



BTEC POLICY

SLT Responsible Person: BTEC Quality Nominee

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To be read in conjunction with: Exams Policy and Appendices
Internal Appeals Procedure
Blended Learning Policy

and the following JCQ documents: Plagiarism in Examinations Guidance
Malpractice Policy and Procedures

This policy covers the main aspects of BTEC courses, including registration of learners, certification, assessment, internal verification, malpractice and appeals. It outlines the tasks that must be undertaken by those staff involved in the teaching, assessment and administration of BTEC qualifications at Helston Community College. It covers all Level 1 – 3 BTEC courses offered at Helston Community College.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Head of Centre: formally responsible for the management of BTECs in Helston Community College and ensuring compliance with Pearson Terms & Conditions.
- Quality Nominee (QN): point of contact for quality assurance, responsible for completing the Centre Declaration Form, oversees the implementation and effectiveness of quality assurance across the College and promotes the sharing of good practice.
- Lead Internal Verifier (LIV): responsible for the quality assurance of a specific programme, including enforcing internal assessment rules, responsible for carrying out the internal verification process.
- Internal Verifier (IV): responsible for ensuring that assessment decisions are consistent by checking assignments are fit for purpose, standardising assessments and sampling assessment decisions.
- Assessor: responsible for teaching and assessing learners against the learning aims and assessment criteria of the course specification, ensures learners are properly prepared to take final assessments
- Programme Leader: responsible for effective BTEC delivery and assessment at programme level, involved in standards verification, responsible for maintaining an audit trail of learner attendance, assessment and achievement.
- Examinations Officer: has administrative responsibilities for the timely registration of learners and accurate claiming of certificates.

Registration & Certification

Aim:

1. To register individual learners to the correct programme within agreed timescales.
2. To claim valid learner certificates within agreed timescales.
3. To construct a secure, accurate and accessible audit trail to ensure that individual learner registration and certification claims can be tracked to the certificate which is issued for each learner.

In order to do this, the centre will:

- Register each learner within the awarding body requirements.
- Register each learner on the appropriate programme code, before any assessment activity is completed.
- Provide a mechanism for programme teams to check the accuracy of learner registrations.
- Make each learner aware of their registration status.
- Inform the awarding body of withdrawals, transfers or changes to learner details.
- Ensure that certificate claims are timely and based solely on internally verified assessment records.
- Audit certificate claims made to the awarding body.
- Audit the certificates received from the awarding body to ensure accuracy and completeness.
- Keep all records safely and securely for three years post certification.

Registration, transfer and withdrawal procedures:

- The Examinations Officer will check all course details (including title and QAN code) with the LIV in July or September.
- All learners undertaking Pearson qualifications at either Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 must be registered prior to the Pearson set deadline (usually 31 October) in their first year of the qualification.
- In September of the first year of the qualification, the Examinations Officer will send out class lists to check which students should be registered.
- LIVs and subject teachers will confirm their student lists and return them to the Examinations Officer by mid-October.
- The Examinations Officer will register the students through the appropriate means and obtain confirmation of registration, before the 1 November deadline.

- The Examinations Officer will register any students who transfer onto BTEC courses after the November deadline, as informed by a relevant member of the Post 16 team or SLT.
- The Examinations Officer will check the registrations in January to ensure no registrations have been missed and to withdraw registrations that are no longer applicable (withdrawals will be confirmed by a relevant member of SLT).
- The Examinations Officer will apply to Pearson for refunds of fees for any withdrawals prior to the refund cut-off date.
- Learners can only be registered late onto the course if circumstances prevented the learner from being registered at the start of the course e.g. late entry to the College, course change following academic probation.
- A learner registration may be transferred between different sized qualifications in the same BTEC suite; the relevant Programme Leader must ensure that the learner is able to complete the programme onto which the transfer is made.

Unit certification & certification procedures:

- Prior to certification
 - Learners must have completed all necessary components of the course.
 - Any outstanding internal verification procedures must have been carried out.
 - Any amendments/actions, as identified within the standards verification report, must have been carried out.
 - All grades on the subject tracker must be checked by the LIV in consultation with the relevant subject teachers to ensure accuracy.
- The LIV will enter internally assessed unit grades directly into Edexcel Online (EOL) or will email unit grades to the Examination Officer, who will enter the grades for each candidate and subject area through the online BTEC bulk grade reporting system where possible or otherwise through the online individual learner reporting process.
- The Examinations Officer will audit the certificates received to ensure accuracy and completeness and will report directly to Pearson for any amendments or re-issues.
- The Examinations Officer will keep all records safely and securely for three years post certification.

