UNIVERSITY of BRADFORD

# Assessment, Marking and Feedback Policy

For Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Provision

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**Contents**

1. Aims and Scope ..... 3
2. Inclusive Assessment ..... 3
3. Assessment Design ..... 5
4. Assessment Scrutiny and Approval ..... 6
5. Assessment Briefing and Support ..... 7
6. Assessment Implementation ..... 9
7. Marking, Moderation and Monitoring ..... 11
8. Feedback ..... 15
9. Oversight, Monitoring and Support ..... 17
10. Document and version control information ..... 18

# 1. Aims and Scope

1.1 This policy aims to outline the principles and practices for assessment, marking and feedback at the University of Bradford. It aims to:

- Provide a consistent framework across all disciplines for assessment, marking and feedback.
- Promote assessment which is authentic and meaningful for students.
- Foster student development and engagement with constructive feedback.
- Ensure assessments are as fair, accessible, and equitable as possible, while maintaining academic standards.
- Support programme-centric assessment strategies.
- Complement the University's assessment regulations and align with the dimensions and principles of the Bradford Curriculum.
- Support the University's ongoing compliance with the Office for Students B Conditions relating to quality, standards, and the student experience.

1.2 The policy applies to all taught programmes and/or modules at the University of Bradford, regardless of qualification level or subject discipline. Local, programme-centric learning, teaching and assessment strategies will be tailored to suit the academic discipline and particular graduate destinations and skills, in alignment with this policy.

# 2. Inclusive Assessment

2.1 The University of Bradford is committed to inclusive learning, teaching and assessment. Core principles of the Bradford Curriculum include:

- **Accessible learning** – Teaching, learning and assessment activities are designed to remove unnecessary barriers to learning and support the diverse needs and abilities of all students.
- **Empowering learning** – Learning and assessment activities offer students choice and flexibility wherever possible and appropriate, in relation to what, when and how they learn or demonstrate learning.

2.2 In addition to this commitment to inclusive curriculum, the University has a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to consider ways to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination** – by avoiding assessment practices that treat students less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** – by designing assessment tasks which give students an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
- **Take steps to meet the needs of students with disabilities** through reasonable adjustments – anticipating and implementing adjustments to assessment tasks to ensure students can participate fully in the assessment of their module/programme.

2.3 The Equality Act uses the term 'competence standard' to describe "an academic, medical or other standard applied for the purposes of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability". In the context of assessment, a competence standard is the fundamental element of knowledge or skill that needs to be tested to meet the relevant learning outcome of the module, and ultimately to meet the standards of the final award. For example, a competence standard on a medical-related degree may be the ability to 'communicate specialist medical information to non-specialist audiences'.

2.4 Because competence standards are fundamental elements to be assessed, there is no obligation for academic teams to make reasonable adjustments to the competence standards themselves. However, there is an obligation to make reasonable adjustments to the 'how' of assessment: the way the competence standards are assessed so that disabled students are not disadvantaged in demonstrating their competence.

2.5 As far as possible, assessment strategies and individual components of assessment should be designed to both assess the fundamental competence standards within the learning outcomes and remove the need for reasonable adjustments. Guidance for academic teams on how to design inclusive assessments, and how to evaluate the accessibility of their current assessment strategies, is available via Developing your Teaching at Bradford [on the Canvas VLE].

2.6 Students with a Learner Support Profile (LSP) for disability or other learning support plan (such as pregnant or post-partum students) will have any recommended reasonable adjustments noted as part of this. Module Leaders are responsible for ensuring any recommended adjustments noted in a student's LSP or learning support plan are accommodated as part of the assessment design and implementation process.

2.7 Programme Teams should monitor the accessibility and inclusivity of their assessment strategies and the performance of students with different protected characteristics as part of their ongoing quality assurance and enhancement processes.

