

# The BTEC Policy Document for John Willmott School

## Assessment, Internal Verification and Malpractice Policy for BTEC Programmes

### POLICY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

#### Aims

John Willmott School is committed to ensuring that standards of assessment are consistent and transparent, and in line with the requirements of the BTEC awarding body, Edexcel. The way learners' work is assessed must serve the stated learning objectives of the programmes on offer and facilitate the achievement and wider development of learners.

#### Objectives

- To assess learners' work with integrity by being consistent and transparent in assessment judgements and processes so that the outcomes are fair, reliable and valid.
- To ensure that assessment standards and specifications are implemented fully, so that no risk is posed to the reputation of the school, Edexcel, or the qualifications on offer.
- To establish quality control and recording mechanisms for assignments and their assessment through a system of sampling, moderation and internal verification as appropriate to the requirements of the programmes on offer.
- To provide learner-centred approaches to assessment, which provide opportunities for learners to achieve at levels commensurate with the demands of their programme of study.

### POLICY RANGE AND SCOPE

The range of the policy covers all BTEC programmes offered at John Willmott School but may well apply to other portfolio assignment-based programmes should they become a part of the curriculum in future. This should be read alongside the school's Assessment Policy but is written in recognition of the specific nature of BTEC and similar programmes.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

- Responsible for Policy: Victoria Neale, Area Study Director Vocational Studies and Quality Nominee
- Responsible for implementation: Quality Nominee, Programme Leaders, Lead Internal Verifiers, Internal Verifiers, Assessors and the Exams Officer.

It is the responsibility of the Quality Nominee to:

Ensure that BTEC programmes are managed effectively, and to actively encourage and promote good practice in the school. They are the main person involved with Quality Review and Development and will liaise directly with the Centre Quality Reviewer. They will ensure that:

- All programmes are approved and registrations are accurate and up to date
- All staff are aware of Edexcel requirements
- There is an accredited Lead Internal Verifier in place for each Principal Subject Area, where required
- Assessment and internal verification is effective on all Edexcel BTEC and vocational programmes
- Standards Verification is completed successfully
- Edexcel's approval conditions and policy requirements are being implemented consistently and effectively.

It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader to:

- Liaise with the Quality Nominee at the centre to be aware of information updates and quality assurance requirements
- Liaise with relevant Edexcel appointed staff undertaking quality assurance, including Standards Verifiers

- Ensure that there are sufficient resources to deliver the programmes and units being operated. This includes ensuring that staff have the necessary expertise and, where relevant, qualifications
- Review the reports arising from quality assurance and ensure that appropriate actions are taken
- Liaise effectively with the examinations officer regarding the registration and certification of learners.

#### It is the responsibility of the Lead Internal Verifier to:

- Register with Edexcel through OSCA2 and confirm registration every year
- Undertake initial induction training
- Complete the accreditation process: practice exercise and assessment exercise (normally only once every three years)
- Make other assessors and verifiers aware of the practice exercise, for example through a team development event
- Ensure that there is an assessment and verification plan for the programmes in the sector which is fit for purpose and meets Edexcel's requirements
- Sign off the plan and check that it is being followed at suitable points
- Undertake some internal verification and/or assessment for individual units within at least one of the programmes
- Ensure that records of assessment and samples of learner work are being retained for use with Standards Verification if necessary. Plan to set aside examples of work that has been verified to different levels and grades
- Liaise with the Standards Verifier to ensure that appropriate sampling takes place, if and when sampling is required
- Make arrangements for handover to a deputy or replacement if unable to carry out the role.

#### It is the responsibility of Internal Verifiers to:

Work with the Programme Leader and Lead IV to:

- Check the quality of assessment instruments to ensure they are fit for purpose
- Ensure an effective system of recording learner achievement is in place
- Keep accurate and up to date records of the internal verification process
- Advise on the appropriateness of assessment evidence with regard to level, sufficiency, authenticity, validity and consistency
- Use the subject specialism to sample assessments to verify assessors' judgements, ensuring that they are consistent, fair and reliable
- Ensure one's own assessment decisions are sampled when teaching on the programme
- Ensure that appropriate corrective action is taken where necessary
- Take part in the formal stages of any appeal.

