

# ACADEMY OF MUSIC & SOUND

## ASSESSMENT, VERIFICATION AND STANDARDISATION POLICY

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### 1. Assessment, Verification & Standardisation Statement

‘Standardisation is a process to ensure that the assessment criteria for a qualification, unit or component are applied consistently by assessors, moderators and verifiers’ <sup>1</sup>

The Academy of Music & Sound has procedures in place to ensure its tutors are competent in assessments and verification and have access to appropriate training and guidance to ensure consistency of standards across courses, different The Academy of Music & Sound centres and time.

Consistent application of assessment to ensure learner achievement is a key priority for The Academy of Music & Sound. The Academy of Music & Sound has developed a robust standardisation process, which can be applied nationally, and will provide the evidence of consistent practice.

<sup>1</sup> The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)

## 2. Assessment, Verification & Standardisation Policy

The Academy of Music & Sound will ensure that standards for assessment and verification are consistent within each Academy of Music & Sound and across all Academy of Music & Sound centres by:

- Ensuring that standardisation occurs within each Academy of Music & Sound centre as part of a rigorous internal quality assurance process.
- Planning and delivering a comprehensive programme of national standardisation events and training for Lead Teachers and Lead IVs each term.
- Lead Teachers will then train all assessors and internal verifiers to:
  - Ensure consistency in the assessment judgements that are being made based on the available evidence.
  - The assessment strategy and the assignment tasks do not prevent any unintended barriers to achievement for a particular learner, and pay due respect to any issues of equality and diversity.
  - Ensure the adequacy of the feedback provided to learners
  - Ensure the adequacy of the feedback provided to assessors, and the robustness of the internal verification of the assessment judgements.
  - Review the appropriateness and currency of the units and their fitness for purpose in the current context, and make any necessary recommendations.
  - Identify and share best practice.
  - Compare the different assessment strategies used across a unit.
  - Compare and confirm standards over time (that is, between different years).
  - Ensure that standardisation occurs within centres as authentic evidence to be produced that is:
    - a) Sufficient: there is enough evidence to demonstrate achievement against unit.
    - b) Appropriate: for the level, type and complexity of the learning

## 3. The Assessment Team Responsibilities

The assessment team will be responsible for ensuring standardisation within The Academy of Music & Sound and for improving teaching and learning:-

**Directors of Study**, HND - Danny Lacey, H.E. - Robin Dymond and Lewis Harding, RSL – Jon Wilson.

**Vice Principal**, Mel Baxter. Responsible for managing the standardisation process.

**Teacher Training**, visiting trainers are invited to give workshops and training

### **Lead Teachers**

Role: to train and mentor teachers in each Academy of Music & Sound centre on assessment standards, feedback, IV requirements, and to observe teaching.

### **Course Coordinators in each Academy of Music & Sound Centre**

Role: To collate assessment marks, collate all assessed work in student portfolios, monitor learner progress, and to implement student support systems. Also, to prepare marking and IV plans each term.

### **The Academy of Music & Sound Teachers and IVs**

Role: to conduct assessment, give written feedback to learners, and to IV assessment.

## 4. Assessment Procedures

Assessment is the collection of evidence from/about a candidate and judgments about that evidence against the relevant grading criteria.

The Academy of Music & Sound utilises a variety of traditional and innovative assessment methods including performances, written assignments, workshops, evaluations, career development plans and special projects. The Academy of Music & Sound will implement this assessment process by:

- Recording each learner's achievements in relation to specified outcomes
- Identifying to tutors and learners areas where further development of knowledge, understanding or skill are required
- Documenting the process for both tutors and learners
- Recording assessment results of each learner detailing the evidence evaluated against the required outcomes
- Keeping all records available for inspection by external/internal examiners and verifiers
- All certificated courses at The Academy of Music & Sound follow a continuous assessment process

### 4.1 Five Key Elements of Assessment

- Identifying and communicating the criteria to be assessed
- The collection of the evidence
- Making a decision about that evidence
- Communicating the decision as feedback
- Archiving the assessment evidence & filing appropriately

### 4.2 Assessor Skills

An assessor should:

