

13 November 2023

Document 100_23

Assessment Policy and Procedure

Version History					
Title of Document	Assessment Policy and Procedure			Code	100_23
Access to Document <i>(Minimum list of document users to be notified upon release of document update)</i>	Internal Staff	Student & Academic Staff	Public	Category	Policy, Procedure,
		✓	✓		
Revision History					
Version	Change Originator	Document Owner	Approver	Approval Date	Effective Date
1st release of document	Director Curriculum and Quality Assurance	Director Curriculum and Quality Assurance	Principal	25 August 2022	25 August 2022
	Details of Change	This document is replacing previous Assessment Policy and Procedure Documents (Doc_011 versions) which are obsolete.			
Doc_100_23	Change Originator	Document Owner	Approver	Approval Date	Effective Date
	Deputy Principal Academic Affairs	Deputy Principal Academic Affairs	Principal	13 November 2023	13 November 2023
	Details of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 7: Included statement that student may be asked to sit for a viva. Update regarding reference to AI use. Official contact person for student is the Programme Coordination Officer. Updates of list of supporting documents. 			
	IDEA College Logo	New College logo was changed on 24/06/2024			

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Continuous Improvement

Procedures are meant to be 'living' documents that need to be applied, executed, and maintained. If the procedure does not reflect the current, correct work practice, it needs to be updated. Please contact us on: +356 2145 6310

Contents

1. Aim	5
2. Defining 'Assessment'	5
3. Scope.....	5
4. Assessment Policy	5
5. Guiding Educative Principles.....	6
6. Approaches to Quality Assessment	6
7. Assessment Procedures	7
7.1 Introduction	7
7.2 The Viva Voce.....	7
7.3 Assessment Procedure of the Taught Modular Component of a Study Programme	7
7.4 Assessment Procedure of the Dissertation Component of a Study Programme.....	11
7.5 Assessment Procedure of the Practical Component of a Study Programme	11
8. Grading and Classification.....	11
9. Sanctions for Plagiarism, Collusion, and/or AI Misuse for Assignments	12
10. Student Responsibilities.....	14
11. Lecturer Responsibilities	15
12. Administrative Responsibilities.....	16
13. Supporting documents.....	16

1. Aim

This IDEA Assessment Policy and Procedure describes the processes required to support the implementation of IDEA Assessment Policy at IDEA Academy (Malta and International Campuses).

IDEA Academy recognises that assessment is an integral aspect of effective teaching and learning and takes responsibility for ensuring the quality and reliability of teaching, learning, assessment marking and feedback practices.

2. Defining 'Assessment'

2.1 The term 'Assessment' includes all forms of assessment to award a mark and/or grad that contributes towards the final award of any IDEA Academy qualification.

2.2 The methods of assessment may include various methods e.g., online discussions, presentations, examinations, class assignments, home-based assignments, dissertations, practical assessments, portfolio, projects, case studies, logbooks, placement assessments and any other method of assessment approved by IDEA Academy.

2.3 The methods of assessment may be a combination of the above examples, though not limited to, and to each of which a percentage of the final mark is assigned.

3. Scope

This document covers all IDEA Academy study programmes starting August 2022 and thereafter.

4. Assessment Policy

IDEA Academy's Delivery and Assessment strategies are built on a strong and robust adult learning model as promoted by Malcolm Shepherd Knowles in his Andragogical model. The two main drivers of this model are:

- a) The adult learner is self-directed; and
- b) The adult learner is expected to take responsibility for decisions.

In education assessment refers to any process of gathering and analysing evidence to make judgments about students' learning in relationship to the goals, objectives and learning outcomes of the curriculum. IDEA Academy employs both formative and summative assessment modes as an integral part of information gathering.