#### It is the responsibility of Assessors to:

- Design assessment activities which guide the learners to produce evidence that meets the targeted assessment criteria and unit content, and any associated guidance such as skills which may need to be demonstrated
- Assess the work submitted by learners, checking authenticity and sufficiency of evidence produced against the relevant criteria
- Accurately record all assessment decisions using the appropriate documentation
- Provide feedback to learners, identifying which criteria have been achieved and giving opportunities for improvement so they can achieve the highest possible grades
- Follow up any advice from the Lead Internal Verifier.
- Set interim deadlines advising learners on the appropriate amount of time to spend on the work, whilst still ensuring it is commensurate with the credit available
- Comply with the school and Edexcel guidelines regarding work that is submitted after the submission date and work that is re-submitted following a referral decision
- Provide special arrangements for learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities according to the regulations of the Edexcel.

#### It is the responsibility of the Exams Officer to:

- Meet the deadlines for registering learners with the awarding body Edexcel;
- Ensure that awarding body data is kept up to date with timely withdrawal or transfer of learners;
- Claim learners' certificates as soon as appropriate;

- Claim unit certification when a learner has not been able to complete the full programme of study.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Internal Assessment is defined as the process where assessors make judgements on evidence produced by learners against required criteria for the BTEC qualification. All school devised assessment materials must be internally verified before being issued to learners.

Completed learner assignments will be assessed internally, and be subject to internal verification. They may also be subject to random NSS sampling as required by Edexcel.

Learners must be left in no doubt that any grade awarded by their assessor will be subject to internal moderation and that ultimately the final decision rests with Edexcel.

The assessor is responsible for ensuring that assessment processes are consistent and transparent, that evidence is valid, sufficient, and authentic and that judgement of evidence is valid and reliable.

Learners may be given interim deadlines within each assignment to help them meet specific criteria. Feedback will be recorded, and the outcome entered on the learner assessment front sheet. All learners have the opportunity to improve assignments before the final deadline. Assessment decisions are then subject to internal verification.

All work must be handed in on the final deadline date. If work is handed in late, a decision about whether it should be marked will be taken by the Programme Leader and the Quality Nominee.

## **INTERNAL VERIFICATION**

Internal verification is the quality assurance system used to monitor assessment practice and decisions, ensuring that:

- Assessment is consistent across the programme
- Assessment instruments are fit for purpose
- Assessment decisions accurately match learner work to the unit assessment criteria
- Standardisation of assessors takes place.

## **Authentication of Candidate's Work**

On each assignment learners must sign that the work submitted is their own and assessors should confirm that the work assessed is solely that of the candidate concerned and was conducted under the required conditions.

If the learner hands in an assignment and assessors suspect it is not the learner's own work, the matter should be reported to the Programme Leader, who must proceed in accordance with a Learner Misconduct investigation.

## **Learner Misconduct**

Misconduct covers a range of offences, which can be collectively described as cheating. The following is not an exhaustive list and the school reserves the right to include any other type of cheating under the terms of this policy.

- Plagiarism: taking someone else's work, images or ideas, whether published or not, and with or without their permission, passing them off as your own: thereby not properly acknowledging the original source. This particularly relates to material downloaded from the Internet or copied from books.
- Copying the work of other learners with or without their permission and knowingly allowing another learner to copy one's own work.
- Colluding with other learners to produce work which is then submitted individually. (Except where this is specifically required or allowed by the assessment criteria.)
- Falsely claiming extenuating circumstances to gain an unfair advantage in assessment outcomes.

## **Preventing Learner Misconduct**

John Willmott School will take positive steps to prevent and reduce the occurrence of malpractice by learners. These will include:

- Using the induction period and the student handbook to inform learners of the school's policy on malpractice and consequent penalties.
- Showing learners the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources including websites. Learners should not be discouraged from conducting research as evidence of relevant research often contributes to the achievement of higher grades. However, the submitted work must show evidence that the learner has interpreted and synthesised appropriate information, and has acknowledged any sources used.
- Introducing procedures for assessing work in a way that reduces or identifies malpractice. These procedures include:
  - The requirement for interim work to be handed in before final deadlines to give a picture of the learner's progress
  - Timetabled sessions during which evidence for assignments/tasks/portfolio work is produced by the learner
  - Altering assessment assignments/tasks/tools on a regular basis
  - The assessor assessing work for a single assignment/task in a single session for the complete cohort of learners
  - Using oral questions with learners to ascertain their understanding of the concepts, application, etc within their work
  - Using school data on students' capabilities
  - Assessors getting to know their learners' styles and abilities.
- Ensuring access controls are installed to prevent learners from accessing and using other people's work when using networked computers.