## 3. Assessment Design

3.1 All components of formal, summative assessment should align with the learning, teaching, and assessment strategy of the relevant module and/or programme, and should be designed according to the following principles:

- **Clear** – the purpose, format, and grading criteria of the assessment is clear to students, and they understand what they need to do to prepare.
- **Valid** – the assessment tests the learning outcomes of the module/programme in ways that are appropriate to both what is being assessed, the level of study and relevant sector standards and/or professional frameworks.
- **Authentic** – the assessment focuses on the application of knowledge and skills in real-world, meaningful contexts relating to the discipline/sector.
- **Accessible** – the assessment must consider and accommodate diverse learning needs, adhering to accessibility and equality regulation.
- **Proportionate** – the intended workload associated with the preparation and completion of the assessment is appropriate to the level of study and nominal credit value of the component.
- **Connected** – there are clear and strong links between the assessment component and the learning activities that precede it. It is also clear how the assessment can support the skills development of students for future elements of work/study.

3.2 To aid consistency and clarity in assessment design, development and implementation, all assessment components must align with the categories within the University's Assessment Typology. This helps ensure that assessments can be accurately described to students and can be set up in a consistent format ready for submission/completion.

3.3 A description of how a programme's assessments have been designed, in alignment with the above principles and frameworks, is provided in the learning, teaching and assessment strategy within the relevant programme specification and module descriptors. It should be clear from these strategies how the different elements of learning and assessment fit together and how they meet the Bradford Curriculum principles. Support for Programme Teams in designing programme-centric, inclusive assessment is available on [the VLE at] Developing your Teaching at Bradford.

3.4 Accountability for ensuring that a programme's assessments are designed, developed, and implemented according to the principles above and the published information in module and programme learning, teaching and assessment strategies rests with the relevant Programme Leader.

3.5 Module Leaders are responsible for designing the individual assessment components for their module, in alignment with the relevant module descriptor and any programme-level assessment strategies.

3.6 Module Leaders should ensure that all assessments – including the task, marking criteria and assessment brief for students – are produced in advance of the relevant module's teaching period, ready to signpost to students during the module's induction.

## 4. Assessment Scrutiny and Approval

4.1 In addition to the internal oversight of assessment design/production provided by the Programme Leader, External Examiners also play a valuable role in ensuring assessments meet the relevant standards.

4.2 External Examiners should be invited to review a sample of designed assessments (including tasks, briefs, rubrics etc.) each year and confirm that:

- There is clear alignment with relevant frameworks/benchmarks/sector norms.
- The tasks and marking criteria are appropriate and valid for the level, learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment strategy of the module/programme.
- There has been consideration of diverse learning needs and there are clear plans for accommodating any adjustments.
- The information to students – [assessment] briefs and any marking rubrics – is clear.

4.3 Programme Leaders should liaise with the External Examiners for their programme, and colleagues from the Programme Administration Team, to agree the sample of assessments for scrutiny and timing of review, based on approximately one working day of allocated scrutiny time per year.

4.4 Using a risk-based approach, the assessment sample for scrutiny should include the following as a minimum:

- A sample from all academic levels of the programme.
- All assessment components for new modules.
- Any new/modified assessment components in existing modules.
- Any assessment components which have a nominal credit value greater than 20 credits (such as a capstone project/dissertation assessment in a module of 40 or more credits).

And, where possible:

- A sample from all Module Leaders.
- A sample of each [discrete] assessment type on the programme (such as reports, exams, presentations and so on).

4.5 Any comments and/or recommendations from the External Examiner(s), following scrutiny of the assessment samples, should be reviewed and actioned by the Programme Team, and should also be noted at a programme management meeting as part of the programme's ongoing quality monitoring.

4.6 If, following scrutiny of the assessments, the External Examiner recommends any changes to the assessment tasks and/or marking criteria, these recommendations should be discussed by the Programme Team and any changes made should be updated in documentation and communicated to the students. If the recommendations are advisory and not fundamental to the validity of the assessment, the Programme Team should consider whether to make changes in the current academic session or to consider changes for future instances of the module.

4.7 If, following scrutiny of the sample of assessments, the External Examiner has major concerns about the assessment strategy and/or designed assessment components on the programme, they should liaise with the relevant Programme Leader and inform the Academic Quality Team [by email] at externalexaminers@bradford.ac.uk.

## 5. Assessment Briefing and Support

5.1 Information about each assessment component should be made available to students at the beginning of each module. Students need to be clear on the requirements of the assessment, how they should prepare, against what criteria their work will be marked, when they can expect to receive marks/feedback and where they can access support for their assessment preparation.