5. Guiding Educative Principles

With a student-centred approach, IDEA Academy recognises that the assessment of students is one of the critical factors to maintain credibility of academic standard of the qualifications awarded. Thus, IDEA Academy is committed to implementing assessment practices which promote fairness, consistency, and rigour by ensuring the application of the following educative principles:

- 5.1 Learning activities and assessments are clearly aligned with the established learning outcomes.
- 5.2 Assessment practices are feasible allowing every student to produce evidence of performance which meets the targeted learning outcomes.
- 5.5 Assessment procedures are reflective of the targeted level and academic standards are maintained.
- 5.4 Encourage the use of assessment practices, methods and modes designed to accommodate the diversity of learners.
- 5.5 Design assessments that are valid, fair, transparent, flexible, feasible and incorporate clearly defined assessment criteria.
- 5.6 Standardised practices are implemented to ensure validity, consistency, and fairness to all learners.

6. Approaches to Quality Assessment

IDEA Academy approaches quality assessment by:

- 6.1 Promoting to enhance the quality of the student's learning experience by providing feedback that is clear, informative, timely, constructive, and relevant to the needs of the student.
- 6.2 Grading and confirming the standard of the student's performance and achievement as aligned to the established learning outcomes, determining the student's progression route.
- 6.3 Providing relevant information in order to continuously evaluate and improve the quality of the curriculum and the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

7. Assessment Procedures

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 Assessment procedures cover the different components of a study programme which are assessed, contributing towards the final mark and/or grade of the qualification.
- 7.1.2 The different components of a study programme may include but not limited to written, oral and practical forms of assessment which may be assessed in various ways e.g., via online discussions/fora, presentations, assignments and/or examinations, dissertation, and practice sessions.
- 7.1.3 IDEA Academy reserves the right to call students for a Viva Voce following submission of work for assessment.

7.2 The Viva Voce

- 7.2.1 The Viva Voce (often referred to as Viva) is a formal oral examination, which forms part of the students' assessment process. It presents the students with the opportunity to emphasise the strengths of their study, fill in any gaps that were evident in their written work, and demonstrate that the student has adequate knowledge and understanding of the topic in context. The Viva Voce is also an important part of the assessment process as it demonstrates that the work presented is the student's own work. It is also an opportunity to engage in academic discourse with the members of the board.

7.3 Assessment Procedure of the Taught Modular Component of a Study Programme

7.3.1 General Information

- 7.3.1.1 Assessment is conducted using formative and summative methods which may include e.g., in-class assignments, home-based assignments, online discussions, presentations and/or examinations.
- 7.3.1.2 A variety of assessment tools are used to allow the learner to produce evidence of performance which meets the targeted learning outcomes.
- 7.3.1.3 Assessment tasks are aligned to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria as described in the course/module specifications which are provided to the lecturer, the student and the internal verifier. No new or additional requirements can be included into the module description.
- 7.3.1.4 The method of assessment shall reflect the level, the number of ECTSs and the total hours of learning: scheduled contact hours and self-study hours of each module.
- 7.3.1.5 Assessment rubrics are provided to the students, lecturers and internal verifiers to facilitate an understanding of the marking scheme as aligned to the assessment criteria.

7.3.2 Assessment Tasks

- 7.3.2.1 Assessment tasks should be designed to both challenge and engage the students in their own learning process.
- 7.3.2.2 Assessment tasks should be logically sequenced so that knowledge builds upon the learning of the previous task.
- 7.3.2.3 Expected wordcount needs to be clearly defined and a 10% plus or minus consideration should be factored in.
In case of assignment submissions that exceed the 10% word count concession, the 'exceeding words' will not be taken into consideration by the examiner/lecturer/assessor.
- 7.3.2.4 The time frame needs to be clearly described together with any penalties that may apply regarding lateness, plagiarism etc.
- 7.3.2.5 Assessment tasks are reviewed by an internal verifier, who provides supportive feedback to the lecturer for improvement before issuing.

