**Summative Assessment and Students’ Technical Proficiency in Writing in English**

A key aim of the University of Hull’s Education Strategy is ‘to create a truly inclusive university’, and to do so in part by ‘adopting an anticipatory approach that not only seeks to identify and remove existing barriers, but endeavours to shape best practice across the wider Higher Education sector’ (see the *University of Hull Education Strategy 2020-2025*, p.2). To this end both the *University Code of Practice on Assessment Procedures* (CoP AP) and the University’s *Inclusive Assessment, Marking and Feedback Policy* (IAMFP) require that all summative assessment procedures, from the design of assessment, through its communication to students, its marking, and the feedback given to students, are fully inclusive.

The points and requirements that follow pertain exclusively to the *summative* assessment of students’ technical proficiency in writing in English. The inclusive marking policy, and this document, are designed to make it clear that markers should not be ‘marking down’ for differences in expression between the marker and the student where the student’s meaning remains clear. This includes but is not limited to grammatical proficiency, and might include things like spelling, punctuation use, over-use of subclauses, poor paragraph structure, regional differences in expression and so on. Provided the marker is able to assess the content (or other learning outcomes/competencies) effectively, then marks should not be negatively impacted solely on grounds of expression. This does not preclude providing formative feedback on language, expression and structure, and assessment of the correct use of technical terminology relevant to the discipline is of course permitted.

What is intended here then, In line with the University commitment to inclusive assessment, is that:

* technical proficiency in writing in English must not be an assessed learning outcome (i.e. it must not be a factor in the summative assessment of a student’s work) except where this is a requirement of the relevant Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and/or is explicitly required by the relevant Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Benchmark Statement(s), and;
* where such exceptional circumstances do apply, Module Leaders are required to submit an exemption request for approval to their Associate Dean Education (ADE). If the request is approved the ADE will pass the details to their Faculty Student Hub so that the Module Leader and relevant markers can be informed, where appropriate, of any implications that may arise for individual students who have relevant disabilities (see **Instructions for Module Leaders** below).

All colleagues involved in the setting and marking of assessment are urged to familiarise themselves with the relevant Codes of Practice and policies. Both the [CoP AP](https://universityofhull.app.box.com/s/wiztothwu2oe3k3ii516plz8c8cppf1k) and [IAMFP](https://universityofhull.app.box.com/s/ttkvnlp02uu96ixbaman4q4k989i3ws0) can be found in the Assessment section of the Quality Handbook, available here: [Quality and Standards | University of Hull](https://www.hull.ac.uk/choose-hull/university-and-region/key-documents/quality)

In the context of summative assessment and technical proficiency in writing in English, and for convenience, a number of key points from the CoP AP and IAMFP are as follows:

* All assessment **must** be inclusive by design, in keeping with the Inclusive Assessment, Marking and Feedback Policy (see CoP AP, ch. 1, para. 13).
* Technical proficiency in writing in English **should not** be an assessed learning outcome unless so stipulated by the relevant Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Benchmark Statement(s) or by a relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) (IAMFP, para. 6).
* Where technical proficiency in writing in English can be justified as a learning outcome/competence:

1. this **must** have been communicated to students in the information that they have been given about the marking criteria and/or learning outcomes/competencies for the particular task (CoP AP, ch. 4, para. 29), and;
2. it **should not** be assessed under examination conditions unless clearly stipulated for in relevant Subject Benchmark Statements or by the relevant PSRB (IAMFP, para. 7).

* Correct spelling and contextual usage of technical terms may be justified in learning outcomes/competencies for some modules, e.g. where it is vital to spell and use technical terms correctly as defined by the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement(s) and/or PSRB. Where this is highly relevant this may be assessed under exam conditions (IAMFP, para. 8).

**Instructions for Module Leaders**

To identify the exceptional situations where technical proficiency in writing in English should be assessed, Module Leaders are asked to answer Yes (Y) or No (N) as appropriate to the questions listed below. Module Leaders **must** ensure that technical proficiency in writing in English is not summatively assessed except where all four questions below can be answered in the affirmative:

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| 1. Does the Subject Benchmark Statement/PSRB require the module to assess technical proficiency in writing in English? | Y/N |
| 1. Have I communicated to students via the assessment guidelines and/or module handbook that technical proficiency in writing in English is a learning outcome/competence? | Y/N |
| 1. If the answers to both questions 1. and 2. above are ‘Y’, have I sent a rationale outlining the case for assessing technical proficiency in writing in English to the Faculty ADE, e.g. quotations and links to the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement(s)/ PSRB requirements? | Y/N |
| 1. Have I received confirmation from the Faculty Student Hub that the ADE has approved the request, and have I resolved any operational queries the Faculty Student Hub have raised regarding the assessment(s)? | Y/N |