- Be knowledgeable in the applicable assessment field
- Be able to brief the candidate fully on the assessment process
- Be able to put candidates at ease during an assessment to enable them to perform to the best of their ability
- Have good communications skills – especially in relating assessment requirements to a candidate
- Be patient with candidates who may have difficulty in communicating
- Identify valid and sufficient evidence
- Be able to identify gaps in achievement or knowledge
- Be able to judge evidence against required assessment grading criteria and make a decision
- Be able to give constructive feedback to candidates

### 4.3 Evidence Requirements

Five key conditions that evidence must satisfy before a decision is made:

- **Validity** – Evidence must meet the requirements of the qualification standards (i.e. be relevant)

- **Authenticity** – The assessor must be confident that the submitted work has been produced by the candidate and not by someone else.
- **Currency** – Evidence must show that the candidates are able to perform the skill or show the knowledge now
- **Consistency** – Evidence submitted should be reasonably consistent in standard throughout the candidate's portfolio. Uncharacteristic changes in the standard of student work should be investigated.
- **Sufficiency** – The assessor must be fully satisfied that the candidate can perform or produce sufficient evidence relating to the task/s competently in meeting the relevant grading criteria

#### 4.4 Feedback Requirements

Feedback should always:

- Be constructive
- Include positive elements of an assessment to give encouragement to the candidate
- Offer alternatives rather than criticism
- Leave the candidate feeling motivated
- Leave the candidate knowing exactly what has been achieved and what needs to be done next to pass and/or to improve their grade/s. These opportunities (i.e. future assignments) should be indicated in the feedback

#### 4.5 Special Needs

Clients with special assessment requirements, such as individuals with low basic ability and sensory impairments or physical disabilities should be allowed appropriate extra time, and may require assistance during an assessment (that does not, however, compromise the integrity of the assessment)

#### 4.6 Assessment Preparation

- Issue relevant *Assignment Brief* & explain tasks fully (see *Assessment Schedule*)
- Communicate assessment timetable with learners & teacher/assessor for each assignment brief
- Ensure learners have covered the subject area sufficiently to enable them to attempt the tasks in the assignment brief
- Ensure teachers/assessors are familiar with the assessment content and the grading criteria against which they will make an assessment decision relating to the evidence
- Ensure the teacher/assessor(s) have necessary paperwork to write up comments & decision (see each *Mark Sheet*)
- Set up stage and/or required equipment that the candidate will need
- Ensure teacher/assessor(s) have relevant assessment resources such as a camcorder (with sufficient blank tape), music notation, green pens (where an assessor needs to write on students' work to show comments or assessment decisions). Mark sheets should be typed up.

