marks and the markers' comments. In cases where the three markers and the Programme Leader cannot agree, the Dean, in consultation with the Programme Leader, will decide the appropriate mark based on the three marks and the markers' comments. The actual individual marks will be retained for the information of the external examiner(s).

4.9 Marks for all 'ephemeral' work (e.g. presentations) must also be moderated regardless of its assessment weighting within a module. This can be done by using two members of academic staff to observe all (or a sample) of the work or by recording a sample of the work for the moderator to evaluate.

Levels 4, 5, 6, 7	Sample internal moderation

Projects and dissertations at levels 6 and 7	Double marking, followed by sample internal moderation

4.10 External Examiners will be provided with a representative sample of student work for each assessment task on the units they are allocated to, in line with the requirements set out in the ***External Examining policy.***

4.11 In cases involving small cohorts, moderators and external examiners may be required to review the complete set of student submissions.

4.12 The internal moderation process must be documented in the moderation log, showing the first marker's marks and the marks agreed by the internal moderator. This information must be provided to the external examiner and a copy of the log must be saved in the virtual repository.

4.13 All marks issued prior to the Assessment Board's deliberations are deemed provisional and shall not be considered final until formally ratified by the Board.

Scaling of marks

4.14 In general, ECT policy is not to scale marks, except in exceptional circumstances and only where the marks after scaling will more accurately reflect student learning and achievement against the assessment element or module learning outcomes. Any module that has a mark distribution outside of the normal expectations must be discussed as part of the moderation process.

4.15 Any decision to scale will be based on appropriate evidence, which may include statistical analysis of mark distributions and external examiner advice. Scaling decisions must be transparent, documented in Assessment Board minutes, and applied consistently across the affected cohort. 4.21 All proposals for scaling must be approved by the Dean.

4.16 Scaling should be undertaken before module marks are released to students. However, in cases where provisional marks have been given to coursework that may have been returned to students for feedback purposes, if any scaling is subsequently applied, the students must be provided with an overview of the process and the rationale for it.

Sampling of student work for external examining

4.17 Detailed expectations for the selection, volume and range of work provided to external examiners, and their roles in reviewing assessment processes and outcomes, are set out in the ECT External Examining Policy and Procedures and will reflect the requirements set out in paragraph 4.6 of this policy.

5 Students' right to appeals and complaints

5.1 Students may request a review of assessment outcomes in accordance with the Student ***Appeals Policy and Procedures***. This document sets out:

- the grounds on which an appeal may be made (e.g. procedural irregularity, bias, or previously unknown mitigating circumstances);

- the stages of consideration; and applicable timescales.

5.2 Appeals cannot challenge academic judgement but may challenge the fairness or correct application of procedures.

5.3 Students may make a complaint about the assessment process or the standard of service they have received by using the procedure set out in the ***Student Complaints Policy and Procedures.***

6 Monitoring and evaluation

6.1 The Academic Board will consider internal and external data on progression, attainment, differential outcomes and feedback turnaround times, together with external examiner reports and relevant sector guidance, to evaluate whether assessment practices remain fair, inclusive and appropriate for blended and online delivery.

7 Accountabilities

7.1 The Academic Board is responsible for review and approval of the policy and procedures. All committees and officers referenced in this Policy are responsible for ensuring consistency with the Academic Regulations.

7.2 The policy will be published on the ECT website. Staff and students receive induction and training on this policy.

8 Definitions

Academic appeal
A request from a student for review of an academic decision (such as a mark, progression or award outcome), based on specified grounds and considered under a published institutional procedure.

Academic integrity
Commitment by students and staff to honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility in teaching, learning and assessment, including appropriate acknowledgement of sources and appropriate use of AI and other tools.

Academic misconduct
Any act that breaches academic integrity in assessment, such as plagiarism, collusion, contract cheating (including misuse of AI tools), fabrication, impersonation or exam cheating.

Assessment
Any task, activity or process used to evaluate the extent to which a student has achieved the intended learning outcomes of a module or course. Assessments should be valid, reliable, inclusive, transparent and consistent with external reference points.

Assessment Board
A formally constituted body, including internal and external examiners, responsible for confirming marks, making progression and award decisions, and assuring that regulations and standards are applied consistently.

Assessment criteria
Explicit, published statements that describe what performance looks like at different levels for a given task, indicating how achievement of the intended learning outcomes will be judged. Criteria support transparent marking and effective feedback.

Programme

A coherent, approved programme of study, normally consisting of modules, with defined learning outcomes and assessment, leading to academic credit or an award such as a degree or diploma.

Equity and inclusivity (in assessment)
The design and conduct of assessment so that all students have fair and equivalent opportunities to demonstrate their learning, with barriers minimised for under-represented or disadvantaged groups.

Explicitness
Clear communication of assessment requirements, criteria, weightings, deadlines, word limits and regulations so that expectations are transparent to students and staff.

External examiner
An independent academic or practitioner from another institution appointed to provide impartial expert oversight of the standards of awards and the fairness and consistency of assessment processes and outcomes.

External examining
The process through which external examiners review assessments, marking, moderation and awards, and report on whether standards are comparable with the wider sector and policies are applied fairly.

Feedback
Information provided to students on their performance in assessments, explaining how their work meets the criteria and indicating how they can improve. Effective feedback is timely, specific and constructive.

Formative assessment
Assessment primarily designed to provide feedback that helps students understand their progress and improve future performance. It may be ungraded or carry low weighting and is used to support learning rather than to determine final outcomes.

Impartiality
The requirement that assessment decisions are made objectively, free from actual or perceived bias, conflicts of interest, or preferential treatment, supported by clear procedures and (where appropriate) anonymised marking.

Mitigating (extenuating) circumstances
Serious, unforeseen events outside a student's control that have a significant impact on assessment performance or attendance, considered through formal processes which may allow adjustments such as extensions, deferrals or disregarding affected attempts.

Moderation (internal)
A quality-assurance process in which one or more qualified staff review assessment tasks and/or samples of marked work to ensure that criteria are applied consistently, standards are appropriate, and marking is fair across the cohort.

Reasonable adjustments
Modifications to assessment arrangements for students with disabilities or specific needs to remove substantial disadvantage, without altering intended learning outcomes or academic standards.

Reliability (of assessment)
The consistency of assessment judgments over time and across markers and cohorts, such that similar performance is rewarded similarly.

Scaling of marks
A controlled, documented adjustment of marks for an assessment or module (normally applied to a whole cohort) where evidence shows that the distribution of marks does not appropriately reflect achievement or intended standards.

Summative assessment
Assessment that contributes to the final mark or outcome for a module or award and indicates the extent to which students have met the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

Sufficiency, currency and authenticity of evidence
Principles applied to evidence used in assessment: sufficiency (enough evidence to make a secure judgment), currency (evidence reflects recent and up-to-date achievement), and authenticity (evidence is verifiably the student's own work).

Validity (of assessment)
The extent to which an assessment accurately measures the intended learning outcomes and required skills, using appropriate methods and content at the correct level.

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Revision History		
Version	**Date**	**Description of key changes**