

Assessment Malpractice & Appeals Procedure Policy

Overton School

Approved by:	Omar Salahuddin, Principal
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1. Introduction

Overton school takes responsibility for ensuring the quality and reliability of assessment very seriously. Overton recognises that high quality assessment practices are an important element of the learner experience and that the outcomes of assessment influence learners' future lives.

This policy and procedure relates to BTEC delivery within the Overton school.

1.1 Learner Assessment Entitlement

Overton learners are entitled to:

- Fair and open assessment practices in line with the Schools Equal Opportunities policy for learners.
- An Assignment Brief indicating the criteria against which you will be assessed.
- Regular information, advice and guidance through teachers and Internal Verifiers (IVs) at all of the Overton school.
- Access to an open and fair appeals procedure.
- Assessments being carried out regularly and outcomes reported within 2 weeks with written and/or verbal feedback.

1.2 Aim of Assessment Malpractice Policy

- To identify and minimise the risk of malpractice by teacher or learners.
- To respond to any incident of alleged malpractice promptly and objectively.
- To standardise and record any investigation of malpractice to ensure openness and fairness.
- To impose appropriate penalties and/or sanctions on learners or teacher where incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice are proven.
- To protect the integrity of the Overton BTEC centre and associated BTEC qualifications that we deliver.

2. Assessment

2.1 Assessment Aims

The purpose of assessment within BTEC programmes is:

- To identify the positive achievements of each learner and the areas of their work that needs to be improved. This involves both formative and summative assessment.
- To further identify learning and additional support needs so that appropriate help and guidance can be provided.
- To enable the teacher and learner to know how the quality of a learner's work relates to the standards of external awarding bodies.
- To inform the process by which learners set targets for attainment.
- To allow teachers to evaluate learners' understanding and progress and decide whether the way in which the course is taught and managed needs refinement or modification.

2.2 Implementation of Internal Verification (IV)

2.2.1 Verification of Assessment Decisions

- Learners work will be marked by the assignment teacher
- IV will 'sample' work assessed based on the IV Plan
- IV will feedback to teachers on awarding of criteria, accuracy, feedback to learner and grading decision. If remedial action is needed, this will be discussed with the teacher and allocated a timeframe of review, in line with BTEC procedures/framework.
- IV will follow up action recommended ensuring high quality standards are being met and maintained. IV will 'sign off' assessment decisions form once satisfied.
- IV will initial and date 'IV Schedule-Assessment Decisions' form to document sampling. Form will ensure Internal Verification coverage of all learners and all criteria within units within each academic year.

2.2.2 Verification of Assignment Briefs

- Teachers at each of the Overton school delivering BTEC programmes are responsible for writing assignments briefs.
- IV will check assignment is 'fit for purpose' incorporating deadline for assessment, assessment criteria, task mapping against criteria, relevance of tasks, evidence, vocational context / scenario, timescale and language / presentation.
- IV will suggest remedial action, if any, needed before brief is issued. Teachers and IV will confirm actions have been met.
- Brief will be signed and dated by IV.
- Brief will be distributed to learners.

2.2.4 External Verification (EV)

All units are internally assessed and subject to external verification through National Standards Sampling (NSS). External verifiers will be responsible for carrying out the sampling process. Verifiers, through consultation with BTEC centres, will agree dates when the sampling process will take place.

The verifier's role is to monitor assessment practice to ensure that all:

- Assessment decisions are valid and reliable.
- Evidence is attributable to the learner
- Evidence is current.

In addition, the verifier will offer advice and guidance on the above where the centre is not meeting the criteria.

Verification of assessment practice will normally be carried out either through postal sampling or a centre visit.

3. Malpractice Procedures

3.1 General Statement

Overton school will:

Seek to avoid potential malpractice by learners by:

- Using the induction period to inform learners of the programmes policy on malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice.
- Reviewing assignment briefs annually and where necessary changing them in order to prevent learners copying any learner work from previous years.
- Including a variety of assessment formats within a programme to minimise the reliance on written assessment (presentations, displays, video, demonstrations etc.)
- Show learners the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources.
- Ask learners to declare in writing 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 wherever malpractice is suspected.

3.2 Teacher malpractice

If the alleged malpractice is by a member of teacher, The Head of the Overton Centre will follow the general procedures outlined in the JCQ regulations.

Annex A

3.3 Learner malpractice

Sometimes learners copy coursework or parts of coursework, either from other learners or from other sources. Should a teacher believe that malpractice has taken place then they should initially bring it to the attention of the Head of school, who will carry out an investigation commensurate with the nature of the malpractice allegation?

If the plagiarism or copying is not detected until after a learner has signed the authentication form, the head of school will, after investigation to confirm the facts, inform the examination board as required by JCQ regulations.

A copy of the form or letter sent to the Examination Board will be provided to the candidate. The Malpractice Committee of the Examination Board may then ask the Head of Centre (Overton) to carry out further investigations or carry out one itself.

The Head of Centre (Overton) will inform candidates of the decision of the Examination Board at the earliest opportunity. The Head of Centre (Overton) can appeal against the decision but needs strong grounds to do so.