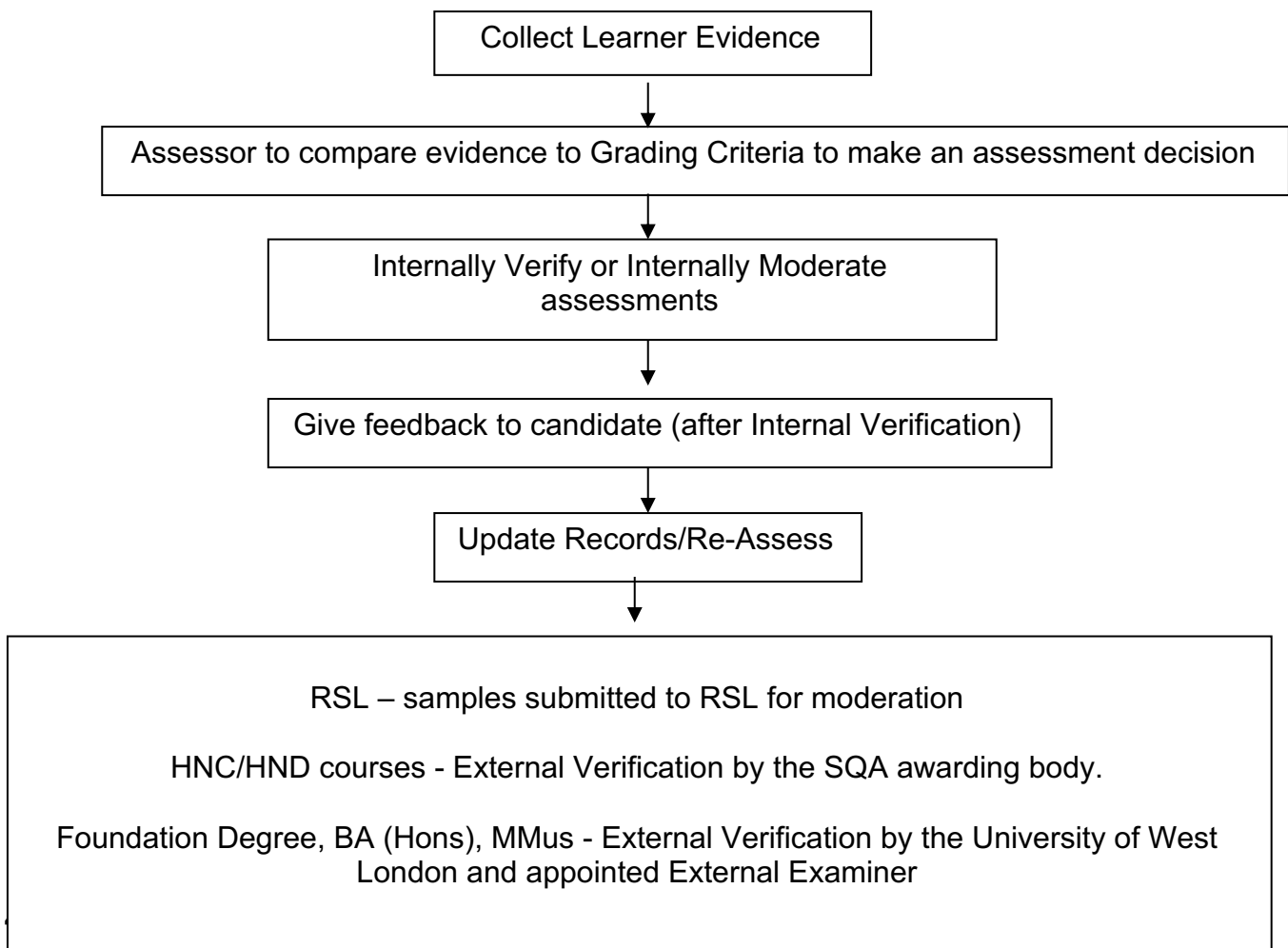
#### 4.7 Assessment Types

- Observation by assessor (usually videoed)
- Written work; essay, questionnaire or test

- Practice diary, rehearsal diary
- Solo performance (usually videoed)
- Group performance (usually videoed)
- Questioning, professional discussion (usually videoed)
- Presentation (usually videoed)
- Witness testimony (where someone has seen the candidate doing a task). This type of assessment is best as a record of progress throughout an assignment period and supported by a final summative assessment.

#### 4.8 Assessment Flow

- Follow assessment guidance from start to finish as per assignment brief
- Transfer assessment decisions & comments to the Mark Sheet
- Feedback discussion with candidate (optional)
- Arrange & follow up further assessments where necessary (see section 4.8 above)
- File completed assessment forms & evidence in student portfolio



For HND/RSL courses, learners are allowed two attempts at each assessment. In some cases, usually involving written work, where students have just failed to meet a particular grading criteria, (especially the pass grading criteria) through omission of a small detail, and this can be remedied by the student providing this extra information relatively easy and quickly, it makes sense to hand back the work to be re-submitted. Decisions on re-submission should be at the discretion of the assessor/course coordinator.

For Foundation Degrees and the BA retakes are only allowed if you fail the module and are capped at 40%

For RSL courses learners should discuss re-submissions with their course coordinator

#### **4.10 Assessment & Verification Should Always Be Fair And Fit For Purpose.**

The assessor must make a fair assessment decision based on the evidence provided by the candidate against the relevant grading criteria. The assessor's opinion of the candidate as a person/student is irrelevant. An unbiased and fair decision must be made based purely on the evidence.

