



ASSESSMENTS POLICY

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Policy Holder:	IBTC

1. Introduction

Assessment is at the heart of the learning experience of the students. Progression through a programme and the validation of success or failure is determined by assessment. Assessment provides public recognition of achievement and gives it its value.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for students at the International Bible Training College (IBTC)¹ which acknowledges that assessment is the primary focus of any learning and teaching strategies. The two main purposes of assessment are:

- a) To enhance students' learning
- b) To certify that students have achieved an appropriate level of performance

The aim of the policy is to put focuses on the development of a learning environment which promotes the student learning experience, facilitates the acquisition of competence in a range of the relevant skills for their future ministry and leads to increased learner autonomy.

Specific aspects include:

- Developing learner independence and employability;
- Promoting student motivation;
- Using assessment that is 'fit for purpose';
- Ensuring assessment is fair;
- Preventing assessment overload and 'bunching' of assignments;
- Providing high quality, relevant and timely feedback;
- Ensuring that assessment methods are 'inclusive' in not disproportionately disadvantaging different groups of students;
- Encouraging the use of formative approaches to assessment;
- Providing support for learners at all stages of the assessment and re-assessment process
- Promoting the use of self and peer assessment;
- Ensuring that assessment in each module is appropriately aligned to both learning outcomes and learning activities.

¹ In all the following text International Bible Training College (IBTC) is referred to as IBTC. The college's trading name is IBTI.



This policy prioritises the role that an effective assessment strategy can contribute towards increasing student retention and identifies important steps that facilitate this.

3. Location of the policy

The college will ensure that the policy is available to all staff, students, and volunteers and will also be on the IBTC website: www.ibti.org.uk.

4. Learning activities and methods of assessment

One of a number of learning activities used at IBTC is face-to-face lectures in classrooms equipped with media resources.

Other learning activities used to strengthen the vocational side of the IBTC programmes include small group discussions, group tutorials, private study, visiting speakers, practical service, devotional practice, spiritual application, attendance at local churches and conferences, placements, mentoring, case studies, role play, creative ministries and English language lessons where required. Academic and vocational performances will be regularly monitored to ensure that all students are maintaining satisfactory course progress.

Through the internal verification process that is in place, if a student is at risk of not meeting the course progress requirements, appropriate help will be given in order for them to achieve satisfactory progress.

In relation to accredited subjects (assignments), all students are required to fulfil all the learning outcomes in each subject as stated in the syllabus.

In order to obtain the Certificate in Applied Theology and the IBTC Diploma in Applied Theology, students must pass each subject in both accredited and non-accredited subjects. Where a student has been unable to pass all of their subjects they will only receive a Certificate of Attendance at IBTC.

Methods of assignments include: essay writing, individual and group project presentations, oral exams, analysis of texts, book reviews, written and/or multiple-choice examinations and compiling reports on outreach activities.

Learning activities and assessments will be grouped in the following ways to compose the final grade for issuing the IBTC Diploma:

Learning Activity	Description of Assessments	Proportion of Marks Towards the Final Grade	Final Grade 100% (70%+30%)
A. Academic assignments	All type of academic assignments will be assessed by one of the methods mentioned above and will be graded from 1 to 100%.	70%	Academic grade 70% of the Final Grade
B. Life application	A life application assessment for each student will take note of their practical service/duties, relationships, discipline and spiritual application. The assessment report will be completed by the Students Welfare Department. It will be assessed from 1 to 10.	20%	Overall Vocational grade (B+C) 30% of the Final Grade
C. Ministerial practice	An assessment for ministerial practice will include attendance and individual participation in creative ministry activities, placement (2 nd year students only), and mission church services. The report will be completed by IBTC staff, peers and relevant church leaders using the grading from 1 to 10.	10%	

In case of written exam/essays, word counts need to be included in assessor’s instructions. This will give the learner a limit to the written words which the learner can use in order to successfully complete the assignment/essay. It is permitted for learners to exceed word counts by 10%. Conversely, there is no allowance for learners to write less than the stated word count.

If a learner’s work significantly exceeds the word count (including the extra 10%), assessors do not have to take into consideration the remaining work. However, for the learner’s development and learning the assessor should make the learner aware of their error and the consequences as reflected in their mark.

Word counts include everything in the main body of the text (including headings, tables, citations, quotes, lists, etc.). The list of references, appendices and footnotes are NOT included in the word count unless it is clearly stated in the coursework instructions that the assignment/essay is an exception to this rule.

