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Learning without limits

# Vocational Curriculum Policy 2023-2024

**Responsibility:** Head of Centre

**Reviewed by:** Chris Lacey

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## Vocational Policies & Procedures

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## **1. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Senior Managers**

The Head of Centre is formally responsible for ensuring that the centre acts in accordance with Pearson's terms and conditions of approval.

### **Quality Nominee**

Every vocational centre must identify a member of staff as the Quality Nominee for vocational provision. This person is the main point of contact for information related to quality assurance.

Responsibilities:

The Quality Nominee should ensure the effective management of all BTEC , Open Award and ASDAN programmes and actively encourage and promote good practice within the centre.

The Quality Nominee will liaise with the centre and Pearson, ASDAN and Open Award staff to ensure that:

- all programmes are approved and registrations are accurate and up-to-date
- approval conditions and policy requirements are being implemented consistently and effectively
- all staff are aware of all support and guidance available and understand requirements
- assessment and internal verification is effective on all Pearson BTEC , Open Award and ASDAN vocational programmes
- there is a registered Lead Internal Verifier in place for each Principal Subject Area, where required.
- liaise with the Lead Standards Verifier for the annual quality assurance procedure

### **Examinations Officer**

This is the person designated by a centre to take responsibility for the correct administration of learners.

The Examinations Officer normally acts as the administrator for Edexcel Online, ASDAN and Open Awards, which provides direct access for learner administration.

Responsibilities:

- Liaise with programme leaders to maintain information on which programmes are running and when they start and finish
  - Register learners onto the correct programmes checking that these are the specific titles and versions that learners are following
- Check registrations carefully to ensure that all data is correct and follow correct procedures if amendments are required



- Give Edexcel Online, ASDAN, Open Award access to the Quality Coordinator
- For relevant programmes, give access to Lead Internal Verifiers so that they can register access standardisation materials
- For programmes that include externally assessed units, ensure that all exam entries are made according to the awarding body requirements.

### **Programme Leader**

A programme leader or programme manager is a person designated by the centre to take overall responsibility for the effective delivery and assessment of vocational qualifications. The programme leader may also act as the Lead Verifier if appropriate.

Responsibilities:

- Liaise with the Quality coordinator to be aware of information updates and quality assurance requirements
- Liaise effectively with the Examinations Officer to ensure accuracy of registration and certification of learners
- Liaise with programme team to confirm assessment and internal verification schedules
- Ensure that there are sufficient resources to deliver the programmes and units
- Ensure that programme staff have the necessary expertise and, where relevant, qualifications
- Review reports arising from quality assurance and ensure that appropriate actions are taken.

### **Lead Internal Verifier**

A Lead Internal Verifier is a person designated by the centre to act as a point of sign-off for the assessment and internal verification of programmes in a Principal Subject Area.

- For QCF BTECs up to Level 3, the Lead Internal Verifier must register through OSCA and complete online standardisation materials.
- For the new NQF BTECs from 2012, the Lead Internal Verifier must register through OSCA to access standardisation materials and work through these with the programme team. There is no requirement to gain accreditation via OSCA.

The Lead Internal Verifier should be:

- a subject specialist. It is important that they have an understanding of the subject they are responsible for
- someone with the authority to oversee assessment. This may be the programme leader, as this would normally be a key part of their role
- directly involved in the assessment and delivery of a programme, so that they understand the units
- able to coordinate across assessors and other internal verifiers for a Principal Subject Area.

**Responsibilities:**

- Ensure that there is an assessment and verification plan for your programmes which is fit for purpose and meets requirements
- Sign off the plan and check that it is being followed at suitable points
- Where possible, undertake some internal verification and/or assessment for individual units within at least one of the programmes
- Ensure that assessment plans, records of assessment and samples of learner work are retained for Standards Verification if necessary. Plan to set aside examples of work 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 colleague if unable to carry out the role.

**Internal Verifiers**

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 assessment & grading criteria
- standardisation of assessors takes place.

**Responsibilities:**

- Agree an assessment and verification plan for each programme
- 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 your subject specialism to sample assessments to verify assessors' judgements, ensuring that they are consistent, fair and reliable
- Ensure your 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.



## Assessors

An assessor is anyone responsible for the assessment of learners.

Responsibilities:

- Ensure that you have read and understood the programme specifications and the requirements of all units being assessed
- Agree an assessment and verification plan for each programme ensuring full coverage of the required units with the Lead Internal Verifier and Quality Nominee.
- Teach learners the knowledge and skills required to achieve the qualification
- Design assessment activities which guide learners to produce evidence that meets the targeted learning aims and assessment criteria, using the associated assessment guidance to provide sufficient coverage of unit content
- Provide summative assessment of the completed work submitted by learners, checking authenticity and sufficiency of evidence produced against the relevant learning aims, assessment criteria and unit content
- Accurately record all summative assessment decisions on the relevant documentation
- Follow up any advice from your internal verifier/standards verifier.

