

SupaJam Assessment Policy

September 2021

(To be reviewed August 2022)

Purpose of this document:

This policy is to support the continuous improvement of internal and external assessment by providing guidelines for staff and students about their responsibilities in the process of assessment. This document will help ensure best practice in assessment and in internal and external verification/standardisation.

SupaJam will make every effort to ensure, through its Quality Assurance and Improvement systems and procedures, that students are able to achieve their qualification aims to the maximum of their ability and potential, supported by high quality assessment processes, and effective, timely feedback.

Student Assessment Entitlement:

All students are entitled to receive an assessment that is fair, rigorous, regular and appropriate for the courses and programmes being followed. It must also be ensured that assessment, verification, standardisation and moderation procedures are in accordance with awarding body requirements.

Students are entitled to assessment that will be used in planning, learning, and in monitoring students' progress. It will be sensitive to the needs of individual students, and reflect the context in which learning takes place, and where achievement is tracked, recorded and accredited. This also includes considering an accreditation of prior learning as part of planning.

Feedback of progress by students, against agreed criteria for assessment, is the cornerstone of this entitlement, and this must be clear, timely and transparent. This entitlement is regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, learning difficulty or disability.

Vision:

Assessment and reporting will provide students, teachers, parents and carers with accurate information as to the progress of students in relation to their programmes of study in line with National Standards, along with an understanding of steps for further progress.

Objectives:

- To ensure all aspects of assessment are realistic in terms of teacher workload.
- To ensure assessment is used to inform planning, teaching and intervention in the classroom and across SupaJam.

Assessment Principles:

1. Assessments are designed to enable students to demonstrate achievement of the requirements of the units and elements of a programme.
2. Support, where appropriate, is offered to students to enable them to meet the required standards by providing equality of access to assessment, and through additional tutorial or learning support where individuals require this, in order to progress with their programme of study.

3. Special arrangements for assessment may be made where appropriate, and where prior agreement has been made with the Internal Verifier.
4. Clear guidelines are provided for assessors and students, both in the operation of formative assessment (initial marking) and summative assessment (final marking following any resubmission) during the programmes and in the feedback of assessments to students, in order to enable them to plan and regulate the effectiveness of their own learning.

SupaJam operates an assessment policy which:

1. Aims to provide fair, timely and informed feedback and assessments for all students.
2. Complies with the examination and assessment regulations of accredited awarding bodies and qualifications.
3. Includes a written procedure for appeals against unfair assessment. (Please refer to our Student Complaints, Conflicts of Interest and Appeals Procedure for more information.)
4. Entitles all students to initial diagnostic assessment and appropriate follow-up learning support for Maths, English and RSL Diplomas.
5. Assesses the support needs of all students upon entry, to be provided where needed.
6. Actively promotes SupaJam's Equality and Diversity Policy.

SupaJam's Responsibilities in the Assessment Process

SupaJam's aims:

1. To provide all students with an outline of their programme and awarding body assessment requirements alongside details of appeals and malpractice policies/processes.
2. That all assessments will be accompanied by an assignment brief where appropriate, which clearly states the criteria for successful completion of the assessment.
3. That learning objectives will be used in order to communicate to students what is expected for success within that lesson.
4. During each lesson, teachers will systematically and effectively check every student's progress in relation to the learning objectives and plan effective intervention within that and subsequent lessons where needed.

5. All processes of informal assessment relating to awarding bodies' requirements will be supervised by Administration, who will maintain records of entries, individual achievements by students and claim all and unit certification.
6. That Assessors and Internal Verifiers (IVs) will meet the awarding bodies requirements. Assessors/IVs in training will have their decisions countersigned by an approved Assessor/IV. Internal assessment will not be completed by an Internal Verifier on their own work, to ensure VACSR standards are met.
7. That sufficient internal assessments will be sampled through internal verification, to meet awarding body requirements. Samples will consist of 5 students or 20% of students per level of study (whichever is the lesser amount), ensuring that: a) every student has work internally verified at least once within the academic year, b) all RSL modules delivered in the academic year are sampled and, c) each individual assessor has their grading internally verified within the sample. Where IV samples produce reports of significant error or inaccurate grading responses, the sample will then be increased to a 50% or 100% sample; whichever the IQA feels is more appropriate in that instance.
8. That clear, effective and constructive feedback from all assessments will be provided to all students on a feedback sheet which will include marks/grades, written feedback and action planning.
9. That internal and external moderation will take place regularly, using students' assessed work/portfolios, to meet the requirements of awarding bodies, ensuring appropriate standardisation of assessment and consistency by all staff involved within the assessment process.
10. To supply an appropriate amount of equipment and resources to support assessment, which will be maintained at a level to meet current awarding body requirements.
11. That opportunities to be re-assessed, to resubmit work or to appeal against an assessment decision will be made available to all students as appropriate, and in accordance with awarding body and qualification requirements.
12. SupaJam expects that students will undertake assessments and/or exams when they are at an appropriate level and standard to successfully achieve the required outcome. Where a student is unsuccessful in achieving their outcome, SupaJam will support a further resit.
13. That students will be given an opportunity to complete formal assessment/exams in a timely manner. Where a student is unsuccessful in achieving the formal assessment/exam, they will be given further opportunities to achieve within the academic year, where the examining windows/opportunities exist.