The penalties for malpractice range from a written warning to being barred from taking any examinations for a set number of years.

If the malpractice is discovered before the authentication form is signed by the learner then the teacher will inform the curriculum leader and will make an appropriate internal assessment decision (see below*) commensurate with the nature of the malpractice suspicion. If there is a second suspicion of malpractice by a learner the Curriculum Head at the school will be informed by the Head of Centre (Overton) immediately.

3.4 Example Internal Assessment Decisions Following Malpractice

- **Learner is asked to rewrite the coursework. The assessment will be based on this new coursework. Learner given a written warning.**
- Inform the parents and gain a contract/agreement regarding any future conduct
- **Learner's work assessed as 'failure to achieve assessment criteria' (whole or part of a unit) with no opportunity to resubmit that work.** [This could for example be work submitted for Merit or Distinction which the learner has plagiarised]
Learner given 'fail' for the entire unit.
Exam board informed in writing of alleged malpractice.

4. Assessment Procedures

4.1 Submitting Assignments

It is recommended that each unit is assessed through 2 to 4 assignments. Learners are given a hand-in date for each assignment. Teachers are required to mark assignments and provide learners with feedback within 2 weeks. The feedback must be sufficient to give clear information on achievement and how to improve, where allowed within BTEC rules.

4.2 Failure to meet deadlines

Learners who fail to hand in work by the agreed deadline will be required to provide evidence of extenuating circumstances e.g. doctor's certificate.

Failure to do so may result in learner's failure to meet all criteria required to pass the course.

4.3 Late submission

Teachers are not required to accept for assessment work that was not completed by the date in the assessment plan.

Learners may be given authorised extensions for legitimate reasons, such as illness at the time of submission. If a teacher accepts a late completion by a learner, the evidence should be assessed normally, unless it is judged to not meet the requirements for authenticity. It is not appropriate, however, to give automatic downgrades on assessment decisions as 'punishment' for late submission.

4.4 Recording Progress

Teachers are required to record learner grades on a grade tracking sheet within three weeks of the assignment being completed.

4.5 Academic malpractice and plagiarism

It is the responsibility of teachers to explain what constitutes plagiarism in their courses and the seriousness of the issue.

Teachers should be on the lookout for plagiarism and run internet checks etc. to guard against it. Learners need to know that this will be done. Learners will need to develop the habit of acknowledging sources through footnotes and bibliographies, lists of sources and acknowledgement of assistance.

Awarding bodies regulations on academic misconduct and plagiarism will be followed. All coursework must be authenticated as original by the learner and the teacher. The School cannot authenticate work it does not believe to be original.

If a teacher suspects plagiarism or academic misconduct has taken place it must be acted upon as per the Overton Malpractice and Plagiarism Procedure.

5. APPEALS PROCEDURE

5.1 Process

In the event of a learner wishing to make an appeal against an assessment decision, the following steps outlined below must be followed:

- Within 3 days of assessment confirmation, the learner must contact the teachers to arrange an informal meeting to discuss the assessment decision.
- If learner is still dissatisfied, then appeal in writing to the head of school. The learner is to put forward reasons why their assignment should be re-assessed. This should be done within 5 days of meeting with the teachers.
- The assignment will be reassessed by an Internal Verifier, who will provide the learner with feedback within one working week.
- If the learner is still dissatisfied, then he / she may appeal to the External Verifier via the Head of Department of the Funding Provider.

5.2 Grounds for Appeal

Appeals may be made under the following circumstances:

- If the learner is dissatisfied with individual assessment outcomes for a unit element or individual performance criteria.
- If the learner is dissatisfied with their assessment outcome at the end of the course.
- If the learner has any personal circumstances which may have affected his / her ability to complete assignments and meet deadlines.

Annex A

This notice has been produced on behalf of:

AQA, City & Guilds, CCEA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC

Notice to Centres

Responsibility of heads of centre to report malpractice

The **JCQ** would like to take this opportunity to remind heads of centres that they have a responsibility, under the regulators' *GCSE, GCE, Principal Learning and Project Code of Practice* to report to the

relevant awarding body any suspected cases of malpractice involving candidates, teachers, invigilators or other administrative teacher (*Code of Practice*, **Section 8, page 49**).

This responsibility is set out in detail in the JCQ publication *Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments: Policies and Procedures*, which states:

Heads of centres must report to the appropriate awarding body at the earliest opportunity, all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice. The only exception to this is malpractice discovered in controlled assessments or coursework before the authentication forms have been signed by the candidate.

This document details the procedures to be followed when malpractice is suspected, lists examples of malpractice and the penalties for infringements of examination regulations.

It further states that failing to report an instance of suspected malpractice in examinations or assessments to the appropriate awarding body as soon as possible after such an instance occurs, or is discovered is in itself malpractice. This may result in sanctions being applied against the head of centre and/or the centre.

Awarding bodies appreciate the co-operation of all centres in reporting suspected malpractice. This co-operation is essential in guaranteeing the fairness of the public examinations system for all.

The above JCQ publication can be downloaded from the JCQ website at:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice>