

## **41. Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy**

## Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy

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*This policy is not intended to supersede or replace the assessment regulations of IFG's awarding organisations, but is based on the assumption that IFG will be complying with the requirements of its awarding organisations in every respect.*

### Introduction

IFG's principal aim is to prepare students for the next stage of their academic journey or careers. We understand that if students are to be successful in their further studies or careers, they not only require a strong academic background, but that they must also develop new skills and embrace a more self-directed approach to their studies than they may have needed in their previous education.

IFG students should also be well prepared to make the right choices in terms of their futures and to cope, in some cases, with living and studying in another country. In addition, for students whose first language is not English, it is essential to develop and build upon existing reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

To achieve these aims, there are six main strands to our strategy:

- to equip students with a strong academic foundation for their area of study in higher education through a wide ranging syllabus, and a varied diet of assessments;
- to develop their academic skills and confidence to engage in and take ownership of their studies;
- to enhance students' proficiency in academic writing and communication;
- to enable the professional development of academic staff;
- to assist students in making informed choices both in terms of academic progression and careers;
- to maintain robust assessment processes.
- to share information between teaching staff.

### A. Academic Foundation

1. Course content is designed to ensure that students have a firm foundation for their future studies in higher education or future careers;
2. Student achievement is measured through a variety of assessment types reflecting a similar assessment range which students will experience when they progress to degree courses or/and their employment;
3. Feedback to students is constructive and enables students to understand what they are doing well and how they can improve;
4. Learning resources support classroom teaching and encourage learning and progress;

### B. Academic Skills

1. There is a strong emphasis on evaluation and application of information;
2. Students are encouraged to develop confidence in solving problems and developing arguments;
3. Student engagement in teaching sessions is encouraged through discussions and group activities;
4. There is a strong emphasis on development of skills required for different types of assessment tasks such as presentations, construction of extended pieces of work, avoiding plagiarism, referencing, and research;
5. Personal tutoring sessions encourage a reflective approach, encourage students to identify areas of strength and weakness, and set their own targets;
6. Student representatives may participate in the Academic Board and other academic committees meetings as delegates of the student body.

### C. English Language Proficiency

1. All students take a Communications Skills module which enhances their ability to communicate verbally in a range of situations;
  2. Students also develop academic English skills in preparing for English language tests;
  3. All teaching and assessment are in English.
- Formative and initial assessment results are shared between staff. This is particularly important where it relates to the English language level of students as this impacts on all other aspects of the course.
  - Before the teaching of a particular cohort commences, the Academic Director shares with English language teachers the results of previous English language tests of new students including the results of online English Placement Tests set by the College.
  - Students are then given a thorough assessment of their English level in all four components of Writing, Reading, Speaking and Listening. These results are shared with other EFL teachers as well as teachers of other subjects.
  - Student levels of English are discussed at the Academic Board and Exams & University Progression Committee as well as a sub Course Committees confined to teachers of Academic English, Study Skills, Communication Skills and Themes in Social Science - all modules with most specific relevance to English language ability
  - Students are then assessed at regular intervals to update assessments of English language levels. The results are shared with all relevant teachers.
  - Communication between teachers, management and support staff is maintained through different channels
    - informal meetings, emails between specific members of staff, through the group email: [teachers@studyatifg.uk](mailto:teachers@studyatifg.uk).

#### D. Staff development

Staff development supports staff in developing the skills, behaviour and knowledge they need to achieve the objectives of their role and to enable them to respond flexibly to the demands placed upon them by internal and external change and development.

1. Academic staff are recruited on the basis of their ability and experience in preparing students for higher education;
2. All staff receive a thorough induction which emphasises the aims and objectives of the programme, the learning outcomes, and the assessment processes of IFG;
3. Staff are encouraged to share good practice through regular meetings with their peers;
4. The Academic Director or an appointed member of staff regularly observes lessons, and, in addition, all teaching staff take part in peer observation of each other's' teaching sessions;
5. The Academic Director appraises all teachers annually, and is, in turn, appraised by the Executive Director or his/her appointee.

