



# Assessment Practice Guidelines for Open College Network Courses



*Available in an alternative format*

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## 1 Introduction

**Open College Network North East Region (OCNNER) is a licensed member of the National Open College Network (NOCN) and works to NOCN Standards. We require each new or approved Course to have clearly articulated and agreed assessment procedures which comply with NOCN Standards.**

This booklet outlines our requirements for assessment, the requirements for Internal Moderation, and the External Moderation that confirms the Award of Credit and Certification for successful learners.

This guidance is intended to provide support for tutors and Course developers in the preparation of an overall Assessment Strategy for the approval of a Learning Course. It also provides guidance for Internal Moderators in determining the appropriateness and suitability of assessments, evidence and records used to demonstrate successful achievement.

If you have any queries or questions relating to assessment or any other issue in the approval and running an Open College Network Course, please contact the OCN.

## 2 Open College Network Requirements

Open College Networks accredit Courses of learning. Each Learning Course is made up of a number of Unit(s). Each Unit is made up of a specific number of Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria. To achieve the Unit, learners must provide evidence for each of the Assessment Criteria. There is no Award of Credit for partial achievement of a Unit and there is no grading system.

## 3 Principles of Assessment

The principles of Open College Network assessment are that evidence produced for assessment of learning achievement should be:

**Authentic**, i.e. that it should be the learner's own work

**Valid**, i.e. the assessment should measure what it claims to measure; there should be a close fit between assessment and the Learning Outcomes

The assessment decisions should be:

**Reliable and consistent**, i.e. the assessment result should be replicable under different circumstances or with a different assessor.

**Fit for Purpose**, i.e. assessment should be appropriate for the curriculum and the learners.

**Inclusive**, i.e. assessment should be equitable and should be designed to allow all learners to achieve regardless of their history or differences.

## 4 Assessment Strategy

At the development and approval stage of a new Learning Course, the Course team must identify the range of assessment methods (Assessment Strategy) they intend to use to assess learners.

The Assessment Strategy should give the general approach and plan for assessment for the whole Course. This may change over time as the Course is delivered and in response to the needs of different learners. It is important to ensure the External Moderator is aware of assessment practice as they will be able to provide advice on how to develop assessment practice to meet the learners' needs.

### The Assessment Strategy should include:

- How to assess your learners in ways appropriate to their needs, to the type of learning, the aims of the Course and the progression routes
- Any compulsory activities/tasks
- Information about formative and summative approaches
- Any differences in approach related to level
- How to ensure authenticity i.e. that the learners' own work is assessed
- How assessment of achievement (as detailed in the Unit Outline) will be presented for moderation, for example structured portfolio, completed workbooks

## 5 Assessment and Evidence Information for Each Unit (excluding some NOCN qualification units)

For the External Moderation visit, you will need to give detailed information on how Learning Outcomes are assessed and evidenced for each Unit or group of Units. Each Learning Outcome does not need a separate assessment activity or task, as one assessment activity or task can assess achievement for a number of Learning Outcomes. However, it must be clear to the External Moderator that all Learning Outcomes in a Unit have been assessed.

### Assessment Planning

We have developed a format to comply with requirements for assessment planning in our Courses. Please refer to the Unit Assessment Plan opposite. Assessment Plans are designed to complement the requirements of schemes of work or lesson plans for delivering a Course. If you have already developed detailed assessment materials for assessing Units, we are happy to accept these. Assessment Plans enable you to meet the requirements of QCA and the Adult Learning Inspectorate/Ofsted.

### UNIT ASSESSMENT PLAN

Completed by: ..... A. N. Other  
Course Co-ordinator/Substituting Tutor

Organisation: ..... FE College

Course Code: .....000..... Course Title: .....Family Health

Unit Code: .....0000..... Unit Title: .....Healthy Eating Awareness

How will tutor record learner progress - Class Matrix  Tracking Sheet

Other (Please specify) .....

Using the table below, describe how learning outcomes for the unit will be achieved. Please use a separate form for each unit.

Learning Outcome No.	Assessment Tasks	Evidence	To be Assessed by 1	Assessment Criteria No. Met
1. Understand basic nutrition and healthy eating	Verbal or written feedback, worksheet on foodwheel	Record of feedback, completed foodwheel	T	1.1, 1.2, 1.3
2. Recognise the impact of an unhealthy diet on family health	Verbal /written feedback, presentation, quiz, observation of group activity	Record of feedback, observation of presentation, completed quiz, observation checklist of group activity	T/L/W	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4
3. Appreciate the actions that can be taken to improve health through healthy eating	Keep food diary for 5 days Examples of food labels	Completed food diary Written description of misleading content	T	3.1, 3.2, 3.3
4. Appreciate the long term benefits of healthy eating	Verbal/written feedback	Record of written/verbal feedback Completed worksheet	T/L	4.1, 4.2, 4.3
5. Understand the importance of cost effectiveness in planning a meal	Collecting healthy recipes Complete a day's menu	Collection of a range of recipes Completed menu plan	T	5.1

Notes for Guidance

Course and Unit Information must be obtained from your Course Submission Form

- <sup>1</sup>To be assessed by key
- T Tutor
  - L Learner/Self Assessment
  - P Peer Assessment
  - W Witness
  - O Other (please explain)

## 6 Examples of Paperwork and Records

### Evidence of Learning

Evidence of learning is the wide range and number of products produced during the learning process e.g. notes, reports, handouts, videos, tapes etc.

### Evidence of Achievement

Evidence of Achievement is the selection of evidence presented for Award of Credit at the External Moderator's visit. The evidence presented must be easy to find, mapped against Assessment Criteria and judged to be valid, appropriate, authentic and sufficient.



### Evidencing Achievement.

We encourage a variety of approaches to assessment which can include a wide range of assessment methods. This table gives examples of evidence produced from a range of assessment methods used by tutors of OCN Courses.

Assessment Activity	Evidence
Learner demonstrates skills, observed by tutor	Observation checklist/write up Tutor feedback and tracking documents
Group discussion observed by tutor or group member	Observation checklist Summary of group decisions/discussions Learner notes Tutor feedback and tracking documents
Oral Quiz	Tutor record Tutor feedback and tracking documents Completed quiz
Personal tutorial with structured question and answer	Tutorial record Action Plan Tutor feedback and tracking documents
Structured written task (eg. Project, report)	Task plans Final report on task Tutorial record Tutor feedback and tracking documents
Home or work based activities assessed through class discussion	Completed task sheet Tutor record of class discussion Tutor feedback and tracking documents
Set exercises marked by tutor	Marked exercises with tutor feedback Tutor feedback and tracking documents
Role play/simulation observed by tutor/peers	Observer checklist Summary of post exercise discussion Learner record Tutor feedback and tracking documents
Case studies discussed in small groups and assessed through class discussion	Learner notes on task sheet Summary of class discussion Tutor record Tutor feedback and tracking documents
Reflection on own learning	Completed learning inventory Learner Record (eg. Log, diary) Checklist Tutor feedback and tracking documents



For more detailed information about appropriate assessment methods for OCN courses, please see NOCN's Assessment Definitions Grid.

This outlines the expectations for assessment at each level for a range of assessment activities.

## Examples of Tutor Records

### Example 1 Tracking Sheet

Open College Network North East Region Learner Assessment Checklist					
Course: .....			Name of Learner: .....		
Unit: .....			Date of First Class: .....		
Location of Class: .....					
This form must be available for the Moderator					
Ref No	Assessment Criteria	Evidence of how criteria was met	Page Number or Section in Portfolio	Signature	Date
Signature of Learner: .....				Date: .....	
Signature of Tutor: .....				Date: .....	

### Example 2 Summary of Assessment Form for Unit

Unit Title:	Level:
Unit Code:	Credit:

Learner Names									
Assessment Task One Assessment criteria 1.1, 1.2, 2.4									
Assessment Task Two A.C. 2.2, 3.1, 4.2									

## 7 Presenting Evidence

### Building a Portfolio

The portfolio is a file of evidence which shows that the learner has achieved all the Assessment Criteria necessary to gain Credit for the particular unit(s) they are studying. Evidence may be presented in many different forms – see Section 6 for methods of recording evidence. Tutors should give learners regular feedback to identify how they are progressing, what they have achieved and what still remains to be done.

