



Resource & Systems to Support Assessment of Units

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1.0 Introduction

This policy is adopted and designed to offer guidance on how TSMR tutors and external verifiers can work together in developing assessment activities and processes.

Assessment is the central concern of external verifiers and it is a subject on which they will provide authoritative advice and guidance when working in international centres. TSMR's requirements in the assessment criteria are unambiguous. The thrust of the stem statement, '*a learner must ...*' is that each learner is able to demonstrate authentic achievement against each criterion. Therefore, assessment must focus on ensuring that learners are able to meet the requirements of the criteria in their work.

2.0 Planning assessments

Planning assessments in a unit requires answers to some simple questions:

- How many assessments are needed?
- What outcomes, assessment criteria and grading descriptors should they cover?
- When should they be given to learners?
- How long should learners have to complete them?

As a guide there must be at least one assessment and no more than there are outcomes in the unit. In reality two to three is enough and this is the number most assessors use.

3.0 Planning the programme of assignments

A programme plan will identify when learners have heavy and light work loads. It will show how many assessments are used in each unit. It will provide a means of smoothing out the flow of work and will provide some ideas for discussion. It will let learners know what they can expect to do during the programme. It will assist with the plan of internal verification. It will identify some preferred times to schedule an external verifier visit.

The yearly assignment planner for the programme based on a thirty week year and eight units running in parallel is shown on the next page. This should be amended to suit the length of individual programmes, offered in centres.

3.1 Planned assignment schedule

This is an example of what a completed planner might look like. “No” is the abbreviation for number. So “No 1” is assignment number 1.

{insert programme details here}								
{Assignment schedule for academic year ...}								
Weeks	Units							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1								
2								
3	Yellow							
4	Yellow				Orange			
5	Yellow				Orange			
6			Cyan	Cyan	Orange			
7			Cyan	Cyan		Pink		
8		Blue	Cyan	Cyan		Pink		
9		Blue	Cyan	Cyan		Pink		
10			Cyan	Cyan			Magenta	
11							Magenta	
12					Orange		Magenta	
13					Orange			
14					Orange			
15	Yellow							Dark Blue
16	Yellow							Dark Blue

17								
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28								
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30								

4.0 Choosing Assessment Methods

4.1 Assessment methods


A variety of assessment methods can be used other than traditional end of unit formal tests that rely on memory and recall. A variety of methods is identified here and many of them will ensure that the learner work is authentic. When a presentation is made, it provides an opportunity to see at first hand how well a subject is understood. Similarly, a diary or log should be unique to each individual. The list of methods is neither definitive nor prescriptive.

It is also important to recognise learning styles when designing assessments. The standard categorisation of learning styles is:

- Visual.
- Auditory.
- Read/write.
- Kinaesthetic.

Assessment activities should offer something for each learning style.

4.2 Activities and levels

- 
- The cognitive skill needs to be matched to a suitable assessment method.
 - Cognitive skills should be linked to qualification levels (e.g. *analyse* problems at level 5 but *list* problems at level 2).
 - Analysis of a problem cannot readily be checked with a gap filling exercise.
 - Checking knowledge is difficult in a demonstration of professional practice (although knowledge may be inferred).

5.0 **Methods for assessing generic skills, knowledge and understanding**

5.1 **Thinking critically and making judgements**


Possible assessment methods:

- Report.
- Journal.
- Briefing paper.
- Review.
- Magazine article.

5.2 **Preparing a case**

Proffering advice (in a letter or a report). The problems with this approach are:

- Some learners will choose unsuitable organisations.
- Some suitable organisations may not have the necessary range of information to allow for the completion of a satisfactory assignment.
- Some organisations may be entirely suitable but will not release commercially sensitive information.
- The learner will have to generate the information on which to base the answer *and* then produce the answer. The unit requires the learner *only* to produce the answer.



The teacher can create realistic problems with all relevant parameters and variables and then just allow the learner to answer the problem. This will not be a problem for the teacher as they have the necessary expertise and knowledge to create these realistic problems. Creating interesting case studies is one of the most refreshing parts of a teacher's job.

Consider collecting together a bank of stimulus material in the centre. Obtaining five copies of a report and making them available to learners in the library is much better than having 50 learners write to the organisation asking for the same information.

5.3 Solving problems and developing plans

Possible assessment methods:

- Work-based problem.
- Case study.
- Group work.
- Analysing problems.
- Preparing a bid.
- Writing a conference paper.

5.4 Performing procedures and demonstrating techniques

Possible assessment methods:

- Demonstration.
- Role play.
- Video production.
- Wall displays.
- Promotional materials.
- Laboratory report.
- Producing a manual or user guide.
- Observed performance.

5.5 Managing and developing oneself



Possible assessment methods:

- Diary
- Journal.
- Portfolio of work.
- Group work.
- Observed performance.
- Learning contract.

5.6 **Accessing and managing information**

Possible assessment methods:

- Project.
- Annotated bibliography.
- Dissertation.
- Applied work.
- Researching problems.
- Surveys.


5.7 **Demonstrating knowledge and understanding**

Possible assessment methods:

- Examination.
- Oral test.
- Essay.
- Report.
- Computer based assessment.
- Multiple choice questions.
- Short answer questions.
- Producing an A-Z of a topic.

5.8 **Designing, creating and performing**

Possible assessment methods:

- 
- Performance
 - Rehearsal
 - Portfolio
 - Presentation
 - Projects
 - Model making
 - Displays.

5.9 **Communicating**

Possible assessment methods:

- Written work.
- Oral presentations.
- Debates.
- Discussions.
- Professional discussion.
- Demonstration of real or simulated professional practice.
- TV or radio production.
- Storyboards.
- Animations.

6.0 **Designing the stimulus (case study) material**

Stimulus material may be a case study, project, scenario or problem. It is tempting to ask a learner to identify a problem and then to suggest a solution. A typical (real) example requires learners to:

'Visit an organisation of your choice. Identify the characteristics of the markets in which the organisation operates. Describe how the organisation develops its position in the market and how it develops its products to sustain its competitive advantage.'

The problems with this approach:

- Some learners will choose unsuitable organisations.

- Some suitable organisations may not have the necessary range of information to allow for the completion of a satisfactory assignment.
- Some organisations may be entirely suitable but will not release commercially sensitive information.
- The learner will have to generate the information on which to base the answer *and* then produce the answer. The unit requires the learner *only* to produce the answer.

However, there should always be some scope for the learner to do some research. At level 5 and 7 there may be complete units that are researched based. The level 7 Management qualifications include a Research Project and Presentation.

The teacher can create realistic problems with all relevant parameters and variables and then just allow the learner to answer the problem. This will not be a problem for the teacher as they have the necessary expertise and knowledge to create these realistic problems. Creating interesting case studies is one of the most refreshing parts of a teacher's job.

Suggestion: Consider placing a bank of stimulus material in the learning centre. Obtaining five copies of a report and making them available to learners in the library is much better than having 50 learners write to the organisation asking for the same information


7.0 Presenting assignments to learners

Present work in a consistent style. It helps the learners and it creates a professional image of the course team. It also saves everybody having to design their own assignment title sheets.

7.1 Ensuring integrity in assignments

The sample assignment in the Assessment Integrity Toolkit has a commentary showing the assignment features that support the production of authentic learner work.

7.2 Enhancing integrity



Various techniques can be used to ensure the authenticity of learner work:

- Ask learners to produce assignment plans (good for projects which have milestones built in to them).
- Require learners to make presentations which you can witness.
- Ask questions verbally and note the answers (in writing or recorded).
- Observe learners (in rehearsal, in performance, in workshops, in laboratories and in studios). Keep a record of what you see and hear.
- Supervise the assignment.

8.0 **Designing assignments**

Assignment design is an iterative process. Fully formed assignments do not immediately emerge from the design process.

The example unit that will be used is a level 3 Human Resource Management unit.


8.1 **Managing Assignments**

In addition to writing the assignments it is necessary to manage their implementation. The main way of doing this is to bring together the assignment management information on to a front sheet. Front sheets need to use a “house style” not just for the qualification but for all qualifications running in TSMR. Example front sheets are provided in appendix 1.

