

Principles of Assessment at LSE (20 April 2018)

(Prepared by sub-working group on Assessment Principles)

Assessment is an integral part of education at LSE. It supports the learning and development of our students as well as measuring their attainment on particular courses and programmes.

Assessment should be considered holistically as part of the overall programme and should be used to reinforce expected standards. Curriculum and assessment should where possible be co-designed by staff, students and involve relevant internal and external stakeholders. Assessment should be conducted in accordance with School regulations, policies and procedures.

These assessment principles, based on a consideration of the educational, ethical and regulatory dimensions of good assessment practice, provide a framework for the development and enhancement of assessment practice at LSE.

1. Assessment should be valid

Assessments and marking criteria should relate directly to the programme aims and learning outcomes, and enable students to demonstrate that they have achieved all the intended learning outcomes by the end of the programme.

2. Assessments should be diverse

Where possible and as appropriate to the field of study, each programme of study should include a range of assessment methods.

3. Assessments should be incremental

Assessment should ensure intellectual development and skills progression through the programme. Therefore, at each level of study, assessments should build upon previous attainment and develop the skills required for the next level of study.

4. Assessment should be sufficiently demanding

Assessments should be designed to challenge students in line with the level of learning on their programme and enable students to demonstrate the highest level of attainment of which they are capable.

5. Assessment should be inclusive and equitable

Assessment on a programme should be designed to enable students to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways, taking into account a range of methods, approaches to learning and disciplinary (interdisciplinary) contexts. As far as is practicable and without compromising academic standards, all assessment elements and procedures should not disadvantage any group or individuals. Reasonable adjustments must be made for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions and specific learning differences.

6. Assessments should be managed and balanced across the programme of study

Staff should ensure that students undertake sufficient and appropriate assessments, which enable the highest levels of attainment of the intended learning outcomes while taking account of student workload across the course and programme. The amount of assessment should be scheduled thoughtfully to provide a robust yet manageable evidence of achievement without overloading students or staff.

7. Assessment processes should be reliable

Clear and consistent processes should be established for setting, marking, grading, moderation and external scrutiny. Accurate, accessible, clear, consistent, transparent, and timely information on assessment elements and procedures should be made available to students, staff and external examiners.

8. Students should engage with both formative and summative assessments throughout the programme

Formative assessment should be clearly connected to associated summative assessments. Regular formative opportunities should be provided which help to deepen students' understanding of the subject.

9. Students should receive clear and timely assessment guidance

Information about assessment including guidance about particular assessments and how and where to get support in preparing for those assessments should be communicated to students at the start of each course and revisited in advance of particular assessments. The marking criteria and marking scales should be explicit, transparent and clearly communicated so that students may use them as a means to develop and improve their work.

10. Students should receive timely, constructive feedback on both formative and summative assessments

Feedback should include a justification of the student's performance in the given assignment and constructive specific suggestions for future improvement. Feedback can and should take a variety of forms including written, verbal, continuous, informal, technology-enabled, peer and self.

11. Assessments should be effective and efficient

Assessment should be designed and managed to effectively utilise academic and professional services staff time and expertise. The use of technology to support electronic management of assessment (submission of assessments, marking and feedback), should be encouraged. However, efficiency must not be at the detriment of the preceding principles.

12. Assessment should be monitored, evaluated and co-ordinated

Students' assessment performance should be monitored to ensure fairness, parity and quality. Assessment should be regularly reviewed by staff and students through internal department processes and in line with School quality assurance processes.

13. Staff development principles, policies and practices should include assessment

All staff involved in the assessment of students should be fully aware of their role, responsibilities and the regulations around assessment. Clear guidance and support should be given to staff involved in marking including graduate teaching assistants.