#### E. Academic Progression and Career Advice

1. Students receive comprehensive advice to ensure they make an informed choice of higher education courses and institutions;
2. Representatives from different universities are regularly invited to speak to the student body and staff to provide insights into higher education opportunities, potential career paths, and further study options;
3. Students receive one-to-one assistance to help in all aspects of the HE application process;
4. Students are given information and advice on living in another country;
5. Embedded in the syllabus is an emphasis on transferable skills to increase student employability;

#### F. Assessments

IFG's assessment policy and processes are guided by the need to prepare students for their future studies at undergraduate or postgraduate level and by the need to assess whether or not specific learning outcomes have been met.

1. There are a variety of assessment methods in order to assess learning objectives appropriately, and as a reflection of the range of student preferred learning styles;
2. Assessments encourage independent learning and reflection and develop transferable skills;
3. All assessments are set by IFG academic staff and internally verified by the Academic Director or his/her appointee;
4. All assessments are moderated by the Academic Director or his/her appointee;
5. All coursework assignments are set on Pharos, and students must upload their scripts on Pharos. All scripts go through anti-plagiarism software, Turnitin - <https://www.turnitin.co.uk/> ;
6. Feedback is either given through Pharos or by email attachments;
7. In the case of academic misconduct, please refer to Academic Misconduct Policy

##### **Late submissions**

8. At induction, students are advised on the importance of submitting assignments before the stated deadline. If an assignment is submitted up to 48 hours late, a penalty of 10 percentage marks will be applied. For example, if the submission deadline is at 22:00 and the assignment is submitted at 23:00 on the same day, a mark of 75 would become a mark of 65 after the penalty. If the submission is between 48 hours and 7 days late, a penalty of 20 percentage marks will be applied. If the submission is between 7 days and 14 days late,

the assignment will be capped at a Pass mark (50%), assuming the assignment merits a Pass. Thereafter, the assignment will be recorded as a non-submission and given a mark of zero.

### ***Mitigating (Exceptional) Circumstances***

9. IFG has a Mitigating Circumstances (Exceptional Circumstances) process for instances where late submission is unavoidable. This process is distinct from the Academic Appeals process. Students are advised to consult grade descriptors and level descriptors for detailed assessment criteria and attainment guidelines, and are encouraged to use the Mitigating Circumstances process to support them as they study rather than trying to struggle through and then needing to rely on the Academic Appeals process.

### **Assessment Feedback**

10. feedback on assignments is:
  - a. concrete and related to the learning objectives of the task;
  - b. specific in that it is related to the particular features of the submitted work;
  - c. useable by students to improve in future assessments;
  - d. Informed by the relevant published marking and assessment criteria, such as Grade Descriptors and Level Descriptors

### **Marking and moderation**

11. All assessment marks are recorded on an assessment grid and are moderated; moderation may result in the adjustment (either up or down) of marks.
12. At the end of each term, the Examination Board reviews and confirms all marks. Where a student's marks are within three or more points of the next grade boundary, moderation may apply to ensure fairness. Any upward moderation must be justified based on clear evidence of performance in the upper range of the grade boundary. Marks below the boundary will not be moderated downward unless errors are identified.
13. Academic Appeals against marks and grades are considered by the Academic Board.
14. Resubmission of coursework assignments. In line with other types of assessments, if a coursework assignment fails to meet the minimum passmark of 50%, the student is given a second opportunity to achieve the required level for a pass. Students are provided with clear feedback on the areas in which they need to improve.
15. The maximum pass mark for a second attempt will be automatically capped at 50%. This means that the maximum mark available for a retaken coursework or examination assessment is 50%.
16. If a second attempt fails to achieve a pass mark, it is still possible for a student to gain an overall passmark for the module if other assessments compensate for this failure and result in an overall module mark of 50% or above.
17. Re-taking of exams. If a student fails to achieve a minimum pass mark of 50% in an examination, they are given an opportunity to re-take the exam.
18. A maximum of two assessment attempts will be afforded to a student for each individual assessment, apart from in the event of a successful academic appeal in which case the mark for the relevant assessment attempt will normally be set aside and replaced with a fresh assessment attempt.
19. If a second/final attempt to pass the exam fails, it is still possible to gain an overall pass for the module if other assessments compensate for this failure and result in an overall module mark of 50% or above.

### **Note:**

- *This Learning, Teaching & Assessment Policy pertains to existing non-HE provision delivered by IFG, therefore*

*the assessment mark capping levels are reflective of this. In the event of successful OfS registration this policy will be adjusted to reflect pass marks at Levels 4-6 that are aligned with the higher education sector.*