8.1.1 **The I confirm that this is all my own work** box

This is the learner’s statement of authenticity. It is a requirement that learners make this declaration on all assessed work they submit. Obviously, this is not a foolproof way of ensuring authenticity but the learner is acknowledging that the work is their own

8.1.2 **Grading**



There is only this one staged assignment for the unit so the following basis for grading the unit is used.

Pass: All pass criteria identified in the assignment are met.

Merit: All pass and all merit criteria are met.

Distinction: All pass, merit and distinction criteria are met.

9.0 SAMPLE ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY – Level 5

Scenario – International Marketing


In the last few years, the number of foreign restaurants (e.g. McDonalds; Starbucks) has proliferated in South Africa. It is clear from walking around South Africa that these chains are popular both with local consumers and with visitors from the time they open until the time they shut.

You work for a family owned restaurant business in the city. The business is thinking about expanding and developing a different style for its restaurants so that they are more like the international chains. There will be some important differences but the main idea is to sell up-market African-style fast food.

The business is hoping to start on 1 October 2009.

At present, the existing business is a traditional restaurant with a single location. It serves mainly traditional food. The décor is very basic but the restaurant is popular with locals because it offers good value for money.

It has a central location. There are many attractions in and around Cape Town including the Two Oceans Aquarium, the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens, Robben Island and Tabletop Mountain. Government offices are nearby. London is a popular entry point for visitors to South Africa. The government is encouraging tourism and visitors to come from around the world. Cape Town's growing economy means there is a year round stream of business visitors. Cape Town successfully hosted the 2010 World Cup and is likely to host



other major international events. There are some international hotels (three, four and five star) nearby.

The initial idea is to open a refurbished and re-branded modern restaurant. It is designed to offer an up-to-date variation on a typical Cape Town restaurant. In addition, it will offer its clientele more traditional service. The plan is to call the restaurant *De Waterkant Junction*. If it is successful, the intention is to open similar restaurants in the city and expand to other cities. The company will prefix the name *Junction* with the location wherever the eatery is situated.

{The rest of the case study would appear here. It needs to give learners enough information to allow them to investigate and solve the problems identified in the tasks}.

Required:

Prepare a two part formal report for the owner of the business, covering the issues described. Tasks 1, 2 and 3 make up part 1 of the report. Task 4 is part two. The two parts make up one final report.


Part 1

Task 1

- Appraise the processes and techniques that need to be used to audit the marketing environment faced by the *Junction*. Consider the change that is happening and evaluate issues relating to aspects of competing for the future and balancing strategic intent and strategic reality.
(Pass criteria 1a)

Task 2

- Using appropriate techniques, conduct an organisational and environmental audit on the *Junction's* plan to launch operations in London. This requires:
 - An organisational audit for the *Junction*.
 - An environmental (PEST) analysis for the fast food market in London.



(The audit and analysis are best done using a form. Design and use your own forms).

(Pass criteria 1b)

Task 3

- Identify the main barriers to marketing planning that the *Junction* faces.
(Pass criteria 2a)
- Suggest how the *Junction* may overcome barriers to marketing planning.
(Pass criteria 2b)

Part 2


Task 4

- Explain the need for the *Junction* to be innovative in the fast food market in London by presenting a marketing plan for the business in which you:
- Make recommendations for pricing, distributing and communicating a product or service.
- Identify and assess techniques for developing products
- Specify measures to monitor and review marketing performance.
(Pass criteria 3^a, b, c, d, e)

Grading

Pass: All criteria identified in the assignment are met.

Merit: Suitable marketing techniques have been used to analyse and process the information collected and presented in the environmental audit, the marketing audit and the marketing plan. Reasoned judgements are made about proposals in the marketing plan. The deadline to submit the plan and final report have been met (M1)



A justified choice of the marketing techniques and concepts applied and used to analyse the situation faced by the proposed new business are given. The marketing plan is based on an understanding of the relevant marketing issues faced by the new business (M2)

The environmental and marketing audits are presented in a standard format that uses business and marketing terminology accurately (M3)

Distinction: The marketing information gathered is checked for accuracy and validity. The marketing plan has justified proposals based on a synthesis of the relevant factors that exist in the local market (D1)

The organisational audit, environmental analysis and marketing plan are interlinked logically and are mutually consistent. Likely problems have been identified and provisions made to overcome them in the marketing plan (D2)

The marketing plan must demonstrate that the full range of marketing ideas and issues have been evaluated and used when making proposals. The proposals must offer a realistic and effective way forward for the business (D3)

9.1 **Commentary on the assignment brief showing how to support authentic work**

The Group

This work is done by individual learners. If the unit specification requires group work then you need to specify this in the assignment. Otherwise, you need to ask yourself why group work should be used in this assignment. When group work is used, the assessor has to judge whether each group member has met every criterion. That is difficult if there is a single piece of word-processed work with four names on it. The assessor may have to have meetings / tutorials with each student to question them on their knowledge and understanding. If gaps in



knowledge are identified, then more evidence will be required to be produced.

The **Feedback** column

When the work is marked, the teacher gives the learner feedback against the assessment criterion. It is where the assessor can question work that has not been identified as authentic.

The **Assessor's decision** column

The **a**, **b**, **c** and so on show which assessment criteria are being assessed. The criteria appear as bullet points in the unit specification and it is helpful to identify them using this system. The blank space next to the criterion is where the teacher records the marking decision. It is either or x. If there is invalid or there is incomplete evidence of achievement in the work then a x is used to show the learner has not met the criterion. Advice should be given to the learner on what needs to be done.

The **Lecturer's additional feedback and comments** box


The box allows teachers to provide learners with any feedback in addition to that given against the assessment criteria. It allows feedback on how to improve work and avoid any malpractice issues.

The, **I confirm that this is all my own work**, box

This is the learner's statement of authenticity. It is a requirement that learners make this declaration on all assessed work they submit. The learner is acknowledging that the work is their own and can be held to account.

The **Scenario**

This is the case study or stimulus provided by the teacher for the learners. The expertise of the teacher is used in devising realistic vocational problems that require the learner to apply what they have learned. The problems need to be realistic but not necessarily real. Some of the information in the scenario is accurate. London will host



the World Cup in 2024 but some information is made up in order to add further variables to the problem. For example, there are imagined government offices that are nearby. This item of information is included so that an alert student will realise there is a lunchtime demand for modestly priced food for 5 days a week all year.

It is unlikely that commercially provided case studies, newspaper articles and material provided by businesses will be 100% suitable. The teacher can take this as base material and then amend it to ensure it allows the outcomes to be achieved. Using the approach of a realistic scenario, imagined by the teacher with relevant problems added, will result in learner answers to problems that cannot be found in any textbook or on the internet.

The **Required section** and the **tasks**

These are the questions asked by the teacher of the learners. The tasks use as much of the wording of the assessment criteria as possible. The tasks are linked to the realistic case study.

As already noted there is no way of finding the answers to these questions in a textbook or from an internet source.

Conclusion

It helps if all assignments in all units look the same.

It helps learners because they become confident about producing TSMR style work when faced with a consistent way of presenting information with tasks based on case studies, scenarios and stimulus material for which there is no existing published answer.

- It helps internal and external verifiers to do their jobs and helps them to confirm the validity and authenticity of learner work.
- It creates a positive impression about the quality of the course, the quality of the course team and the quality of TSMR.

10.0

ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET

LONDON SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT & RESEARCH

Name _____ Group _____ Individual

Activity title _____ Assignment reference _____ Unit 19 _____


Date issued: _____ Date due: _____ Date submitted: _____

Assessor(s) _____

Unit outcomes

Outcome	Evidence for the criteria	Feedback	Assessor's decision	
Compile marketing audits (19.1)	Section in the report appraising the processes & techniques used for auditing the marketing environment.		a	
	Organisational and environmental audits of the Junction.		b	
Examine the main barriers to marketing planning (19.2)	Section in the report identifying the barriers to marketing planning.		a	
	Section in the report on how to overcome the barriers to marketing planning.		b	
Formulate a marketing plan for a product or	Explanation of the need to be		a	

service (19.3)	innovative.				
	Section in the plan identifying and assessing techniques for developing products.			b	
	Recommendations in the plan for pricing, distributing and communicating a product.			c	
	Measures to monitor and review marketing performance in the plan.			d	
	The marketing plan.			e	
Merit grades awarded		M1		M2	M3
Distinction grades awarded		D1		D2	D3
Assessor name and signature		Date			
<p>I, (<i>Print student name / student ID number</i>) hereby confirm that this assignment is my own work and not copied or plagiarised. It has not previously been submitted as part of any assessment for this qualification. All the sources from which information has been obtained for this assignment have been referenced. (Harvard format).</p> <p>I further confirm that I have read and understood the (<i>Print name of centre</i>) rules and regulations about plagiarism and copying and agree to be bound by them.</p>		Learner signature			