5.2 Module Leaders should ensure that assessment briefings are clear and available to all students, that any assessment briefing sessions are recorded and that all students have explicit opportunities to ask questions about the assessment prior to completion/submission.

5.3 As a minimum, assessment briefing documents should include the following elements:

#### 5.3.1. Basic information

- Module code and title.
- Assessment type.

- Assessment task title/description.
- Assessment weighting.
- Submission/completion date.

#### 5.3.2. Assessment aims

- Learning outcomes tested.
- Marking criteria.
- Level of generative Artificial Intelligence permitted.
- Level of English language proficiency tested.

#### 5.3.3. Practical details

- Submission/completion method (for example, in person, via Canvas).
- Submission/completion format (such as file type or printed requirement).
- Word/time limit.
- Any technical requirements (like a need to use specific tools).
- Additional instructions/rules of assessment.

#### 5.3.4. Results and feedback

- Feedback level and format.
- Results/feedback timeline.
- Specific preparatory support available like revision sessions, Canvas [/VLE] resources or formative activities.
- Point to central support services.
- Point to relevant policies as needed including Consideration of Personal Circumstances, the Academic Integrity Policy and this Assessment Policy.

5.4 A standard template for Module Leaders to adapt is available via Developing your Teaching at Bradford [on the VLE]. While Module Leaders can adapt the template to suit their local needs, Programme Leaders should ensure that there is consistency in level, format and quality of assessment briefings across their programme.

# 6. Assessment Implementation

6.1 The fundamentals of how each assessment should be implemented is included as part of the University's Assessment Typology and supporting guidance for Programme Administration and Programme Teams is available.

6.2 For any assessments delivered via Canvas (the University's VLE), Module Leaders should liaise with the Programme Administration Team to ensure that the relevant submission boxes/quizzes are set up appropriately in advance of the relevant module's teaching period. Further guidance on Setting up Assessments in Canvas is available.

6.3 For any assessments involving scheduled exams, Module Leaders should liaise with the Exams Team when prompted, to confirm assessment details and any reasonable adjustments required. Module Leaders should also confirm details for oversight and support on the day of the exam. Further guidance on Exam Scheduling and Implementation is available.

6.4 By participating in formal assessment activities, students are confirming that:

- They are fit and well enough to participate – if students feel they are unable to participate in an assessment, they are able to make a request for 'extenuating circumstances' as part of the University's Consideration of Personal Circumstances Policy.
- Their work is their own and they agree to uphold the expected standards of academic integrity and any relevant assessment submission/completion requirements, in line with the University's Academic Integrity Policy.

6.5 Students will be reminded of any particular assessment rules prior to the submission/completion, via either an invigilator announcement in exams, or via a statement of authenticity for submissions on Canvas.

6.6 For Canvas submissions, the University uses Turnitin Originality which highlights similarities between a submitted text and a database of academic content, online sources, and other student papers to support the detection of academic misconduct such as plagiarism and/or collusion.

6.7 Students have an opportunity prior to their assignment deadline to upload work and check their similarity score via Turnitin. There is no limit to how many times students can check their similarity score prior to the submission deadline. However, is it the responsibility of students to make sure that the work uploaded by the deadline is the correct version. Uploading the wrong version of a document will not be viewed as a legitimate excuse for the work being subject to an academic misconduct allegation.

6.8 An opportunity to rectify a submission in error in Canvas will only be allowed under the following circumstances, and with the explicit agreement of the Programme Administration Manager:

- The submission error of an individual will impact a wider group of students. For example, as part of pair-work or group-work submissions.

and/or

- The submission error was the genuine mistake/oversight of an individual student (insofar as the correct file was submitted but to the incorrect box or the wrong file/version/document was submitted to the correct box before the published deadline).

6.9 In all cases, students must notify the Programme Admin Team of the error via email within 24 hours of the published submission deadline (or any approved extension to that deadline). They should attach the correct version of their work to the email. Any submissions which do not fall into one of the above categories, or are flagged after the 24-hour deadline, will be marked/graded and processed according to standard regulatory procedures.

6.10 A similar approach will be taken where students experience technical issues that prevent them from submitting via Canvas (for example, system outages or file upload errors). In such cases, students must notify the Programme Admin Team via email within 24 hours of the published submission deadline (or any approved extension) and attach the final version of their work to that email. These cases will be considered on an individual basis and, where appropriate, the attached work may be accepted as evidence of timely submission.

