



UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

CODE OF PRACTICE ON ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX G

Policy on Assessment of Group Work for Taught Provision

2023-24

Applicable to all cohorts

In the Code of Practice on Assessment and all Appendices the term “student” includes apprentices on degree apprenticeship programmes

Policy on Assessment of Group Work for Taught Provision

1. Definitions

1.1. The Policy applies to situations:

1.1.1. Where a group of students (i.e. 2 or more) is assessed by a single, jointly produced assignment (whether this is a product, e.g. a report, or a performance e.g. a presentation);

1.1.2. Where students are set individual assignments that demonstrate learning derived from formal group work and where, therefore, the quality of the individual assignment will be impacted by the effectiveness of the group work element.

1.2. Guidance on good academic practice in the use of group work recommends that group work should be seen as an integral and progressive element of each university programme, enabling the development of group working skills. Detailed guidance for staff is provided in the Annexe to this Policy. It is suggested that academic staff review the contents of the Annexe prior to introducing elements of assessed group work within programmes/modules.

1.3. It must be ensured that students are treated equitably in group working activities and that these activities do not overburden students at the expense of other methods of teaching, learning and assessment. The assessment process must not be biased according to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or belief, age, class or disability.

2. Requirements of Schools/Institutes

2.1. Module Specification

The module specification must clearly set out the nature of the group assignment, with the learning outcomes relating to either the group work process and/or the assessment product(s), and with assessment weightings if applicable. The specification also needs to outline the marking process, particularly whether it is practicable to use anonymous marking. The module tutor is responsible for ensuring that the module specification is kept up-to-date.

2.2. Module/Programme/Department Handbook and the VLE

The information provided to students must clearly indicate:

- a) How students will be assigned to groups (i.e., either by the module tutor or through a self-selection process), whether a student is permitted to request a change to group membership and, if so, how this should be implemented. Where groups are self-selecting, the information should clearly state minimum / maximum numbers;
- b) The contribution of the group assignment to the final module mark (i.e., the weighting);
- c) The nature of the assignment and the assessment criteria to be used;
- d) If the mark of the group assignment will be the same for each group member, or if the group members will receive a moderated mark of the collective group assignment (based on a pre-established criteria), or if individual group members will receive individual marks for the group assignment. It is strongly encouraged that group assignments should apply some sort of peer moderation to ensure fairness;
- e) How late penalties, if applicable, will be applied (see Section 6). Local or specific issues can be dealt with using local departmental/school policies in conjunction with this policy;

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- f) The process by which the single group mark will be adjusted (where one has been used) to reflect individual contribution - e.g. by peer moderation of contribution, individual viva, electronic recording of on-line contribution etc., and the range of adjustment that may be made. Tutors should also signpost students to their role and responsibilities as outlined in related policies (Student Conduct and Bullying and Harassment, see Section 8.1). Where the module tutor(s) have been made aware of concerns from a student that they have been treated unfairly by other group members during group work or peer moderation due to a protected characteristic (or other unprotected characteristics such as linguistic discrimination) they will investigate with the relevant parties to ensure that the particular student has not been treated unfairly as a result of their characteristics (see Section 7) and/or has not received a potentially unfair mark as a result.
- g) How the assignment should be submitted, including any co-requirements for submission of individual peer moderation;
- h) If applicable, details of how the assignment will be presented or delivered visually (e.g. for presentations, posters or discussion-based assessments that require external participation); and how the assessment will be moderated where the group assignment is a performance rather than a product (e.g. a group presentation);
- i) That all students must ensure that if the assignment is a single group product, the final piece of submitted work is academically sound, without elements of plagiarism or other features of poor practice. Any Academic Integrity Penalties apply to all members of the group who submit the assignment, unless there is clear evidence that any errors or wrongdoing were caused by an individual part of the group only. In any instances where there is sufficient evidence, Academic Integrity penalties should be applied to that part of the group that is responsible for any errors or wrongdoing. The examiners will also need to adjust marking for the rest of the group taking into consideration the degree to which the submitted work, without those parts affected by Academic Integrity issues, achieves learning outcomes;
- j) That staff should advise students to retain copies of the final piece of work, and of their contributions to it, until grades have been confirmed by the relevant Board of Examiners;
- k) That any peer marks and peer feedback received by the group that does NOT form part of the assessment will not be taken into account by the academic marking the module;
- l) Whether or not anonymous marking will be used. Anonymous marking should be used wherever practicable; where it is not feasible for coursework to be marked anonymously, then this must be explained within the module specification. In cases of a group work assignment, it is acknowledged that anonymous marking is not always practical or possible;
- m) How feedback will be given within the standard marking period. Feedback on the assignment must be given to all students within the group and not solely to an individual representative of the group;
- n) Information on what support is available, and from where it can be accessed, in cases where a group or individuals in a group feel that the group is not functioning effectively;
- o) The responsibilities of students (see Section 5);
- p) How claims for extenuating circumstances and exemption from late penalties will be handled (see Section 6).
- q) The nature of resit opportunities and arrangements to be clearly communicated to students before they take the first sit assessment.