Assessment

Aim:

1. To ensure that assessment methodology is valid, reliable and does not disadvantage or advantage any group of learners or individuals.
2. To ensure that the assessment procedure is open, fair and free from bias and to national standards.
3. To ensure that there is accurate and detailed recording of assessment decisions.

In order to do this, the centre will:

- Ensure that learners are provided with assignments that are fit for purpose, to enable them to produce appropriate evidence for assessment.
- Produce a clear and accurate assessment plan at the start of the programme/academic year.
- Provide clear, published dates for handout of assignments and deadlines for assessment.
- Assess learner's evidence using only the published assessment and grading criteria.
- Ensure assessment practices meet current BTEC assessment requirements and guidance.
- Ensure that assessment decisions are impartial, valid and reliable.
- Not limit or 'cap' learner achievement if work is submitted late.
- Develop assessment procedures that will minimise the opportunity for malpractice.
- Maintain accurate and detailed records of assessment decisions.
- Maintain a robust and rigorous internal verification procedure.
- Provide samples for standards verification/external examination as required by the awarding organization.
- Monitor standards verification/external examination reports and undertake any remedial action required.
- Share good assessment practice between all BTEC programme teams.
- Ensure that BTEC assessment methodology and the role of the assessor are understood by all BTEC staff.
- Provide resources to ensure that assessment can be performed accurately and appropriately.
- Maintain and store securely all assessment and internal verification records in accordance with the Pearson Centre Agreement.

Assessment procedures:

- Assessment can take many forms: written (e.g. formal essays, evaluations, notebooks), verbal (e.g. discussion presentation), records, studio logs, timesheets, plans, tutor observation and witness statements, photographic/digital.
- Assessment can be practical work within the specialist area of the qualification, should be timed carefully to reduce overload and should be varied as appropriate to enhance learning, improve knowledge of the grading criteria and of how to progress to higher-grade achievement.
- If group work is used, teachers must ensure that assessment is done at individual learner level, using witness statements, tutor observation sheets, checklists based on unit grading criteria or other paperwork that records achievement at criterion level against the activity being observed.
- Before starting an assessment the assessor must ensure that each student is ready for the assessment and that they understand the assessment requirements – this includes having access to the content of what is required for the assessment and also the importance of time management and submission deadlines.
- Students must be aware of the restrictions in how the assessor can provide support once the assessment has been started.
- Once the assignment brief has been given out the assessor must not provide specific assessment feedback directly related to the achievement of specific assessment criteria; students must use their knowledge/notes/textbook to work independently towards the task.
- Only one submission is allowed for each assignment task which must be handed in to the assessor on the designated deadline day outlined within the assessment plan, unless there has been an agreed extension between the assessor and the student due to extenuating circumstances; the LIV must be informed of any agreed extensions.
- For each assignment task the student must submit an assignment which consists of evidence towards the targeted assessment criteria, a signed and dated declaration of authenticity which confirms the evidence has been produced independently and appropriate referencing.
- The assessor must mark the work submitted in a timely manner so it is ready for internal verification.

Resubmission/retake procedures:

- The LIV may authorise one opportunity for the student to resubmit evidence to meet assessment criteria targeted by an assignment. This can only be authorised if the following conditions are met:
 - The student has met the initial deadline set in the assignment, or has met an agreed deadline extension.
 - The assessor judges that the student will be able to provide improved evidence without further guidance.
 - The original work has been authenticated by both the student and the teacher.
- Resubmissions must be recorded on the assessment feedback form, completed within 15 working days of the student receiving the results of the assessment and undertaken by the student without any further guidance.
- The student and the assessor must complete the appropriate forms to confirm the authenticity of the resubmitted work.
- If the student has not achieved the targeted pass criteria following resubmission of the assignment the LIV may authorise one retake opportunity to meet the pass criteria only. This should only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. The following conditions apply:
 - The retake must be a new task targeted at only the pass criteria, and a merit or distinction cannot be achieved.
 - An agreed deadline must be agreed and recorded between the assessor and the student.
 - The student and the assessor must complete the appropriate forms to confirm the authenticity of the resubmitted work.
- A full paper trail of all student work from resubmissions and retakes must be kept by the assessor, as this needs to be made available for standards verification.