11.0 **Working with the internal verifier**


The internal verifier must look at your assignments before you give them to learners. Ask your internal verifier for advice on your assignments and how they might be improved. Even if you do not ask advice, you may be told what you need to do to improve the assignment. Make sure you follow the advice, modify the assignment and then finally agree it with the internal verifier.

12.0 **Working with the external verifier**

The external verifier will ask to review the assignments after you have had them internally verified. This will give you an additional perspective on the assignment.

13.0 **Assessing and annotating work**

When distributing assignments you can give a verbal briefing, in addition to the written assignment. In the verbal briefing, you can remind learners about integrity, authenticity, plagiarism, citation, referencing and the requirement to sign the statement of authenticity on the front of the assignment. (An example of an authenticity statement can be seen on the sample assignment in this document). Remind learners about the consequences of not adhering to the rules.



When assessing work there are techniques you can use to help assure the quality and the integrity of the work.


- A teacher's comments must be made against the criteria. That gives the feedback to the learner a focus.
- Be clear when work is not yet to the right standard, give the reason why. *This work cannot yet be given a pass as it is not clear why your answer is the same as someone else's answer* leaves open the possibility that the current work is the original work not the copied work.
- Use positive comments. *Please would you reference your assignment using the conventions you were taught in the Referencing Workshop* is preferable to *Not acceptable – no references*.
- Note in the margins of answers where you think the work has come from an unattributed source and ask the learner to rectify the problem before you will complete the assessment.
- Refuse to assess work that does not use the conventions associated with authentic work. Refusing to assess work is not the same as failing it.
- Standardise the assessment. This can help identify problems with learner work that may not be obvious to all. This can be done in various ways e.g. Ask a team of assessors to assess the same pieces of work and discuss why there are differences in opinion. This may only work when the subject is general rather than specialist in nature.
- Blind double 'mark' a sample of work.
- Ask assessors to produce an examiner's report on the assessment of their unit(s).
- Have the specialist assessors in a unit discuss a sample of work and identify where there are differences of judgement.
- Discuss assessment of learner work concerns with the internal verifier.
- Discuss assessment of learner work concerns with the external verifier.
- Hold centre based workshops on assessment. This and other activities can form part of your continuing professional development.

- Ask the Regional Development Manager to organise the International Team Leader to provide advice on assessment that can be made available to your centre.
- Ask the Regional Development Manager to organise a regional training event on assessment that can be attended by different centres in the region.

14.0 **Features of good assignments**

In designing assignments it is helpful to have a note of the relevant aspects of assignment design to hand. This checklist acts as a reminder. The list will also assist internal verifiers in considering whether assignments are suitable for use with learners.

Features of good assignments	Present (yes/no)
• The assessment/grading criteria to be assessed are identified.	
• Which criteria are covered? List them.	
• The questions are based in the requirements of the assessment /grading criteria.	
• The tasks/questions are mapped to the assessment /grading criteria.	
• The learner has an opportunity to achieve higher grades.	
• There is a scenario or case study or stimulus material to provide a problem for learners to consider.	
• The scenario or case study or stimulus material provides a relevant/local problem.	

- 
- The learner is put in a realistic role.
 - Learners will be able to understand what to do as the language used is clear and at the right level.
 - The evidence to be submitted is identified.
 - The evidence to be submitted uses vocational formats.
 - There is a clear rationale for group work when it is used and all students will be able to meet all criteria.
 - The programme details are correct.
 - The unit(s) details are correct.
 - The time allocated to the work is sufficient with the hand out and hand in dates clearly shown.
 - Additional guidance on assignment completion is provided.
 - The assignment uses the centre's standard front sheet.
 - The assignment has been submitted for internal verification before copying and distribution.