14. That standardisation activities are undertaken throughout the academic year to ensure consistency in assessment and informal verification, and that students' work meets the required standards.
15. To ensure that regular reviews of the students individual progress will be undertaken, which will incorporate constructive feedback from all relevant staff involved in assessing a students' progress. The level teacher will provide an overview of each student's overall progress against targets for assessment and will be responsible for reporting progress or improvement issues to the student, and/or parents if appropriate.
16. To provide regular and constructive reporting of both actual formative assessment outcomes and predictive summative assessment outcomes for students, parents and employers, as appropriate, and in accordance with awarding body requirements.
17. All SupaJam staff involved within a process of assessment will be provided with sufficient information training and up-to-date qualifications, where required, together with recent industrial experience, as appropriate, to meet an awarding body's requirements, and to fully implement SupaJam's policy and guidelines regarding assessment.

The Students' Responsibilities in the Assessment Process:

The student is required:

1. To attend all classes punctually.
2. To produce work for formative and summative assessment, in line with awarding body requirements or for submission to an awarding body, as required by the assessor.
3. To undertake placement/residential commitments as required by course guidelines.
4. To attend examinations, assessments (including IV and EV visits) and submit work as required for assessment, providing in advance of an assessor's/IV meeting information on any exceptional personal circumstances which may have affected performance and which s/he may wish to be taken into account.
5. If the student fails to attend examinations, assessments (EV visits) or to submit/resubmit work for assessment without good cause, the assessors have the authority to deem that the student has failed the assessment.
6. If the student is found to have misled or attempted to gain unfair advantage, assessors have the authority to deem the student to have failed part or all of the assessment and to determine whether or not the student will be permitted to be reassessed.

7. To declare any learning difficulty that may require exceptional support in an exam or assessment situation at the outset of the programme of study, so that appropriate support may be put in place.

Note: PLAGIARISM

In order to prevent incidents of plagiarism by students of published or unpublished work produced by others, there will be a requirement for students to make an appropriate acknowledgement or reference to such sources within the essay or assignment. This applies to text, CD-ROM or Internet Sources. Students who fail to acknowledge sources may be disqualified from the assessment process or required to resubmit/retake their essay/assignment.

Baseline Assessments:

At point of enrolment, SupaJam will take into consideration recognition of prior learning to ascertain the appropriate level Diploma that each student should undertake. Within the first 6 weeks of study, rates of progress within the first module of each level will be monitored to ensure that each student has been allocated correctly.

For Functional Skills, an initial assessment and diagnostic test will be taken with each student regardless of whether they have achieved their GCSEs at a Grade C/4 to ensure that students current level of learning has not fallen since passing their most recent qualification. (Should their understanding have fallen, steps will be taken to support them to raise their level of understanding to the current expectation and to ensure that they are continuing to progress towards the next level of study.)

Progressing onto next level of study:

Students completing a Level 1 RSL Diploma for Music Practitioners and wishing to progress onto a Level 2 RSL Diploma for Music Practitioners will be required to achieve a Merit overall for their Level 1 Diploma. Interventions and appropriate support will remove barriers to learning that will help students to achieve this target. For those that do not achieve this despite interventions, SupaJam will support finding an alternative progression beyond the Level 1 Music Practitioners Diploma.

Students completing a Level 2 RSL Diploma for Music Practitioners and wishing to progress onto a L3 RSL Diploma for Music Practitioners will be required to achieve both a Merit in their Level 2 Diploma as well as have achieved a Level 1 in English (and therefore be working towards achieving a Level 2 in English the following year), in order to access the Level 3 Diploma during the following year. This is due to increased workload and level of difficulty within the work. Interventions and appropriate support will remove barriers to learning that will help students to achieve this target. For those that do not achieve this despite interventions, SupaJam will support students to find an alternative progression beyond the Level 2 RSL Diploma for Music Practitioners.