Assignment design/assignment briefs:

- Assignment briefs must be internally verified as 'fit for purpose' before being issued to learners. The IV must ensure that:
 - Tasks and evidence criteria will allow the learner to address the target criteria.
 - Tasks allow for differentiation.
 - The level and language of the brief is appropriate for the level.
 - Tasks are set in a vocationally relevant context.

- If any recommendations are made for the improvement of briefs, a follow up check must have been made by the IV to ensure these have been carried out before the assignment is issued to learners
- Records are kept of the whole process with clear dates and signatures of both the assessor and IV with any identified actions signed off by the IV and assessor.

Assessment plans:

- All teaching teams must produce an assessment plan (using the Pearson pro forma) at the start of the academic year indicating for each unit covered:
 - The unit number, title, assignment title and targeted learning aims.
 - The assignment hand out, submission, internal verification and resubmission dates.
 - The assessment and internal verification staffing.
- Assessment plans may be adapted and updated throughout the year as required.
- Assessment plans should be available for the Standards Verifier to view.

Assessment recording / tracking for learners:

- The assessor will record their assessment decisions against individual assessment criteria.
- All assessment decisions must be recorded on a tracking sheet.
- Tracking sheets will be kept for three years post certification.

Internal Verification

Aim:

1. To ensure there is an accredited Lead Internal Verifier in each principal subject area.
2. To ensure that internal verification is valid, reliable and covers all assessors and programme activity.
3. To ensure that the internal verification procedure is open, fair and free from bias.
4. To ensure that there is accurate and detailed recording of internal verification decisions.

In order to do this, the centre will:

- Where required by the qualification, appoint a Lead Internal Verifier is appropriate for each subject area, who is registered with Pearson and has undergone the necessary standardisation processes.
- Each Lead Internal Verifier oversees effective internal verification systems in their subject area.
- Staff are briefed and trained in the requirements for current internal verification procedures.
- Effective internal verification roles are defined, maintained and supported.
- Internal verification is promoted as a developmental process between staff
- Standardised internal verification documentation is provided and used.
- All centre assessment instruments are verified as fit for purpose.
- An annual internal verification schedule, linked to assessment plans, is in place.
- An appropriately structured sample of assessment from all programmes, units, sites and assessors is internally verified, to ensure centre programmes conform to national standards.
- Secure records of all internal verification activity are maintained.
- The outcome of internal verification is used to enhance future assessment practice.

Internal verification schedules:

- The LIV will produce an annual internal verification schedule which takes into account the following:
 - The internal verification of assignment briefs before they are issued to the learner.
 - The internal verification of assessment decisions.
 - Ensures every assessor on the programme is sampled over time.
 - Includes a record of which learner work has been sampled, and in which units.
- Records will be kept of all meetings.
- The LIV will provide annual training and standardisation for their teaching teams.

LIV registration and OSCA accreditation / standardisation procedures:

- The LIV will undertake induction training run by Pearson (this only needs to be done once).
- The LIV will ensure they have completed the registration process by the deadline issued by Pearson.
- The LIV will ensure they have completed any required OSCA accreditation and standardisation activities by the deadline set by Pearson.

- The LIV will provide annual standardisation for their teaching teams.

Internal verification of assignments:

- The internal verifier will check that:
 - The appropriate qualification is noted on the assignment.
 - The timescales are appropriate.
 - The learning aims and assessment criteria are included.
 - The scenario and evidence to be submitted will allow learners to achieve the assessment criteria.
 - All assessment criteria are covered across the full set of assignment briefs.

