

# LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSING POLICY

## Scope and purpose of policy

This policy provides a framework for creating excellent learning, teaching and assessment across ALPHASKILL in every aspect of curriculum, support and delivery. It establishes general principles that are applied in more specific policies such as ALPHASKILL's Key Priorities for Excellence in Learning, teaching and assessment. It also provides a framework for student entitlement in relation to assessment as assessment is at the heart of the learning experience of learners. It reflects the values and strategic objectives of ALPHASKILL. It applies to all members of ALPHASKILL community.

## Policy statement

ALPHASKILL's mission is to transform lives by unlocking potential and developing skills. ALPHASKILL values learning and recognises that learning occurs in many settings, both formal and informal. ALPHASKILL facilitates learning for academic, vocational, social and personal purposes in a wide variety of disciplines at all levels to learners from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. In all its activities, ALPHASKILL aspires to be a learning organisation in which all members, learners and staff, are committed to their learning and that of others. We want to ensure that learners studying at ALPHASKILL gain excellent knowledge, understanding, skills and habits of mind, which lead to successful completion of their studies, meaningful and sustainable employment, progression onto Further or Higher Education and a commitment to Lifelong Learning. To achieve this, the learning, teaching and assessment process must be systematic and supportive. It must embed assessment as part of the learning process rather than an end product. ALPHASKILL's Quality Procedures (incorporating the Judged Observation Procedure, Good Practice Observations, Learning Walks and Internal Review) are developmental in focus and one founded on continuous improvement in all learning, teaching and assessment.

## General principles

Alphaskill is committed to:

### 1. A focus on learning

The purpose of teaching is to enable active and positively reinforced learning. A central focus of ALPHASKILL is therefore the provision of environments that promote high quality, differentiated learning and inclusivity.

### 2. Developing the skills needed for life and work

ALPHASKILL will enhance the ability of its students to read, write and speak in English or Welsh, and to use mathematics at a level in order to function and progress in work and society. It will also develop the skills of learners to think critically, be reflective in their actions, to apply their skills and knowledge to progression, to behave ethically and to make informed decisions.

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## 3. Promoting active and positive learning

ALPHASKILL will provide learning, teaching and assessment activities that actively engage learners in learning and promote learner ownership and responsibility for the learning process. These activities will involve both autonomous learning and collaborative learning. Learning will be underpinned by positive reinforcement and effective assessment for learning strategies which will ensure the provision of quality feedback to learners and teach learners to receive feedback positively and use it to effectively improve their work.

## 4. A learner- centred approach

ALPHASKILL will enable access to education by a wide range of learners. The learning, teaching and assessment activities offered will accommodate the diverse backgrounds and needs of its learners by using a range of stimulating learning styles and reflect real progression opportunities for learners in sustainable environments.

## 5. Providing learning pathways

ALPHASKILL will provide a wide range of courses that both enhance full career opportunities and provide progression to employment and other programmes of study. It will also help learners to make learning choices that are appropriate to their career direction.

## 6. Flexibility in its programmes of study

ALPHASKILL will design and deliver its programmes of study in a way that is responsive to the needs of its learners, local community and economic business drivers.

## 7. Recognising prior learning

ALPHASKILL acknowledges that all learners bring an element of relevance to knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs to the learning environment. ALPHASKILL will formally recognise this prior learning where this is educationally appropriate. When not formally recognised, prior learning will be acknowledged and built on by Training Advisors.

## 8. Enhancing both employability and lifelong learning

ALPHASKILL has the dual responsibility of enhancing the employability of its learners and developing their effectiveness as lifelong learners. It recognises that in the majority of cases it's at Level 3 that learners become economically sustainable in the jobs market. ALPHASKILL will support learners to develop their skills in Welsh language and enable them to contribute to the Welsh culture and community.

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## 9. Continuous improvement of teaching, learning and assessment

ALPHASKILL will ensure that learning, teaching and assessment are continuously improved using the quality cycle (Plan-Do- Review-Improve). This includes regular review of all courses involving consideration of feedback from all key stakeholders, both internal and external. ALPHASKILL Quality Procedures enact the Learning, teaching and assessment Strategy and are focused on continuous improvement in all learning, teaching and assessment.

Judged Observations, Good Practice Observations, Learning Walks, Internal Reviews and CPD are the mechanisms through which ALPHASKILL aims to continually improve learning, teaching and assessment and embed the following guiding principles for Training Advisors and managers:

- Seeing learning, teaching and assessment as their main priority
- Regular dialogue about learning, teaching and assessment with other Training Advisors, Teaching and Learning Champions, and managers
- Regular reflection on learning, teaching and assessment practice
- Supporting others to improve
- Experimenting with learning, teaching and assessment practice
- Recognise, share and transfer good practice
- Encouraging a culture of openness in which staff work together to improve the learning experiences

### Operational principles

Alphaskill will ensure that:

#### 1. Learners are supported in their learning

ALPHASKILL will provide its learners with:

- Guidance and support from first enquiry to completion of course and beyond
- Quality learning resources
- Effective classroom management that creates an environment that is conducive to learning
- Timely and helpful personalised feedback on their learning
- Work-integrated learning
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL) and credit transfer arrangements
- Assessment that is fair, transparent, consistent and aligned with stated learning outcomes
- Support to improve the essential skills of learners
- Support for learners with individual learning needs

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## 2. Courses are of high quality

All courses will:

- Have a clear purpose
- Have clear statements of course aims
- Have equivalence across all sites and modes of delivery
- Focus on employment-related outcomes and/or career development
- Have a coherent programme of subjects, modules or units that is consistent with its aims
- Have clearly defined access and progression routes
- Be subjected to regular formal review

## 3. Modules or units are effectively designed and delivered

All modules and units will:

- Have clear statements of learning outcomes
- Have learning activities that are designed to achieve those learning outcomes
- Have assessment activities that are aligned to the learning outcomes
- Be evaluated both informally and formally with the aim of continuous improvement of student learning
- Be subjected to regular formal review
- Be taught by Training Advisors with appropriate levels of up-to- date knowledge and skills

## 4. Assessment as a fundamental process used to promote learning and achievement (Formative Assessment)

All Training Advisors will:

- Explain learning aims to learners and check their understanding
- Demonstrate the standards learners are required to achieve and help them recognise when they have achieved that standard
- Give effective feedback on assessment decisions so that learners are motivated and empowered to improve
- Demonstrate high expectations and raise aspirations by helping students believe they can improve on their past performance and achieve to their full potential
- Provide regular opportunities for Training Advisors and learners to reflect on past performance and review learners' progress
- Develop learners' self-assessment skills, so that they can recognise what aspects of their own work they need to improve
- Develop learners' peer assessment skills

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## 5. Training Advisors are supported in their practice

ALPHASKILL will enhance the effectiveness of its Training Advisors by:

- Providing and maintaining resources and facilities to support learning, teaching and assessment
- Developing the use of educational technologies to support teaching and learning
- Recognising and rewarding excellent teaching and teaching support
- Ensuring access to ongoing professional development for Training Advisors e.g.:
- Skills for teaching
- Awareness of meeting the needs of learners
- Legislative requirements
- Sharing good practice across ALPHASKILL
- Encouraging the scholarship of teaching, learning and assessment
- Ensuring staff have clear understanding of curriculum development and other sector developments