## 2. Registration and Certification

Aims:

- To register individual learners for the correct programmes by an agreed deadline.
- To ensure learners are entered for externally assessed units where necessary.
- To claim valid learner certificates by an agreed deadline.
- To ensure that individual learner registration and certificate claims are accurate and secure.

Actions:

- Learners will be registered within the awarding body requirements.
- Procedures put into place so programme teams can confirm the accuracy of learner registrations.
- Ensure each learner is aware of their registration status.
- Inform the awarding body of any withdrawals, transfers or changes to learner details.
- Where the programme requires, learners will be entered for the necessary externally assessed units in accordance with Pearson requirements.
- Exam information will be distributed to students and staff by the Exams Officer prior to the examination date.
- Ensure that certificate claims are made by the deadlines set.
- Certificates are audited against the learner, claims and internal assessment records to ensure that they are accurate and secure.
- Keep all documentation secure for three years post certification.
- Learners work can be handed back out 12 weeks after certification



### 3. Assessment

Aims:

- To ensure that assessment methodology is valid, reliable and does not disadvantage or advantage any group of learners or individuals.
- To ensure that the assessment procedure and is fair and unbiased and to national standards.
- To ensure that there is accurate and detailed recording of assessment decisions.

Actions:

- To ensure that learners are provided with assignments that are fit for purpose, to enable them to produce appropriate evidence for assessment.
- To assess learner's evidence using only the published assessment and grading criteria.
- To ensure that assessment decisions are impartial, valid and reliable.
- Not limit or 'cap' learner achievement if work is submitted late.
- To develop assessment procedures that will minimise the opportunity for malpractice.
- To maintain accurate and detailed records of assessment decisions.
- To maintain a strong and rigorous internal verification procedure.
- To provide samples for Standards Verification as required by the awarding body.
- To monitor standards verification reports and undertake any action required
- To share good assessment practice between all programme teams.
- To ensure that assessment methodology and the role of the assessor are understood by all staff.
- To provide resources to ensure that assessment can be performed accurately and appropriately.

### 4. Internal Verification

1. Internal Verification will be undertaken on all Programmes run by LVS Oxford, in line with the requirements of awarding and regulatory bodies.

2. Internal Verification should cover:

- All Assessors
- All units/modules
- All grades
- All assessment methods
- All student groups
- Not necessarily all learners



3. Internal Verification should result in:

- The review of assessment plans and assignments
- The review of students' assessed work to ensure that Assessors are assessing accurately and consistently to national standards.

4. The Lead IV in each subject area will make the decision of who will be assessing which unit.

5. There should be a written record of every Internal Verification undertaken. Copies should be sent to the Assessor and Course Tutor.

6. Copies of all Internal Verifier documents should be retained by Verifiers/Course Tutors in course files and be available for inspection, when required, by Standard Verifiers. Documentation to be held for 3 years.

The following procedures are designed to ensure that internal moderation is carried out to meet the requirements of Edexcel and the regulatory bodies.

#### 1. THE INTERNAL VERIFIER

For each BTEC Programme at least one Internal Verifier should be identified. This will usually include the Course Tutor. Where the Internal Verifier is also an Assessor, another member of staff is required to internally verify his/her assessment decisions.

#### 2. PROCEDURES

1. AT THE START OF THE YEAR - the Internal Verifier should request reviewed and updated copies of all assignment briefs from Assessors.

Lead Internal verifiers should carry out the OSCA activities and disseminate activities to assessors/verifiers to ensure that awarding body standards are met.

Each assessment should be checked to ensure that it is of the appropriate quality and that the tasks will provide students with the opportunity to meet different grading criteria. Assessors should not start delivery of the assignment brief until it has been internally verified.

Specifically, Internal Verifiers should check that for the unit/programme:

- All grading criteria are covered
- Assignments are vocationally relevant
- Assignments are presented in a standard format
- An appropriate range of assessment methods are used
- There is a balance of assessment across the course and students are not being over-assessed
- Grading criteria are available to students
- The BTEC Record of Internal Verification should be used for this purpose.





- Subject leaders meetings are used for moderation in order to ensure that all teachers are using same grade criteria and are agreeable on marks. In the event of weakness of assessment, staff development and IV training will take place.