Internal verification of assessment decisions:

- The LIV will determine the amount of work to be internally verified, which will be a minimum of four pieces of work for each assessment, made up wherever possible of a piece of work at all three levels of achievement (Pass, Merit and Distinction) and one more of the most common grade; this number may increase for new assessors to BTEC, for new qualifications or specifications, or for programmes with large cohorts of students (>20).
- The LIV will feedback on assessment decisions to the assessor.
- The LIV will internally verify assessed work in a timely manner after the initial assessment deadline, to allow for the identification of any problems at an early stage and in order to provide support to assessor.
- The LIV will provide clear feedback to the assessor; if recommendations are made, clear actions must be provided by the LIV and if adjustments are made, dates and signatures must be obtained.

Maintenance of internal verification records:

- The LIV is responsible for maintaining records of the internal verification process.
- Generic documentation must be used across the programme area in all internal verification procedures, with clear dates and signatures included.
- Internal verification documentation should be kept securely to evidence an audit trail.
- Internal verification records will be kept for three years post-certification.

Standards verification procedures:

- When a subject is going through standards verification the following will apply:
 - The Programme Leader, supported by the Quality Nominee (QN) will liaise with the allocated standards verifier regarding the sample requested.
 - If there is an unsuccessful outcome from the first sample (i.e. the first sample is 'blocked') there will be a second sample.
 - The Programme Leader, supported by the QN, will ensure that the second sample is checked thoroughly and that the advice and guidance given by the Standards Verifier is applied to this sample.
 - If the second sample has an unsuccessful outcome the Regional Quality Manager will set up a remedial action plan.
- Before the agreed sample date the Standards Verifier will need the following:
 - A list of all completed mandatory units.
 - A list of anticipated learner grades.
 - A list of which learner work has been internally verified.
- The Standards Verifier will then select a sample from the list and for the sample they will require:
 - The assignment brief(s) for the whole unit with evidence of internal verification.
 - For each learner sampled, a portfolio of work for the complete unit with evidence of assessment and internal verification.
 - For graded qualifications, learner work at all grades
- Feedback from the Standard Verifier's report will be shared with all relevant staff to ensure any required actions are carried out.

Appeals – to be read in conjunction with the College Policies on Examinations and Appeals

Aim:

1. To enable the learner to enquire, question or appeal against an assessment decision.
2. To attempt to reach agreement between the learner and the assessor at the earliest opportunity.

3. To standardise and record any appeal to ensure openness and fairness.
4. To facilitate a learner's ultimate right of appeal to the Awarding Body.
5. To protect the interests of all learners and the integrity of the qualification.

In order to do this, the centre will:

- Inform the learner at induction and via the learner handbook of the Appeals Policy and procedure.
- Record, track and validate any appeal.
- Forward the appeal to the Awarding Body when a learner considers that a decision continues to disadvantage him/her after the internal appeals process has been exhausted.
- Keep appeals records for inspection by the Awarding Body for a minimum of 18 months.
- Have a staged appeals procedure.
- Take appropriate action to protect the interests of other learners and the integrity of the qualification, when the outcome of an appeal questions the validity of other results.
- Monitor appeals to inform quality improvement.

Please refer to the College's Internal Appeals Procedure for further information.

Malpractice – to be read in conjunction with the College Policies on Examinations and Plagiarism

Aim:

1. To identify and minimise the risk of malpractice by staff or learners.
2. To respond to any incident of alleged malpractice promptly and objectively.
3. To standardise and record any investigation of malpractice to ensure openness and fairness.
4. To impose appropriate penalties and / or sanctions on learners or staff where incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice are proven.
5. To protect the integrity of this centre and BTEC qualifications.

In order to do this, the centre will:

- Seek to avoid potential malpractice by using the induction period and the learner handbook to inform learners of the centre's policy on malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice.
- Show learners the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources.
- Ask learners to declare that their work is their own.
- Ask learners to provide evidence that they have interpreted and synthesised appropriate information and acknowledged any sources used.
- Conduct an investigation in a form commensurate with the nature of the malpractice allegation. Such an investigation will be supported by the Head of Centre and all personnel linked to the allegation. It will proceed through the following stages:
 - Make the individual fully aware at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven.
 - Give the individual the opportunity to respond to the allegations made.
 - Inform the individual of the avenues for appealing against any judgment made.
- Document all stages of any investigation.

Where malpractice is proven, this centre will apply penalties / sanctions according to the College Policy on Malpractice.