6.11 Where a student, in error, answers more than the required number of questions/sections as part of an [examination or other] assessment, all completed questions should be marked and the final mark should be based on the highest of the required number of sections/questions. For example, if a student answers four questions when they were only required to answer two, all four questions should be marked and the highest two questions should make up the final mark.

6.12 To encourage concise, focused writing, adherence to assessment briefs and to ensure fairness across submissions, where a student submits work that is over the word-limit [in written work] or time-limit set [in recorded presentations or similar] for their assessment, markers will apply the following penalties:

- **11% to 25% over the limit** – 10 marks deducted

- **25% or more over the limit** – submission will be classed as a fail and student will be required to undertake reassessment, where eligible.

# 7. Marking, Moderation and Monitoring

7.1 The University's approach to marking, moderation and monitoring is informed by a risk-based methodology, which prioritises quality assurance activities where the potential for variation in academic standards or impact on student outcomes is greatest – such as in new, revised, high-credit, or historically low-performing assessments. This ensures that scrutiny and resources are focused where they are most needed to maintain consistent academic standards.

7.2 All assessments must have a clear mark scheme/rubric with explicit alignment to level of study, intended learning outcomes, classification boundary thresholds (where applicable), and which allow for demonstration/achievement of the full range of marks.

7.3 To ensure consistency of marking within and across modules, Programme and Module Leaders should ensure there is appropriate support and guidance for markers for all assessment components. This might include marked samples of different grade bands with supporting commentary/annotation.

7.4 Programme and Module Leaders should also agree and coordinate a schedule of calibration/standardisation activity each year for assessment types where academic judgement against a marking rubric is required. Using a risk-based approach, it is recommended that calibration/standardisation activity for the following assessment elements takes priority:

- **Assessment components for new modules**.
- Any **new/modified assessment components** in existing modules.
- Any assessment **components which have a nominal credit value greater than 20 credits** (such as a capstone project/dissertation assessment in a module of 40 or more credits).
- Assessments in modules which have **a large and/or new marking team**.
- Assessments in modules which have been identified as **'low performing' or 'higher risk'** as part of the programme's ongoing quality monitoring processes.

7.5 As part of the assessment briefing information provided to students, Module Leaders should outline how and when students will receive their marks and feedback. Marking and the release of provisional marks to students should be completed within a maximum of 4 weeks from the assessment completion/submission date. For students granted submission extensions, marking will be completed, and provisional results released, within 4 weeks of the extended deadline.

7.6 Exceptions to this maximum 4-week timeframe may be:

- Where there are **pre-planned breaks** as part of the academic calendar including the winter and spring breaks.
- Where students are **subject to investigations** as part of the Academic Integrity Policy which may delay the release of their assessment results.

Students will be informed by their module tutor or marker if either of these scenarios apply to their assessment/work. Module Leaders are responsible for overseeing assessment components and numbers of students which fall into the exceptional categories above.

7.7 To ensure quality and consistency of marking standards, the marking of all assessment components is subject to internal moderation, taking the form of either:

- **Marking review** – where a second marker reviews a sample of the marking and feedback of a first marker.
- **Independent second marking** – where a second marker marks a sample of assessments independently of any marking and feedback of a first marker.

7.8 All assessment components should be subject to internal moderation of a sample of completed/submitted work.

7.9 For assessment components which have a nominal credit value greater than 20 credits (such as a 50% or above weighted component in a 40 or above credit module), a sample comprising at least 5 students or 20% of submitted/completed work (whichever is greater, up to a maximum of 100 students) should be independently second marked.

7.10 For all other assessment components, a sample comprising at least 3 students or 10% of submitted work (whichever is greater, up to a maximum of 50 students), should be subject to either independent second marking or marking review.

For 'live', in-person assessments (such as presentations or practical assessments), the sample size should be the same, but marking teams may decide that independent second marking is a more appropriate/convenient method of moderation.

7.11 Using a risk-based approach, it is recommended that the selection and distribution of samples for internal moderation prioritise areas of greatest risk, while also ensuring that internal moderators are paired across the programme team to support consistency – particularly where markers are new to a module or assessment component.