Extensions for deadlines can be granted in the case of illness, provided that there is a medical certificate or they have spoken with the Student Welfare Manager or the tutor. Work submitted after the set deadline will not be refused, but will attract a penalty for late submission. Therefore, the assessor must inform the learners about how much they will be penalised should this occur.

4.1. Diploma categories

Diploma Categories	
Diploma with Honours:	85% - 100%
Diploma with Credit:	80% - 84%
Diploma:	40% - 79%

5. Grading of assessments

Grades for all assessments will be based on the following scale:

Percentage	IBTC criteria and definitions of performance
90% - 100%	OUTSTANDING: evidence of outstanding individual contribution
80% - 89%	EXCELLENT: excellent, only marginal mistakes
70% - 79%	VERY GOOD: some mistakes, but overall still very good
55% - 69%	GOOD: good and sound but some basic mistakes
50% - 54%	SATISFACTORY: shows satisfactory understanding
40% - 49%	PASS/SUFFICIENT: just fulfils the requirements
0% - 39%	FAIL: considerable further improvement is required

6. Class attendance and approved absences

Students are required to be punctual at the start of their lectures and to attend all learning activities. Only medical reasons or other exceptional needs, as approved by the student welfare manager, are judged to be sufficient cause for an approved absence being granted.

Any authorised absences (for a whole session or a part thereof) should be reported to the assessor, in advance if possible, as a matter of courtesy. Attendance and punctuality are recorded by the assessor. Unapproved absences will result in a grade reduction for that subject, the magnitude of which will be at the discretion of the teacher.

7. Procedures for failed assignments

a. Introduction

In order to pass assignments, students are required to achieve a mark of 40% or above, and in the case of accredited subjects to have also completed all the learning outcomes.

NB: Please note that the term 're-sit' will be used in this text but it also refers to the term 'resubmission'.

Students can have a maximum of three re-sits per assignment. If the IBTC schedule is too busy or the student doesn't feel ready to take the first re-sit immediately after the failed assignment, due to language difficulties for example, the second re-sit opportunity will be given towards the end of the year when their English has inevitably improved.

Students who choose to do a first or second re-sit nearer the end of the year but still fail to achieve a pass and/or the learning outcomes, and, due to time constraints are not able to do a third re-sit and are not coming back for the second year, have to keep in mind that there will not be a further opportunity to re-sit the assignment. Under these circumstances the mark they receive for their first or second re-sit will be their final mark. However, if a student returns for a second year they will be given an opportunity to take their third re-sit.

If a student has failed an assignment due to personal or emotional reasons, their situation will be dealt with in a different, personalised way by the Academic and Student Welfare Departments. The final decision as to whether or not it is in the student's best interests to continue studying at IBTC will be taken by the Academic committee led by the Principal of the IBTC. The decision will be final and will be communicated to the student verbally and in writing.

b. Failure to achieve the Pass mark

The failure mark at IBTC is anything marked below 40%. Students have the opportunity to change a failing mark, either by re-submitting the same work (with improvements), or by re-sitting the exam/assignment (new questions/new topic to work on). The tutor will decide which of the aforementioned actions will take place.

When a student has failed to achieve the pass mark of 40% for an assignment and has completed a re-sit, the resulting mark for the re-sit is usually capped at a level slightly above the pass mark, which is typically in the 40-49% range.

As a guide, the tutor can only award a maximum of half of the marks originally assigned for those questions which have been assessed again in the re-sit. For example, if in the first attempt the maximum mark for a question was 10 points, in the re-sit the maximum the student can be awarded will be 5 points.

If the student fails an assignment a second time he will be given another opportunity to do a re-sit and the tutor will find a way to help the student to understand the subject by giving some extra tuition if necessary. The same marking criteria, as detailed above, applies to the second and third re-sits.

c. Failure to fulfil learning outcomes

With regard to accredited subjects, where a student has achieved 40% or more for an assignment, but has failed to fulfil a learning outcome(s), they will be required to re-sit the questions related to that learning outcome(s). However, even if the learning outcome(s) is fulfilled in the re-sit their mark will not change.

d. Failed assignments due to plagiarism

If a student is found to have copied work from another source or used the ideas of others without citing their sources appropriately, they will fail the assignment. Students found guilty of plagiarising will be dealt with according to the procedures described in the Academic integrity policy. However, it should be noted that the mark they receive for the resubmitted assignment under these circumstances will be capped at a maximum of 49% at the first offence.