3. Reassessment opportunities

- 3.1. The reassessment requirements will depend on the nature of the module learning outcomes. Learning outcomes that do not refer to learning about group process, but which are concerned with the task, may be appropriately met by setting an alternative individual task. Tutors should be mindful in this case of the complexity of the group task and should ensure that any individual task set as a reassessment covers the full range of outcomes.
- 3.2. Where module learning outcomes do not refer to learning about group processes, then it will be appropriate to use individual reassessment tasks in situations where one or more members of the group have failed and the other members have passed the assignment.
- 3.3. Where learning outcomes do include those gained from the process of working as part of a group then any reassessment task must include the opportunity to meet these learning outcomes.

4. Situations where the group size is reduced after the start of the group work activity

- 4.1. If the group size changes after the start of the group work activity, then this should be taken into account when assessing the group product, i.e. when the assignment has been produced by fewer or more students than originally envisaged.
- 4.2. The monitoring of group process should be sufficient to allow the tutor to intervene expeditiously when a group falls below the optimum range for group size for the particular context. The intervention made will depend on the judgement of the tutor but should involve discussion with the group members. It could include merging groups and/or amending the form of expected task output(s), whilst ensuring that the learning outcomes can still be met.
- 4.3. If the group reduces to one person for whatever reason, and the learning outcomes and assessment require the opportunity of experiencing a group process, the remaining individual should normally be integrated into another group with appropriate support/guidance for this process to both the individual and the members of the group being joined.

5. Responsibilities of students

- 5.1. Students should be informed that:
 - 5.1.1. All members of the group must collectively ensure that if the assignment is a single group product, the final piece of work is academically sound, without elements of plagiarism or other features of poor practice in accordance with the Academic Integrity Policy (Code of Practice on Assessment Appendix L, Annex 1): https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/tqsd/code-of-practice-on-assessment/appendix_L_cop_assess_annex1.pdf;
 - 5.1.2. All members of the group should, where practical, retain copies of the final piece of work, and of their contributions to it, until grades have been confirmed at the relevant meeting of the Board of Examiners;
 - 5.1.3. All members of a group are responsible for monitoring the group's progress and should be prepared to access support from the module tutor(s) if the group is not functioning effectively;
 - 5.1.4. Individual students who feel that their group is not functioning effectively and/or are not happy with their treatment by the rest of the group should inform the tutor concerned as soon as possible;
 - 5.1.5. All members of the group are responsible for treating fellow group members equitably, in line with the University policies on Diversity and Equality of Opportunity and, Bullying and Harassment i.e. not engage in a discriminatory behaviour based on protected

characteristics or other characteristics that may not be covered under law but are still the subject of potential discrimination such as class or linguistic capability.