To support this, sample selection should, where possible, include:

- **A range of marks** (fails, low pass, mid pass, high pass).

- **A range of first markers,** to enable cross-checking and calibration across the marking team.
- **A higher sample from markers new** to the programme, module and/or component.

7.12 For modules that have been identified as 'low performing' or 'higher risk' through the programme's ongoing quality monitoring processes, the Module and Programme Leaders may wish to implement an enhanced approach to internal moderation.

This may include actions such as increasing the sample size for moderation, organising team-based moderation exercises, or providing additional oversight and support for individual markers.

7.13 Where in marking review or independent second marking the internal moderator broadly agrees with the marking and feedback of the first marker, then the mark of the first marker shall stand.

7.14 Where the internal moderator initially disagrees with the marking and feedback of the first marker, but a discussion leads to agreement, the final outcome should reflect the consensus reached.

This may involve upholding the original marks or reviewing a wider selection of assessments if the discussion highlights issues with the application of the marking criteria.

7.15 Where the internal moderator disagrees with the marking and feedback of the first marker and, following discussion, consensus cannot be reached, the Programme Leader should review the samples of work and take actions to mitigate the risks to confirming marking standards.

Programme Leaders may wish to seek advice from their Associate Dean for Learning, Teaching and Student Experience in determining appropriate mitigating actions, which may include:

- Comparing all the provisional component/module marks against other relevant modules on the programme to identify outliers in mark distribution.
- Requiring additional independent marking of a sample/all of assessment for the module under consideration.
- Asking the External Examiner to review samples from the module under consideration.

7.16 Confirmation of internal moderation, any relevant discussions and any mitigating actions taken in relation to 7.15 should be noted in the Module Assessment Log for each module and made available for discussion at the relevant Continuation and Award Board.

7.17 In addition to the internal oversight of marking and feedback provided by the Programme Team, External Examiners also play a valuable role in assuring the marking and feedback standards.

7.18 External Examiners should be invited to review a sample of the internally moderated assessments (including the pieces of work, first marker's scores/feedback, and any second marker scores/feedback etc.) each year and confirm that:

- Marks, feedback, and grading decisions are **consistent, fair and at an expected level** of quality across marking teams.
- Any differences between markers are appropriately **resolved** and transparently **documented**.
- Assessments and outcomes are **comparable to similar programmes** and **meet relevant standards**/benchmarks.

7.19 Programme Leaders should liaise with the External Examiners for their programme, and colleagues from the Programme Administration Team, to agree the sample of assessments for scrutiny and the timing of review, based on approximately one working day of allocated moderation time per year.

7.20 Using a risk-based approach, the marking sample for scrutiny should include the following as a minimum:

- A **sample from all academic levels** of the programme.
- **All assessment components for new modules.**
- Any **new/modified assessment components** in existing modules.
- Any assessment **components which have a nominal credit value greater than 20 credits** (such as a capstone project/dissertation assessment in a module of 40 or more credits).

And, where possible:

- A sample from all Module Leaders.
- A sample of each [discrete] assessment type on the programme (such as reports, exams, presentations and so on).

7.21 Any comments and/or recommendations from the External Examiner(s), following scrutiny of the marking samples, should be reviewed and actioned by the Programme Team, and should also be noted at a programme management meeting as part of the programme's ongoing quality monitoring.

7.22 If, following scrutiny of the marking sample, the External Examiner recommends any changes to the marking and/or feedback, the Programme Leader and relevant Module Leader should discuss and agree a final mark for the student's work against the grading criteria.

7.23 If, following scrutiny of the marking sample, the External Examiner has major concerns about the quality and standards of marking and feedback, they should liaise with the relevant Programme Leader and inform the Academic Portfolio Records Team [by email] at externalexaminers@bradford.ac.uk.

7.24 Confirmation of internal and external moderation, as well as any comments and/or recommendations from the External Examiner(s) should be noted at a programme management meeting as part of the programme's ongoing quality monitoring.

7.25 All results will remain provisional until assessment moderation is complete, and marks have been confirmed at a Continuation and Award Board. Students will then be notified of their final results via e:Vision. Guidance on how final marks are calculated and published is available via the Student Guide to Assessment, Marking and Feedback.