7.3.3 Formative Assessment

- 7.3.3.1 Formative assessment provides on-going guidance and feedback from the lecturer to students during their learning experience in preparation for their summative assessment, while contributing towards building a community of practice.
- 7.3.3.2 Formative assessment takes place through a blended approach of face-to-face and on-line sessions using assessment tasks e.g., online discussions, presentations.
- 7.3.3.3 In cases when online discussion tasks are used for assessment, these will be initiated by the Lecturer presenting discussion questions. Every student is asked to critically answer a minimum of one (1) selected question and post critical feedback to other students' posts.
- 7.3.3.4 The discussion tasks are facilitated and monitored by the lecturer who provides students with constructive feedback to help them improve and prepare for summative assignment and dissertation, when applicable.
- 7.3.3.5 Students may be required to use references and citations in their posts to further expand their academic writing skills necessary for their summative assignments and dissertation when applicable, as indicated by the lecturer.
- 7.3.3.6 Formative assessment tasks may be graded to help the student gauge his/her level of performance during the learning experience.
- 7.3.3.7 Formative assessment tasks may contribute to the student's final mark to acknowledge the student's participatory online discussion work.
- 7.3.3.8 Online questions, discussions, students' contributions and lecturer's feedback and assessment are carried out via IDEA's virtual learning platform.

7.3.4 Summative Assessment

7.3.4.1 The summative assessment is done via one assignment at the end of each module. The mode of assessment varies and may include in-class assignments, home-based written assignments, examination using diverse assessment tools which may include e.g., case studies, reports, proposals, essay titles and presentations, as applicable to the diverse modules.

7.3.4.2 Assessment Documentation consists of:

1. Assignment Cover Sheet which includes student's declaration of own work.
2. Assignment Brief Form which includes the following information:
 - a. Programme Title
 - b. Module Number and Title;
 - c. Cohort number;
 - d. Name of lecturer;
 - e. Name of Internal Verifier;
 - f. Issue Date;
 - g. Submission Date;
 - h. Accepted word count;
 - i. Assignment Tasks;
 - j. Guidelines;
 - k. Evidence to be generated by Students;
 - l. Access to the Assessment Rubric and
 - m. Signature of Lecturer

7.3.4.3 Students submit their assignment work via IDEA's virtual learning platform which includes a plagiarism detection software.

7.3.4.4 Students are allowed multiple checks on the plagiarism detection software before they submit for assessment to empower them to take ownership of their integrity and authenticity while they work.

7.3.4.5 The lecturer provides written assessment feedback and grading via IDEA's virtual learning platform.

7.3.4.6 Assessment decisions are internally verified before publishing.

7.3.5 Support to students

7.3.5.1 The official contact person for student support services is the Programme Coordination Officer who is the first point of contact with students. The Programme Coordination Officer will then meet with the student to discuss the support that is required.

7.3.5.2 When a student is unable to complete an assignment through extenuating circumstances, a process is outlined for students to indicate how to obtain special considerations.

7.3.6 Assessment Feedback

- 7.3.6.1 The students are provided with the lecturer's feedback on their assessment in written format.
- 7.3.6.2 Feedback must be timely and contain detailed comments from the lecturer, specifying where the student has done well and guidance on areas that require improvement, as well as a grade.

7.3.7 Internal Verification

- 7.3.7.1 Assessment Tasks are subject to an internal verification process before issuing assignment brief.
- 7.3.7.2 Assessment Decisions are subject to an internal verification process before publishing results.

7.3.8 Successful Completion of a Taught Module

- 7.3.8.1 In general IDEA Academy's minimum pass mark for a module of a study programmes is 50%. However, the minimum percentage pass may differ depending on the nature of the module/specific programme.

7.3.9 Successful Completion of a Programme of Studies

- 7.3.9.1 In general IDEA Academy's minimum pass mark for study programmes is 50%. However, the minimum percentage pass may differ depending on the nature of the specific programme.
- 7.3.9.2 For successful completion of a study programme, the student is required to achieve a minimum pass mark in each module, as applicable to the specific study programme.