Information in the portfolio should be easy to find and it is useful to provide an index or contents page. Learners must show evidence that all Assessment Criteria have been completed. Evidence should be clearly endorsed or marked by the tutor, clearly indicating which Assessment Criteria have been met by that piece of work. The level of support learners require to put portfolios together depends on the level they are working towards:

#### Entry

Learners who have specific learning disabilities or who lack basic skills may need considerable support to put together their evidence of achievement.

#### Level 1

Learners will collect and identify evidence. Tutors may need to assist in the structure and matching of the evidence against the Unit specifications

#### Levels 2 and 3

At these levels, learners can be expected to organise and reference in more complex and developed ways.

## 8 Use of NOCN Qualifications or Use of Units from NOCN Qualifications

You should use the guidance outlined in the relevant NOCN Qualification Guide. A copy of this is available from the NOCN website. ([www.nocn.org.uk](http://www.nocn.org.uk))

## 9 Access to Higher Education

Open College Network North East Region holds a licence from the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) to validate Access to Higher Education Programmes and we therefore act as an AVA (Authorising Validating Agency) on behalf of QAA to quality assure provision.

The special nature of Access to HE Programmes requires a more formal approach to assessment. Most Programmes set timed exercises and examinations to meet the need to demonstrate readiness for HE, where exams and time pressure are important features of learning. However, much of the assessment on Access to Higher Education Programmes will still be tailored to the needs of the individuals as outlined in this booklet and they will be asked to produce a variety of assessed work, as are learners on all OCN Programmes. Further information for learners on Access to HE Programmes is available from our office.



## 10 Policy on the Retention of Assessment Materials and Representative Samples of Learners' Work

NOCN requires that a representative sample of learner achievement is retained by providers to enable the monitoring of standards over time, centres and options.

You should ensure that a representative sample of assessed work is retained for a minimum of two learners per moderated Course for a period of **three** years.

These pieces **must** be representative of the sampling and standardisation process resulting from Internal Moderation, and subsequently submitted for External Moderation. They should be supported by Internal and External Moderation records to evidence the process of sampling and standardisation undertaken. The External Moderator may assist in the identification of pieces to be retained.

Where retention of the assessed samples is impractical (e.g. craftwork, cakes or haircuts), suitable photographic or equivalent records (e.g. video) should be retained. The sample should be updated on a yearly basis.

### Results of appeals against assessment decisions

You are required to keep records of appeal decisions in line with your own policies. We do not require copies of appeals which conclude within your organisation.

If your centre wishes to appeal against a moderation decision all learners' work should be retained until the conclusion of the appeal process.

Please refer to the Appeals against Moderation section of the Appeals Policy.

## 11 Responsibility for Assessment Judgements

Anyone who carries out part or all of the assessment process is responsible for assessment judgements.

Tutors: the tutor (main contact with the learner) is responsible for planning and managing the Assessment Strategy and ensuring that it follows the information in the Learning Course and Unit Documents.

### The tutor is responsible for:

- Using the Assessment Criteria clearly and fairly
- Recording assessment
- Giving on-going feedback to the learner
- Ensuring that all learners have equal opportunities for their achievement to be assessed
- Giving guidance to the learner where there are choices regarding assessment
- Sharing the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria with learners
- Liaising with the Internal Moderator on arrangements for Internal Moderation
- Providing assessment samples for Internal and External Moderation as required
- Attending Internal and External Moderation meetings as required

Learners/Self Assessment: this involves the learner in identifying their own learning in relation to the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria. Self assessment encourages the development of learners' own judgement and evaluation skills, allows reflection on learning and involves learners in the whole learning process, but this must be authenticated by the tutor.

Peer assessment: this involves other learners on the Course in formal or informal situations either as a group or individuals giving feedback and support in assessment of their learning.

Others external to the learning environment: this may involve supervisors, workplace mentors, witnesses, witness testimonies and others who contribute to the assessment process. It is essential that these additional sources also have full access to the Unit specifications. The tutor is responsible for communication and liaison with these outside sources. It is the tutor or assessor's responsibility to authenticate and accept any witness statements as evidence of achievement.