15.0 **Validating Assessment Decisions**

There are various techniques that are used to validate assessment decisions.

- **Internal verification**

All lecturers' must follow laid down policy and associated procedures for internally verifying both assessment instruments and a sample of marked student work.

- **Double assessing**

Work can be assessed twice to ensure consistency in the assessment decision-making process. Many higher education providers have protocols for double marking.



- **Standardisation**

This means ensuring that markers are making consistent assessment decisions. One technique is to have a group of markers all considering pieces of work and then comparing decisions before discussing it to establish the final worth of the work. Alternatively an assessed piece of work could be considered by a group of assessors before comparing decisions to establish the final worth of the work.

- **Examination boards**

Examination boards consider the final assessment decisions made about student work. Advice on assessment boards can be found in the TSMR website at: www.TSMR.uk

16.0 **Strategies for Avoiding Plagiarism**

Students and staff need to be informed of the following:

Referencing and citation

Material should be referenced, using a standard citation and referencing system such as the Harvard Referencing system.

Quotation

Material that comes from a source, whether it is a book or a downloaded piece of text should be put into quotation marks and possibly also italics

Synopses, paraphrasing and summarising

Researched material, which the learner puts into his or her own words still, needs to recognise the original source material.



Abstract

An abstract is a summary, in the learner's own words, of what an assignment is about. It is placed at the beginning of an assignment.

Keeping track of the source

Students should be advised to make accurate and careful notes about the sources used and to keep full bibliographic references. In the case of websites a note should be made, not only of the address but also of the date on which the material was accessed.

17.0 **Finding anti-plagiarism software**

There is a range of anti-plagiarism software available and some of it is identified here. There are of course other products available.

Turnitin

<http://www.turnitin.com/static/home.html>

Ingenta connect

<http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/routledg/cher/2006/00000025/00000002/art00007>

Glatt Plagiarism Services Inc

<http://www.plagiarism.com/>

WCopyfind

<http://plagiarism.phys.virginia.edu/Wsoftware.html>

Antiplagiarist

<http://www.winappslist.com/education/antiplagiarism.htm>

Note that learners can also obtain software that will allow them to monitor their own writing and help them establish whether what they have written is sufficiently differentiated from the source material.

Here are two examples.



<http://www.acumenenterprise.com/>

<http://www.essayrelief.co.uk/>

Sample Marking/Grading Scheme

Management Levels 5 & 7

Academic Year:

Student Name:

Date of submission:

Unit /Qualification Title:

Criteria	Weighting	Mark	Marker Comments	Supervisor mark	Supervisor Comments
1. Purpose: a clear statement of the purpose of the dissertation e.g. reasons for the investigation; statement of problems; purpose of the study.	15				
2. Literature review: critical review of the literature e.g. use of relevant literature; evidence of understanding the ideas expressed; development of a critical focus.	20				
3. Methods; appropriate use of methods e.g. stated reasons for using type of methods; appropriateness and extent of application	15				
4. data: presentation and analysis e.g. description and setting of the study; presentation of the results; analysis of the findings	20				
5. Interpretation and conclusion: e.g. analysis and discussion of findings with reference to purpose of study; issues from the literature review; practical application and areas for further research.	20				
6. Presentation: e.g. structure, language, visuals, logic and coherence.	10				

Marks	100				
-------	-----	--	--	--	--

Word guidance:

18000 word dissertation	words	marks
Introduction: a clear statement of the purpose of the dissertation e.g. reasons for the investigation; statement of problems; purpose of the study.	1500 - 2000	15
Literature review: critical review of the literature e.g. use of relevant literature; evidence of understanding the ideas expressed; development of a critical focus.	4000-5000	20
Methodology: appropriate use of methods e.g. stated reasons for using type of methods; appropriateness and extent of application	3000-4000	15
Analysis: : presentation and analysis e.g. description and setting of the study; presentation of the results; analysis of the findings	3000-4000	20
Conclusion: e.g. analysis and discussion of findings with reference to purpose of study; issues from the literature review; practical application and areas for further research.	2000-3000	20
Presentation: e.g. structure, language, visuals, logic and coherence, referencing.		10