### **Investigating Learner Misconduct**

There will be an investigation if learner misconduct is suspected which may lead to disciplinary action.

- Learners who attempt to gain an award by deceitful means will automatically have their result(s) suspended (held) pending a thorough investigation by the Programme Leader and Quality Nominee. The learner will be informed at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences.
- The outcome of the investigation will determine the appropriate programme of action to be taken by the school. Malpractice is a breach of school rules and may invoke a Learner Disciplinary Procedure. Any case where learner malpractice is found to be substantiated this will be reported to Edexcel.
- If no evidence is found that the learner cheated, then the benefit of the doubt should be given to the learner and the grade achieved should be awarded.

### **Appeals Procedures**

It is the responsibility of the school as an assessment centre, to make all learners aware of the appeals procedure and give them access to a copy of the procedure.

The Quality Nominee is responsible for managing the formal appeals process. If deemed necessary, a formal appeals panel should be set up comprising at least three people, where at least one member is independent of the assessment process.

Written records of all appeals should be maintained by the school. These should include a description of the appeal, the outcome of the appeal and the reason for that outcome. A tracking document will be used to follow the programme of an appeal, allowing it to be time tracked and verified at each stage.

### **Grounds for Appeal**

A learner would have grounds for appeal against an assessment decision in the following situations. This list is selective and not exhaustive:

- The work is not assessed according to the set criteria or the criteria are ambiguous
- The final grade of the work does not match the criteria set for grade boundaries or the grade boundaries are not sufficiently defined
- The internal verification procedure contradicts the assessment grades awarded
- There is evidence of preferential treatment towards other learners

- Valid, agreed, extenuating circumstances were not taken into account at the time of assessment, which the school was aware of prior to the submission deadline
- Agreed deadlines were not observed by staff

### **Formal appeal procedures**

- If, after informal discussion with the assessor, the learner wishes to make a formal appeal, the learner must ask request in writing, for a re-assessment. This must be done within 10 working days of receiving the original assessment result.
- The Programme Leader together with the assessor, on receipt of the formal appeal from the learner, will try to seek a solution negotiated between the relevant assessor and the learner. If it is not possible to reach an agreement, the Programme Leader and the assessor will set a date in liaison with the Quality Nominee for the Internal Verification Appeals Panel to meet.
- The Internal Verification Appeals Panel will normally meet within 2 weeks of the receipt of the appeal by the Internal Verifier, with re-assessment, if deemed necessary by the panel, taking place within 15 working days of the appeals panel meeting.
- The outcome of the appeal may be:
  - confirmation of original decision;
  - a re-assessment by an independent assessor;
  - or an opportunity to resubmit for assessment within a revised agreed timescale.

### **Staff Malpractice**

The following are examples of malpractice by School staff. This list is not exhaustive:

- failure to keep any awarding body mark schemes secure;
- alteration of awarding body assessment and grading criteria;
- 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 school 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/ portfolio work;
- facilitating and allowing impersonation;
- misusing the conditions for special learner requirements;
- failing to keep learner computer files secure;
- falsifying records/certificates, for example by alteration, substitution, or by fraud;
- and/or fraudulent certificate claims, that is claiming for a certificate prior to the learner completing all the requirements of assessment.

**Where staff malpractice is suspected, an investigation will take place under staff disciplinary procedures.**

### **ACCESS TO POLICY**

Copies of the policy will be available via the school's u-drive.

Learner induction programmes and programme handbooks will highlight key aspects of this policy.

Training for assessors will be given as part of staff induction, if and when necessary.

**Victoria Naruszewicz-Neale, Area Study Director Vocational Studies, Quality Nominee**

**Date: November 2010**

**To be reviewed in November 2012**