6. Extenuating circumstances

6.1. Students should be informed that:

- 6.1.1. Claims for exemption from late penalties will be dealt with in accordance with section 6 of the Code of Practice on Assessment <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/aqsd/academic-codes-of-practice/code-of-practice-on-assessment/code-of-practice-on-assessment/>;
- 6.1.2. Claims for extenuating circumstances by individual students within the group will be dealt with in accordance with the Policy on Extenuating Circumstances (Appendix M to the Code of Practice on Assessment) <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/aqsd/academic-codes-of-practice/code-of-practice-on-assessment/code-of-practice-on-assessment/>. Any influence on the effectiveness of the group work activity will be considered when marks are awarded to all within the group;
- 6.1.3. Further guidance on the Extenuating Circumstances Policy for both staff and students is also available (Code of Practice on Assessment Appendix M, Annexe 1): <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/aqsd/academic-codes-of-practice/code-of-practice-on-assessment/>;
- 6.1.4. If an individual student claims exemption from late penalties or extenuating circumstances where the group work is assessed by individual assignment, they alone will receive the exemption/consideration. Where the group work is assessed by a group assignment, all members of the group will be granted exemption from late penalties, but not extenuating circumstances. Where a group moderation exercise takes place tutors should ensure that students that have been granted exemption from late penalties or extenuating circumstances are not treated unfairly by other group members (see section 2.2f);
- 6.1.5. Where a student is unable to make a contribution due to circumstances likely to be considered valid for an extenuating circumstances claim, each member of the group is responsible for informing the tutor as soon as possible after they become aware of this. If other members are not aware of an individual student's circumstances, the tutor will exercise appropriate academic judgement;
- 6.1.6. Where one or more of the learning outcomes of a module is to be assessed by group work activities, it should be identified how the group work component will be assessed if an individual student has a re-sit opportunity. Reassessment must enable a student to demonstrate the same intended learning outcomes as the first assessment.

7. Declared disabilities

- 7.1. Where a member of a group has a declared disability (as previously notified to the University's Disability Advice and Guidance Team), highlighted via the Student Support Information Sheet (SSIS) on the class list in Banner (for Liverpool Online students, the Student Support team), module tutors should ensure that reasonable adjustments are in place, where possible, to ensure that the student can actively participate in the group activity or otherwise meet the learning outcomes of the module.
- 7.2. Module tutors should not reveal details of the disability to other members of the group, unless the student specifically requests it or gives permission following a discussion with the module tutor.

Module tutors should consult their Department/School Disability Co-ordinator (DDC) (for Liverpool Online students, the Kaplan Disability Team) in the first instance for advice on any appropriate adjustments to be made within the group work if a group member appears to require disability support. The Disability Advice and Guidance (DAG) website can be viewed at <http://www.liv.ac.uk/studentssupport/disability/index.htm>
<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/studentssupport/disabled-students/>

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- 7.3. Where a student declares a disability after the group work process has started, the module tutor should:
- 7.3.1. Check via Banner if an SSIS is in place (or checking with the Kaplan Disability Team for Liverpool Online students),
 - 7.3.2. If an SSIS is not highlighted, the Department/School DDC should be contacted to ascertain if the student is already known to the DDC/DST but that an SSIS is not in place; if this is the case, the module tutor should discuss possible appropriate support measures with the student,
 - 7.3.3. If a student is not known to the DDC or DAG, the module tutor should encourage the student to make themselves known to DAG.

8. Related Policies

- 8.1. Students and staff should also note the University's Bullying and Harassment Policy, which states, *inter alia*, that "All members of the University of Liverpool community have the right to be treated with dignity, respect and courtesy, in an environment free from any form of bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination." <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/hr/my-hr/information/policies/diversity/bullying/> , as well as the Student Conduct policy.

Note re terminology: the term 'module tutor' is used in this policy, but it is recognised that this role may be known as 'module coordinator' or 'module convenor' at local level within the University of Liverpool.