

Chemistry, Biochemistry and Core Science

3rd December 2018, 9.30am-12.30pm

One Awards, Peterlee

Attendance:

3 delegates from 2 providers attended:

Rob Aspden New College Durham

Kumi Yatsuzuka New College Durham

Sarah Irving Hartlepool College

In addition, there was 1 external moderator, *Eileen Baron*. The facilitator was *Sue Scheilling*, One Awards Lead Moderator.

Apologies:

Andrew Brook, Newcastle City Learning

Aims and Objectives of the event:

Aim: To provide opportunities for those involved in the assessment and/or moderation of the Access to HE Diploma to increase their understanding of assessment requirements, and to compare their assessment judgements with others delivering and/or moderating units in the same subject area.

Objectives:

To undertake activities which enable participants to:

1. Compare assessment judgements in relation to student achievement of learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
2. Compare assessment judgements in relation to student achievement of grade indicators.
3. Explore and confirm QAA and One Awards requirements for assessment.

Samples of student work chosen for the event:

Unit title: Chemistry – Questions and answers

Unit title: Core Science – Academic Poster

The associated learning outcomes, assessment criteria and grade descriptor components were provided on separate sheets. The assignment briefs were not provided.

Summary of feedback from delegates and moderators

Sample 1: Chemistry – Questions and answers

AC	Comments from delegates and moderators	Consensus decision Pass/ borderline/fail
3.1	Some small errors but generally, can use calculations correctly	Achieved
3.2	Successfully completed calculations	Achieved
3.3	Percentage composition has been calculated. Evidence difficult to find for 'evaluate' considered not to be the best command verb. For Science subjects, delegates considered 'determine' a better command verb to use.	Achieved
3.4	Similar comments re. command verb but considered achieved.	Achieved
3.5	Skill is achieved as molarity is calculated. However, equation and substance stated are incorrect.	Achieved Consensus for all ACs.

Grading judgements using GD components

GD	Comments from delegates and moderators	Consensus decision Pass/Merit/ Distinction/ Borderline
3	This was a comfortable Pass. There was a discussion around the components of GD3 (a and c). Delegates considered that the selection of skills and techniques was appropriate and eventually decided that the small errors were acceptable at level 3.	Merit Consensus following discussion
7	Work considered well organised and logical and definite consensus in awarding a merit for 7. There was a good discussion about the possibility of judging it as a distinction.	Merit Possibly borderline Distinction

Sample 2: Core Science – Academic Poster

Achievement of learning outcomes and assessment criteria

AC	Comments from delegates and moderators	Consensus decision Pass/ borderline/fail
1.1	Many comments on the 'incorrect' nature of some of the	Generally,

	wording student uses. Concern about the wording of the AC. As 'distinguishing' was attempted but not always 'correct'.	borderline with 1 fail (delegate was considering the views of colleagues)
1.2	Lack of evidence for this within the carbon cycle. Delegates found it difficult to locate evidence in part because of the nature of the assessment task. The wording of the AC was considered unclear and the use of the term 'role' to be problematic.	Consensus fail

Grading judgements using GD components

In normal circumstances the student would be required to produce a resubmission prior to grading taking place. However, for the purposes of the meeting, grading was discussed.

GD	Comments from delegates and moderators	Consensus decision
	Hypothetical resubmission to provide achievement for 1.2	Pass/Merit/ Distinction/ Borderline
2	Lack of evidence to judge a number of the components chosen (full list and breadth/ depth) Some facts rather dubious. Models and concepts not applicable	Pass
7	Lack of logic and fluency. Difficult to tease out issues due to way in which the poster was presented.	Pass Delegates did try to find sufficient evidence for merit but eventually decided it wasn't possible.

Outcomes from discussion on Draft Assignments

The facilitator lead a discussion on the policy and practice of providers in relation to allowing draft assignments. The following key points were raised.

This topic generated a great deal of discussion. One provider had very recently held a meeting to consider 'drafts' and support for students. This was in response to attendance at a standardisation meeting. This provider may develop a draft policy for early first assignments. The delegate from the other provider stated they had a no drafts policy.

1. Problems in allowing drafts

- Risk of grade polishing and potential risks to fairness and equity for students.
- Determining the 'line' for the feedback given by the assessors
- Time available and increase in volume of work
- Problems related to 'multiple deadlines'
- Difficulties in arriving at an appropriate definition of a draft
- Students perceptions of drafts and how it links to achievement of higher grades. Take up of opportunities may be related to individual personality difference in students.

2. Problems of not allowing drafts

- Linked to the converse of points above
- More resubmissions
- Psychology of failing
- Adult learners' expectations

3. Support for students with assignments

- A variety of approaches are employed by different members of staff
- Classroom activities included – using a checklist for the ACs with subheadings, highlighting the brief frequently whilst teaching, reinforcing the brief by examining ACs, GDs and reflecting on current work, workshop approach to encourage peer group sharing of understanding of issues to do with the brief, using examples of previous, similar submissions to explore issues.

4. What would need to happen to bring about a change in relation to draft policies

- Personal development and work on definitions
- Staff would need to undergo training and to buy into this development
- Management support

Agreed recommendations from the event

1. The way in which ACs are worded needs ongoing review to avoid misinterpretation by tutors and students.
2. The choice of assessment task needs to be a good fit with the ACs and provide the students with the opportunity to clearly address them.
3. GD components must be carefully selected for the specific assessment, otherwise, it may inhibit the opportunity for awarding the higher grades.

4. Contextualisation of GDs is particularly important for Science subjects, to allow the assessors opportunities to award higher grades.
5. The choice of command verbs for Science subjects needs to accurately reflect what the student is required to do. Sometimes evaluate/role are not the most appropriate terms.
6. A review of support provided to help students in relation to their assignments is useful to further develop standardisation of practice.

Date report written: 4th December 2018

Name of facilitator: Sue Scheilling