## 8. Feedback

8.1 Feedback is an integral part of the learning and assessment process, supporting students in understanding their progress, identifying areas for improvement, and building upon their strengths.

8.2 Feedback provided to students should adhere to the following principles:

- **Clear** – The feedback must be easy to understand, with specific examples and language that clearly communicates strengths, areas for improvement, and suggested next steps.
- **Constructive** – Feedback should focus on providing actionable suggestions that help students address weaknesses and enhance their performance.
- **Developmental** – The feedback should guide students in building upon their skills and knowledge, linking with past and future elements of study/work.
- **Supportive** – Feedback must encourage and motivate students, fostering confidence and engagement in their learning journey.
- **Timely** – Feedback should be delivered promptly to ensure students have adequate time to reflect on and apply it to their subsequent work.

8.3 The choice of feedback methods on a module will be determined by the nature of the assessments and where in a student's learning journey they occur, but may include:

- **Formative feedback** – ongoing feedback provided during the course of study to help students improve prior to formal/summative assessments.
- **Individual feedback** – comments specific to an individual student's work.
- **Group feedback** – general comments provided to a group/cohort of students to address common themes or areas for improvement.
- **Peer feedback** – provided by fellow students as part of collaborative learning activities.

8.4 Each module should have a clear feedback strategy outlined in the module descriptor and in the briefing materials for each assessment component. This ensures that students are aware of the method, purpose, and timing of feedback they will receive. Examples of feedback strategies, as well as good practice tips for markers is available in the Developing your Teaching at Bradford space on Canvas.

8.5 In line with the timing of releasing provisional results to students, feedback on summative assessments will be made available to students within a maximum of 4 weeks from the assessment completion/submission date. For students granted submission extensions, feedback will be made available within 4 weeks of the extended deadline.

8.6 Exceptions to this maximum 4-week timeframe may be:

- Where feedback at the end of one module/stage has been **built into the learning activities** of a subsequent module.
- Where feedback relates to **[final] examinations** completed at the very end of a student's programme of study.
- Where there are **pre-planned breaks** as part of the academic calendar including the winter and spring breaks.
- Where students are **subject to investigations** as part of the Academic Integrity Policy which may delay the release of their assessment results.

Students will be informed if any of these scenarios apply to their assessment/work.

8.7 Unless stated in the Regulation Variance Register, students in all modules where exams form part of the assessment strategy should be given the opportunity to review their exam scripts as part of their feedback.

8.8 Module Leaders and Programme Leaders should also ensure that students have explicit opportunities to seek support with, or ask questions about, the feedback they receive throughout their programme.

## 9. Oversight, Monitoring and Support

9.1 Implementation of this Policy is governed and monitored by the following Boards/Committees:

- **Continuation and Award Board** – responsible for confirming assessment, marking and feedback standards, ratifying achievement of credit and making decisions relating to continuation, reassessment/restudy and/or award.
- **Assessment and Achievement Monitoring Board** – responsible for monitoring institutional assessment, marking and feedback standards and making decisions on recommendations from Continuation and Award Boards.
- **Learning and Teaching Committee** – responsible for the ongoing monitoring and approval of assessment and award regulations, as well as the monitoring of academic outcomes and compliance with the Office for Students B Conditions of Registration.

9.2 The Academic Quality and Portfolio Management Team are responsible for the operation of this policy and corresponding processes, as well as the ongoing schedule of policy/process review and continuous improvement.

9.3 The Equality Act 2010 places a legal obligation on the University to make reasonable adjustments to its services and meet the requirements of staff with a disability and/or other specific needs. Where a member of staff feels they may require additional support to navigate and/or participate in the processes outlined in this policy, they should contact their line manager in the first instance. Measures to support participation may include, for example, distribution of individual roles and responsibilities across a Module/Programme Team.

9.4 This policy and accompanying guidance shall be reviewed annually.

## 10. Document and version control information

| Version control information heading | Details |
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| **Owner** | Paul Watson, Provost/Director of Student Experience and Teaching Excellence |
| **Author** | Tori McKay, Associate Director (Academic Experience) |
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| **Applicable statutory, legal, or national best practice requirements** | Equality Act 2010<br>Public Sector Equality Duty 2023<br>UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance: Assessment<br>OIA Good Practice Framework: Supporting Disabled Students<br>EAT Framework |
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