If a candidate feels an assessment decision is unfair, then they should always seek a second opinion from either another tutor/assessor or Internal Verifier (IV). If the tutor/assessor or IV agrees with the decision, but the candidate still feels it is unfair, then the evidence should be reviewed by the Lead IV and/or referred to our partner college or awarding body (e.g. Edexcel)

### **5. Internal Verification Policy**

The Academy of Music & Sound operates a verification system that ensures all learners and awarding bodies can expect the highest standards possible in assessment and evaluation procedures at the centre. The Academy of Music & Sound utilises a range of verification techniques and will implement these by:

- The designated internal verifier monitoring learner's self and internal assessments
- Internal verification will be documented by countersigning assessment records.
- All assessment and verification records and documentation will be openly available for inspection by visiting external verifiers from relevant and recognised awarding bodies.
- All verification criteria and procedures will be governed by course team

Internal Verification is primarily about checking that assessment decisions are accurate and that the feedback to students is appropriate. It is about giving feedback to assessors to help them improve and/or to give them confidence that they are making correct decisions. It is a useful indication to The Academy of Music & Sound & Lead Teacher on how effective assessment training is and where there are areas that need improving.

RSL and HND - It is essential that Internal Verification takes place regularly and is compulsory as far as awarding bodies and our partner colleges are concerned. As a rule of thumb, a minimum of 10% of all students' work or 4 pieces of work should be internally verified for each unit assignment.

The choice of which Internal Verifier to assign to which assignment should be based on the competence of the IV (i.e. their specialist knowledge) and the need to spread the IV load equitably (the former being more important than the latter). Under no circumstances should a

verifier be assigned who lacks the subject knowledge to make judgements on the accuracy of assessment decisions.

## 5.1 Preparation for Internal Verification

An IV must:

- Ensure any re-submitted work or follow up practical assessments have been completed
- Ensure all assessment decisions have been made and written up on appropriate mark sheets
- Ensure all evidence is contained in student portfolio and/or archived in centre appropriately (in other words, that all evidence such as Video/CD/DVD is clearly labelled and easy to locate – an IV may need to liaise with the centre technician about archiving and storage of media and that it is readily available to him/her when IV'ing).
- Allow sufficient time to IV assessment decisions without disturbances

## 5.2 IV Forms

- IV Plan
- IV of an Assignment Brief
- IV of an individual candidate assessment

# 6. External Verification Procedure

## 6.1 Preparation for EV

Awarding bodies such as SQA, RSL, BTEC, and University of West London will have access to records, information, candidates, staff and premise for the purpose of external quality assurance activities

The Academy of Music & Sound will prepare samples of learner work for Standards Verifiers (SV) as requested by the awarding body (Edexcel, SQA, RSL). The course coordinator would ensure the students work that has been fully assessed and internally verified for the SV to review for Standards Sampling. Prior to the sample being sent to the SV, Assignment Briefs of units selected for sampling should be firstly approved by the Vice Principal.

Some awarding bodies e.g. SQA; sample learner work and Internal Verification processes through a visit to centres by a Standards Verifier. Where this is the case, each Academy of Music & Sound centre must:

- a. On the day of the EM visit, ensure a quiet room is available with sufficient heat & light for the EM to work in, and enough worktop space or desks to lay out student's written work and assessment forms etc.
- b. Ensure a computer is set up with links to performances and events that need to be viewed.
- c. Ensure a track list with location times of student performances is clearly shown so that the EM can find performances quickly and that it is clear who each guitarist is on the video (i.e. *John Smith is the lead guitarist on the right*)

Samples for RSL and BTEC are to be uploaded to be viewed by the moderator as requested.

## **6.2 Actions points resulting from the EV**

After each external visit or report there will follow a dissemination of the feedback and action points to relevant individuals. The Lead Teacher and Course Coordinator in each Academy of Music & Sound will be responsible for monitoring the progress of action points to ensure all are carried out.

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**Prepared by:** Mel Baxter

**Agreed by:** Steve Ryan (Principal), Mel Baxter (Vice Principal)