8. Malpractice²

‘Malpractice’, is defined as any act, default or practice which is a breach of the regulations or which:

- Gives rise to prejudice to candidates; **and/or**
- Compromises public confidence in qualifications; **and/or**
- Compromises, attempts to compromise or may compromise the process of assessment, the integrity of any qualification or the validity of a result or certificate; **and/or**
- Damages the authority, reputation or credibility of any awarding body, college staff member or organisations working closely with the college.

Malpractice does not only include written examinations but can arise in practical assessments; through the fabrication of assessments and/or internal verification records, and as a result of the abuse of technological use in assessments for example.

Where malpractice is suspected the academics manager must be informed and an investigation launched into the matter.

9. Appeals procedure³

The IBTC acknowledges the right to appeal if a candidate is dissatisfied with an assessment decision made by an assessor. The main reasons for an appeal are likely to be:

- An administrative error in the assessment process that caused significant doubt about whether the decision might have been different if the error had not occurred
- Evidence of prejudice or bias or lack of proper assessment on the part of the assessor.

An appeal which questions the academic or professional competence or performance of the assessor will not be permitted.

When the candidate does not agree with the assessment, the candidate should follow the three stages indicated in the appeals procedure stated below and each stage must be completed before proceeding to the next one.

² Adapted from ‘Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures’, Joint Council for Qualifications, 1 September 2019 – 31 August 2020.

³ Adapted from “Appealing Against Assessment Decisions Policy and Procedure”, Myerscough College, [website], <http://www.myerscough.ac.uk/policies/>, (accessed 17.01.2017)

Stage 1

If an IBTC student wishes to make an appeal relating to an assessment, the matter should be raised initially with the relevant assessor. The appeal should be raised orally in the first instance. This must be done within five working days of receipt of the assessment feedback form. The assessor will attempt to resolve the complaint informally by discussing with the complainant and explaining the reasons for the comments and mark on the assessment or by agreeing that an error has been made. The conclusion will normally be communicated to the complainant orally, within **five working days** of the appeal being raised. If, upon receipt of the decision, the complainant is still dissatisfied with the decision, he/she may progress the appeal to Stage Two. An appeal at this stage must be made within **five working days** of the decision regarding the initial complaint.

Stage 2

If the appeal has not been resolved at Stage One, the complainant may refer the appeal to the Academic Manager by completing the Stage Two Appeals Form (See Appendix 1). The complainant must complete the form by providing full details of the complaint and should address it to the Academic Manager (this form can be obtained from the Academic Department at IBTC). This must be done within **five working days** of the end of Stage One. The Academic Manager will review the assessment decision with the assessor (the course tutor) and the Internal Verifier.

The Internal Verifier and the Academic Manager will consider all the matters relating to the assessment and determine the outcome, usually within **20 working days of receipt of the Stage Two** appeal. The result of the appeal will be communicated to the student and the assessor by completing the appeals form and sending it on to both parties concerned.

Stage 3

If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student at Stage Two, the appeal from the student will be referred to the **Academic Committee** in a written form through the Academic Manager who will update the student record with a copy of the unresolved complaint. This must be done within five working days of the end of Stage Two. The Academic Manager will consider the appeal and arrange a meeting with the Academic Committee whose members are the Internal Verifier, the Academic Manager, the Principal of IBTC who is the Head of this area, one of the resident tutors and one of the external tutors.

The resident and external tutors will be supplied with all the documentation submitted in relation to the earlier stages of the procedure. This committee will determine the assessment decision. The decision will be final and will be communicated to the student and the assessor in writing. This will usually be within **20 days from receipt of the Stage Three** appeal. The decision will then be binding.

10. Mechanisms for feedback

Constructive comment for the continued improvement of this policy is welcomed and should be forwarded to the IBTC Data Protection Officer, Gordica Karanfilovska at policies.data@ibti.org.uk.

Appendix 1: STAGE TWO APPEALS FORM

Name of Student:	
Date:	
Subject:	
Assessment Title:	
Assessor (Tutor):	
Internal Verifier:	

Details of Appeal:

Student Signature: _____

Outcome of the Appeal:

Internal Verifier Signature: _____

Date the form is returned:

Academic Manager Signature: _____