## 2. INTERNAL VERIFIER PLAN

Also, at the start of the year the Course Coordinator/Internal Verifier should draw up a schedule for internal verification for their programme ensuring that:

- All modules and their Assessors are indicated
- All students taking each unit/module are listed
- The range of assessment methods are covered
- Internal verification is ongoing during each term

## 3. SELECTION OF WORK

Internal Verifiers should aim to cover:

- the range of work produced by students - eg presentations, written assignments, practical work, artefacts, etc.
- as many grades as possible: eg Refer, Pass, Merit, Distinction.

In the case of new Assessors, the sample of work for verification may need to be increased. This should be agreed with the Head of Faculty.

## 4. INTERNAL VERIFICATION OF ASSESSMENT DECISION

Since the aim of internal verification is to review students work to check that assessment is accurate and consistent, verifiers will need to re-mark the student's work, checking to see that they agree with the assessment decision.

Two processes could be followed when verifying:

- Look at the work submitted as a whole, then check against assessment and grading criteria;
- Look at assessment/grading criteria and identify within the work submitted where the evidence is found.

The Internal Verifier may choose whether to look at the Assessor's comments before or after carrying out the Internal Verification (blind marking).

NB: Internal verification should take place as soon after assessment as is possible.



## 5. FEEDBACK AND FOLLOW-UP

The Internal Verification (assessment decisions) should be completed and decisions should be clearly stated and explained.

Only the Lead Internal Verifier for the subject can authorise a resubmission within the permitted guidelines. (BTEC) Authorised resubmissions must be recorded on the Internal Verification Assessment Decision document for audit purposes.

Copies of the Internal Verification record should be passed to the Assessor and Course Team.

Feedback is not to be given to learners until after internal verification has been carried out.

## 6. SAMPLE SIZE

For each unit/module a minimum of 4 assessment decisions should be internally verified to correspond with Pearson guidelines for Standard Verification.

In the case of new assessors the sample of work may need to be increased and this should be agreed with the Lead Internal Verifier.

## 7. ALLOCATION OF TIME FOR INTERNAL VERIFIERS

This will be allocated within the school's workload agreement.

## 8. INTERPRETATION OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

Where there is a query over the interpretation of National Standards, the Internal Verifier should contact the Head of Sixth form or Deputy Head, who if required, will liaise with Pearson for clarification.



## 5. Assessment Malpractice

This policy refers to all and any vocational programmes delivered across KS4 and KS5. The role and purpose of this policy is to:

- Define malpractice in the context of assessment and certification for vocational qualifications
- Set out the rights and responsibilities with regard to malpractice of the learner, centre and awarding bodies

According to guidance:

‘Malpractice consists of those acts which undermine the integrity and validity of assessment, the certification of qualifications and/or damage the authority of those responsible for conducting the assessment and certification. Pearson does not tolerate actions (or attempted actions), of malpractice by:

- Learners
- Centres

In connection with vocational qualifications awarding bodies may impose penalties and/or sanctions on learners or centre staff where incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice have been proven.

Learner malpractice includes:

- Plagiarism by copying and passing off as the learners own work the whole or part(s) of another person’s work including artwork, images, words, computer generated work (including internet sources), thoughts, inventions and/or discoveries whether published or not, without appropriately acknowledging the source
- Collusion by working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as individual learner work. Learners should not be discouraged from teamwork, as this is an essential key skill for many sectors and subject areas, but the use of minutes, allocating tasks, agreeing outcomes etc are an essential part of teamwork and this must be made clear to the learner
- 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
- misuse of assessment/examination material
- Behaving in a certain way as to undermine the integrity of the assessment/examination/test.
- The alteration of any results documents including certificates



- Cheating to gain an unfair advantage

Assessors must verify that the learners work is their own, for instance:

- Checking the validity of the learners work to ensure worked submitted has not been plagiarised

In order to prevent the occurrence of plagiarism assessors should ensure that learner malpractice is addressed in the following ways:

- Through initial induction
- Providing correct guidance on study skills and how to cite and reference secondary sources
- Provide supervised opportunities for learners to complete their work

Assessor Malpractice includes:

- Assisting learners in the production of work for assessment, where the support has the potential to influence the outcome of assessment
- Producing falsified witness statements allowing evidence which is known by the staff member not to be the learners own to be included in a learner assignment /coursework
- Misusing the conditions for special learner requirements
- Fraudulent certificate claims

Malpractice Procedures

Awarding bodies procedures for dealing with Malpractice:

Awarding bodies will deal with alleged malpractice with the Principal, Ian Peters , and may require full access to a centre for investigation purposes. During the investigation the awarding body may fuse learner registration/enrolment or withhold the release of learner results/certificate

If malpractice is suspected this must be reported at the first instance to the QC (Chris Lacey) who will make the individual fully aware in writing of the nature of the alleged malpractice.