## 12 Internal Moderation

However large or small your Course, it must have an Internal Moderation process. We provide training to support the professional development and skills of staff involved in Internal Moderation.

### Internal Moderation provides:

- Verification of the Award of Credit through sampling of assessed learner work
- Consistency and standardisation of assessment
- Sharing of good practice
- An active peer process of quality improvement

Within a Course, a sample of assessment decisions will be internally standardised through Internal Moderation, before presentation to the External Moderator, who will then confirm learner achievement at the appropriate level.

**Assessment Sampling during the Course must include:**

- A range of learners
- A range of levels (where appropriate)
- All borderline cases
- Examples of different methods of assessment
- Examples of work assessed by all tutors
- Work from all sites

There are separate guidelines for Internal Moderation available from the OCN.

**Benefits of Internal Moderation**

- To ensure that different methods of assessment are applied consistently and appropriately
- To ensure there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the Learning Outcomes have been achieved
- To ensure that National Standards are met e.g. on NOCN Programmes
- Provides support and feedback to the assessor

## 13 Role of the External Moderator

External Moderation is the process of Quality Assurance ensuring credibility of the Award of Credit for the learner, the providing organisation and the Open College Network. We appoint an External Moderator to each Course to undertake a minimum of two Moderation visits each year.

• **Visit Plan**

The External Moderator sends out Visit Plans to you prior to the initial and final visits. They outline the intended activity planned for the visit plus any documentation and staff the Moderator requires to see. It is the tutor's responsibility to ensure they have completed the Recommendations for the Award of Credit and all the learners' portfolios of evidence are available for the External Moderator to sample.

• **Initial Moderation Visit**

At the initial moderation visit, the External Moderator and tutor will discuss sampling and sampling methods used across all tutors, levels and sites. The nature of evidence is also discussed and highlighted in the Assessment Strategy or Assessment plans.

• **Final Moderation Visit**

At the final visit, if satisfied that the standards have been met, the External Moderator signs the Recommendations for the Award of Credit form which triggers Certification for individual learners.

**External Moderation ensures that:**

- There is regional and national consistency in the way the Assessment Criteria are applied
- There is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the Learning Outcomes have been achieved
- A range of appropriate assessment methods have been used to meet specific learner needs
- Tutors have the opportunity to discuss the key issues involved in running the Programme and meeting learners' needs using the Moderation Action Plan
- There is an Assessment Plan or equivalent and you are supported in its development
- There is support for tutors and Centres

For further information on External Moderation, please contact the Quality Development Manager at the OCN.

## 14 Training and Support

### We will provide:

- Developmental support to assist you in the design of an appropriate and rigorous assessment strategy for your Course
- A Curriculum Development Service which includes support and advice from Quality Accreditation Managers on Quality Assurance, curriculum and staff development issues, and Approval processes
- Staff development including training in Internal Moderation, assessment procedures, running Open College Network Courses and developing new Courses

Scheduled training sessions are free to member organisations and are publicised each year.

### You must ensure support at Senior Management level for:

- The design and development of the Course
- The induction of any new staff/tutors to the Programme over time
- Ensuring all tutors and assessors have adequate experience and/or qualifications
- Ensuring all staff involved in the Course are given the opportunity to update their training in relation to Open College Network requirements

## 15 Conclusion

- Assessment strategies and assessment planning improve the overall quality of a Course. Assessment Plans are valuable to tutors, Internal Moderators, External Moderators and where appropriate, learners, as they clearly state what evidence is expected and collected as evidence for each learner as part of the assessment strategy. You can use your plans e.g. lesson plans, Schemes of Work, as long as they meet NOCN requirements outlined in the Assessment Plan format
- Quality Accreditation Managers are available to offer clarification, advice and support to centres which wish to develop assessment strategies or Assessment Plans
- We run a number of training events throughout the year based on assessment planning, which are free to member organisations
- External Moderators are also available to provide support in the development of Assessment Plans as part of their responsibility for the development of the Course

Details of all training events are circulated to all member organisations on a regular basis. Alternatively, if you have any queries or require further information relating to assessment planning, you can contact a Quality Accreditation Manager at the OCN.