7.3.10 Unsuccessful Completion of Work

- 7.3.10.1 In cases when a student fails to achieve a minimum of the established percentage pass mark in a study module, as applicable to the specific study programme, the student is considered to have failed the Module, but shall however, be eligible to resubmit on one occasion only with mark capping at a pass.
- 7.3.10.2 Students are offered support and guidance in preparation for the resubmission.
- 7.3.10.3 If a student does not achieve a minimum of the established percentage pass mark in the resubmission of the failed module(s) the student is considered to have failed the study programme.
- 7.3.10.4 Students who fail a module or a number of modules after resubmission may be considered by the Board of Studies to repeat the outstanding modules, with attendance, with the following cohort, assuming space on the course permitting and subject to the same module is delivered in the following cohort.
- 7.3.10.5 A penalty charge may be applicable in a re-submission of a failed assessment in accordance with *Doc 098_22 Extension Payment Fees Guidelines*
- 7.3.10.6 The Board of Studies cannot guarantee that any of the modules delivered during one cohort period will feature again in any subsequent programmes.

7.3.11 Sanctions for non-submission

Failure to submit within the deadline without official justification

- 7.3.11.1 In the case of failure to submit an assignment/task and/or absence from a Class Assignment, where the student does not have any valid extenuating circumstances, the student shall have the opportunity to resubmit the assignment/task or re-sit only once the examination for that unit, with the final grade capped to a pass mark.

7.4 Assessment Procedure of the Dissertation Component of a Study Programme

- 7.4.1 The dissertation is a compulsory element of the all B.Sc. and M.Sc. Programmes.
- 7.4.2 Students who have successfully passed the written dissertation will be called to participate in the Viva Voce.
- 7.4.3 Students failing the written dissertation will have a chance for a second attempt to re-submit the dissertation only once. The resubmission includes dissertation proposal re-submission and a resubmission of a new dissertation within 1-year time after receiving the failing results.
- 7.4.4 A penalty charge may be applicable in a re-submission of a failed dissertation in accordance with *Doc 098_22 Extension Payment Fees Guidelines*.

For further information refer to:

Doc_059_23 Student Dissertation Manual

Doc_064_23 Assessment of Dissertation

Doc_074_23 Viva Voce Guidelines

7.5 Assessment Procedure of the Practical Component of a Study Programme

- 7.5.1 Practical Assessment allows the assessor to assess the practical skills and competences of the students as applicable to the study programme.
- 7.5.2 Assessment of the practical component(s) of a Study Programme is carried out against the learning outcomes reflecting the required skills and competences.
- 7.5.3 Different assessment methods may be used to carry out practical assessment, to include but not limited to: e.g., direct observation, questioning, reflective discussions, reflective portfolio, log-book.
- 7.5.4 For details of the assessment procedure used in a study programme refer to corresponding programme specifications.

8. Grading and Classification

8.1 The overall mark achieved in the 'taught' component is worked out by calculating the average mark obtained in the 'taught' modules.

8.2 In calculating the average mark obtained in the taught component of a study programme, the individual mark obtained for each Module is weighted according to its credit value. The total resultant marks are added and divided by the total number of credits to give the average mark. The average shall be recorded correct to the nearest whole number.

8.3 The final overall total mark achieved in a Study Programme is worked out by summing a stipulated percentage of all the weighted marks obtained for the taught component and where applicable, a stipulated percentage of the weighted marks of the other assessment components as per Programme Specification. Percentage marks are added to make the final mark which determines the classification of the qualification.

8.4 Classification of the Qualification may be: Pass with Distinction, Pass with Credit, Pass with Merit, Pass and Fail.

9. Sanctions for Plagiarism, Collusion, and/or AI Misuse for Assignments

9.1 Turnitin provides % similarity report before submission (in the case of assignments and dissertations only and not examinations). In the case of AI, the student will not receive any feedback from Turnitin but AI generated % will be indicated to the Academy, and further investigation is conducted. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that AI is not used to replace their academic efforts. Copying and pasting AI generated material will be detected by the Academy and sanctions will be enforced.

9.2 While Turnitin provides a % similarity report it is the responsibility of the lecturer/tutor to evaluate the plagiarism report and the percentage of potential AI use, determine the level of plagiarism and AI misuse, and mark the students' work accordingly.

9.3 Failure to submit original, authentic work (plagiarism or collusion) will lead to the below sanctions:

9.3.1 Grade-related measures and penalties involving an assignment/ open book examination/ assessed task:

- a) Eligible grade is given if after exclusions by the assessor (e.g., assignment question, template and technical jargon, formulae) the score doesn't exceed 15% including direct quotations and bibliography. *It is to be noted that quotations are only acceptable within reasonable quantities and only if they add value to the work presented.*
- b) A reduction in the grade for the assignment – if the plagiarism level amounts to 16-20%.
- c) If the plagiarism on the assignments in the initial stage amounts to 21-25% or 26%-30%, a partial credit for academic incompetence will be given. The partial credit may will entail a reduction of marks according to the assessment rubric with no additional penalty marks, according to Plagiarism Policy Doc 017_23).

d) No credit for the assignment – if, following the initial stage the plagiarism level exceeds 30%. In such instance, student will fail the first submission and is permitted to re-do the assignment. In case of resubmissions, the assignment will be treated as a second attempt and, while marked according to the usual procedure including the lecturer’s feedback, the mark will be capped to a pass mark.

f) Table showing decisions and actions on sanctions for plagiarism:

Plagiarism Penalties - Taught Modules Assessment	
<i>Level of Plagiarism as indicated from the Turnitin % Similarity Report</i>	
% Similarity Report [#]	Decisions and Actions
0% - 15%	Level of similarity is not treated as Plagiarism
16% - 20%	Mark is reduced up to 10 marks.
21% - 25%	Mark is reduced up to 20 marks.
26% - 30%	Mark is reduced up to 30 marks.
Higher than 30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Fail - first submission. *Student is required to re-do/re-submit the assignment. *The assessment will be treated as a second attempt which is the final attempt. *The second attempt is marked according to the usual procedure and the lecturer provides appropriate feedback. *The mark is capped to a pass mark.
<p>#Academic Incompetence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *At the initial stages of studies, assessor takes into consideration the possibility of academic incompetence of the student and may treat the case as an instance of 'academic incompetence'. *In such cases when the % Similarity Report is minimal and less than 30% the assessor notifies the student, giving him/her a copy of the plagiarism report for learning purposes and indicates how to avoid repeating the error in future assessments. *In such cases marks may be deducted according to the rubric with no additional plagiarism penalties. *The QA office needs to be informed of similar decisions. 	

9.4 Identification of AI Misuse and Sanctions

9.4.1 If the level of AI misuse is detected

Lecturer is to determine the level of cheating. The AI use is not hindering the recognition of the student's voice and any critical engagement with:

- peer-reviewed literature,
- conceptual theories,
- real-life experiences,
- reflection,
- and analysis etc., or
- any other criteria/instruction as indicated in the assessment brief.

The lecturer is to act accordingly and mark, affecting the related sanctions where deemed appropriate and assigning the deserved mark.

9.4.2 If the level and gravity of AI misuse is persistently high to the extent that the student's voice is completely missing and no evidence of the below is present in the work:

- any critical engagement with peer-reviewed literature,
- conceptual theories,
- real-life experiences,
- reflection,
- and analysis etc., or
- any other criteria/instruction as indicated in the assessment brief.

The lecturer is to treat the submission as a failed attempt, the lecturer does not give feedback nor corrects the first attempt.

9.5 In cases when students' assignments submissions continue to be consistently plagiarised and/or showing AI misuse, IDEA Academy may stop the student from continuing his/her studies.

Refer to: Doc_017_23: Recognising and Avoiding Plagiarism Policy and Procedure

10. Student Responsibilities

The student should:

- a) Complete all assessments to deadlines and within the criteria set down by IDEA Academy guidelines provided **e.g.**, in the assignment brief and any other document referring to assessment.
- b) Submit work for assessments which is original, his/her own and appropriately referenced to sources using the British Harvard Referencing Style.
- c) Where applicable submit Assignment Coversheet including declaration of own work.

11. Lecturer Responsibilities

The Lecturer should:

11.1 Ensure that all deadlines are respected e.g., handing in of assessment brief, internal verification, corrections, posting online discussion questions etc.

11.2 Design all assessment tasks e.g., discussion tasks, assignments, examinations etc., clearly aligned to the programme/module learning outcomes and assessment criteria, within the given timeframe.

11.3 Adhere to and participate in the Internal Verification Process as required.

11.4 Ensure that students are aware of the importance of authenticity and the consequences of plagiarism. Refer to Doc_017_23 Plagiarism Policy and Procedure for more information.

11.5 It is the Lecturer's responsibility to check and evaluate the plagiarism and AI reports of each student on Turnitin before proceeding with the marking.

11.6 The lecturer rates the magnitude/extent of plagiarism and AI misuse and determines what actions are required as an integral part of the marking process. Refer to Section 9 above.

11.7 In case of plagiarism the following actions may be taken accordingly:

11.7.1 In case of minor plagiarism reduce marks according to the level of plagiarism:

- Mark reduced by 10% (all Rubric Referencing Section Marks) for work indicating plagiarism of 16-20%
- Mark reduced by 20% (all Rubric Referencing Section Marks plus an additional 10 marks) for work indicating plagiarism of 21-25%
- Mark reduced by 30% (all Rubric Referencing Section Marks plus an additional 20 marks) for work indicating plagiarism of 25-30%

11.7.2 In case of major plagiarism follow the policy and advise the verifier.

11.8 In cases where plagiarism exceeding 30% is detected, the student fails the first attempt, the lecturer does not give feedback nor corrects the first attempt and the plagiarism procedure as per Doc_017_23 Plagiarism Policy and Procedure.

11.9 In cases where there is detection of AI use/misuse, the lecturer is to determine the level of AI use and in case of AI misuse to what extent it is hindering the recognition of the student's voice. Refer to Section 9 above.

11.10 Adhere to IDEA Academy assessment specifications, criteria, and rubrics in judging evidence towards an award. Refer to Assignment Briefs and Assessment Rubrics on Canvas for further information.

11.11 Provide constructive written feedback to students for all assessment. Feedback should be given on both the strengths and weaknesses emphasizing on how the student can improve in future assessment.

11.12 Fill in the results sheet and return it to the verifier keeping in copy IDEA Academy as advised. Assessment decisions and marks are also to be recorded on directly on the students' work on the Canvas-Learning Management Platform within the established and communicated timeframe. Results are not to be published before verification is complete. Refer to Document 036_23 Internal Verification Policy and Procedure for further information.

11.13 Ensure that the right to appeal against assessment decisions is communicated to students at the start of the course. Refer to Document 008_Grievance Policy and Procedure for further information.

11.14 Ensure that students' records (e.g. attendance, marks, feedback, etc) are maintained and checked as part of the lecturing duties in support of the quality process throughout the year.

11.15 Ensure that students' work and assessment records are stored securely and that both are retained for a duration of a course as per IDEA Academy Privacy Policy on the website and GDPR regulations: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-topic/data-protection/reform/rules-business-and-organisations/principles-gdpr/how-long-can-data-be-kept-and-it-necessary-update-it_en

12. Administrative Responsibilities

- a) The Quality Team is responsible for the monitoring of this procedure.
- b) The Quality Team is responsible for the maintenance and reviewing of this procedure for improvement.

13. Supporting documents

- Doc_008_22 Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Doc_009_22 Student Disciplinary Procedure
- Doc_017_23 Plagiarism Policy and Procedure
- Doc_018_22 Student Support Policy
- Doc_036_23 Internal Verification Policy and Procedure
- Doc_037_22 General Programme Regulations
- Doc_046_22 Verifying Student Identity in Online Learning Activities
- Doc_096_22: Request for Concessions and Extension Regulation

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