Definition of Malpractice by Learners:

This list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by this centre at its discretion:

- Plagiarism of any nature.
- Collusion by working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as individual learner work.
- Copying (including the use of ICT to aid copying).
- Deliberate destruction of another's work.
- Fabrication of results or evidence.
- False declaration of authenticity in relation to the contents of a portfolio or coursework.

- Impersonation by pretending to be someone else in order to produce the work for another or arranging for another to take one's place in an assessment/examination/test.

Definition of Malpractice by Centre Staff:

This list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by this centre at its discretion:

- Improper assistance to candidates.
- Inventing or changing marks for internally assessed work (coursework or portfolio evidence) where there is insufficient evidence of the candidates' achievement to justify the marks given or assessment decisions made.
- Failure to keep candidate coursework / portfolios of evidence secure.
- Fraudulent claims for certificates.
- Inappropriate retention of certificates.
- Assisting learners in the production of work for assessment, where the support has the potential to influence the outcomes of assessment, for example where the assistance involves centre staff producing work for the learner.
- Producing falsified witness statements, for example for evidence the learner has not generated.
- Allowing evidence, which is known by the staff member not to be the learner's own, to be included in a learner's assignment / task / portfolio / coursework.
- Facilitating and allowing impersonation.
- Misusing the conditions for special learner requirements, for example where learners are permitted support, such as a scribe, this is permissible up to the point where the support has the potential to influence the outcome of the assessment.
- Falsifying records/certificates, for example by alteration, substitution, or by fraud.
- Fraudulent certificate claims, that is claiming for a certificate prior to the learner completing all the requirements of assessment.

How the College will minimise the risk of learner malpractice:

- Student induction will inform learners about malpractice.
- Students will declare all work submitted is their own.
- Student will use appropriate citations and referencing for research sources.
- Assessment procedures will be designed to help reduce malpractice e.g. there will be a time limit for resubmissions to minimise the risk of plagiarism.

How the College will minimise the risk of staff malpractice:

- Teaching teams will participate in annual training run by the LIV.
- The College will employ robust internal verification processes.
- Tracking records will be audited.
- Certification claims will be checked.

How the College will deal with malpractice:

- The College will appoint a designated member of staff to:
 - Inform the individual of the issues and possible consequences.
 - Inform the individual concerned of the right to appeal and the avenues of appeal.
 - Provide an opportunity for the individual to respond.
 - Investigate in a fair and equitable manner.
 - Document all stages of the investigation.
- Penalties will be appropriate to the nature of the malpractice under review.
- Pearson will be informed of any malpractice which has compromised assessment.

Distance and/or Blended Learning:

Aim:

1. To ensure that distance and/or blended learning delivery meets the guidelines set by the awarding organisation.
2. To ensure that assessment methodology is valid, reliable and does not disadvantage any group or individual learners.

In order to do this, the centre will:

- Ensure that teaching/delivery/assessment staff are timetabled to support distance/blended learning when learners are working remotely.
- Ensure there is a process to manage feedback on assignments, questions are constructively answered, and feedback is provided in a timely manner.
- Ensure the setting of assignments is undertaken in the face-to-face sessions and that deadlines are clear.
- Ensure that when learners submit work measures are taken to ensure the work is authentic and has been completed by the learner.
- Maintain and store securely all assessment and internal verification records in accordance with Pearson Centre Agreement.

It is anticipated that Blended Learning will only occur if the College is required to close as part of a national, pandemic-related lockdown. Please refer to the College's Blended Learning Policy for further information regarding the College approach to remote teaching and learning. Considerable staff training has taken place to ensure that teachers can continue to deliver courses effectively in the event of a lockdown, using a blend of live Google Meets, pre-recorded lessons and individual / small group contact by email, video call or telephone. Students who struggle with remote learning will be supported through provision of ICT equipment and the in-College provision for keyworker and vulnerable students.

In the event of a Covid cluster or outbreak precipitating remote learning for one or more year groups for a short-term, fixed period of time, the approaches outlined in the College's Blended Learning Policy will apply, although in the case of a short term closure it is expected that, where possible, assessment plans should be adjusted to ensure that key points within the assessment timeline take place during face-to-face teaching rather than during remote teaching.