The individual involved with an act of alleged malpractice will be provided with the opportunity to respond to the allegations made; and will be informed of the right to appeal should a judgement be made against them.

In the event of malpractice Pearson has the right:

- to access any documents held by the centre in relation to alleged malpractice
- make a report to the regulatory bodies to include details of actions taken by the QC and the principal, Governing body or responsible employer
- May notify other awarding bodies

Penalties and Sanctions applied.

- The awarding body may refuse to accept assessment/examination entries from a centre if malpractice established
- Has the right to withdraw programme approval



- Reserves the right to refuse to issue or withdraw certificates

## Appeals

Awarding bodies (JCQ) has established procedures for the consideration of appeals against penalties and sanctions arising from malpractice.

## Focus on Plagiarism

### Defining plagiarism

Taking someone else's intellectual effort and presenting it as one's own. The Joint Council's Guidelines for Dealing with Instances of Suspected Malpractice defines plagiarism as: "The failure to acknowledge sources properly and/or the submission of another person's work as if it were the candidate's own." Mostly, plagiarism refers to copying from published texts whether these are in print or on the internet, but it can also refer to copying from manufactured artefacts, or essays or pieces of work previously submitted for examinations/coursework.

### Why plagiarism is on the increase

The reasons why candidates plagiarise are varied, but among them are:

- the candidate's lack of awareness of the regulations;
- the candidate's failure to allow sufficient time to produce the work;
- the greater pressures on students to succeed;
- the greater availability of information on the internet and ease with which this can be copied.

### Preventing plagiarism

The teacher or assessor entering candidates for a qualification with a coursework component, must accept the obligation to authenticate the work which is submitted for assessment. They must confirm that the work produced is solely that of the candidate concerned. They must not accept work which is not the candidate's own. If plagiarism is discovered prior to the signing of a declaration of authentication the incident need not be reported to the Awarding Body, but should be dealt with in accordance with the centre's own procedures.

In order to prevent plagiarism, you:

- should consider incorporating an awareness raising session on academic honesty in the induction process for new students;
- could require students to sign a declaration that they have understood what plagiarism is, and that it is forbidden, in the learning agreement that is signed at enrolment;
- should teach the use of quotation marks when sources are quoted directly;
- should set reasonable deadlines for submission of work and provide reminders;
- should explain the importance of the candidate producing work which is their own and stress to them and to their parents/carers the penalties of malpractice;
- must not accept, without further investigation, work which you suspect has been plagiarised; to do so encourages the spread of this practice.



## Dealing with plagiarism

There are three steps in the process for dealing with plagiarism:

- keeping watch
- confirmation
- reporting

### Keeping Watch on content

- You should check a candidate's work for acknowledgement of sources as the work is being completed.
- Varying quality of content is one of the most obvious pointers. Well-written passages containing detailed analyses of relevant facts alternating with poorly constructed and irrelevant linking passages ought to give rise to suspicion.
- Dated expressions, and references to past events as being current can also be indications of work which has been copied from out-of-date sources.

### Confirmation

- If it is suspected an assignment has been plagiarised, the next step is to try to locate the source.
- The easiest method is to type a four to six-word phrase from the text (preferably one with an unusual phrase in it) directly into a search engine such as Google and perform an "exact phrase search". If the article was copied from the free, visible web there is a good chance this approach will find it.
- Another method is to look through the websites that students use, as these are common sources for essays and assignments.
- If an investigation is inconclusive the work in question could be removed and replaced by alternative work whose authenticity is not in doubt.

### Reporting

- If suspicions are confirmed and the candidate has not signed the declaration of authentication, the centre need not report the malpractice to the appropriate Awarding Body. Centres can resolve the matter themselves prior to the signing of the declarations. Teachers must not accept work which is not the candidate's own. Ultimately the Head of Centre has the responsibility for ensuring that candidates do not submit plagiarised work.
- If plagiarism is detected by the centre and the declaration of authentication has been signed, the case must be reported to the Awarding Body. The procedure is detailed in Guidance for Dealing with Instances of Suspected Malpractice in Examinations; this document is published by JCQ.
- The Awarding Body will then consider the case and, if necessary, impose a sanction in line with the penalties given in the document Guidance for Dealing with Instances of Suspected Malpractice in Examinations. The sanctions applied to a candidate committing plagiarism range from a warning regarding future conduct to the candidate being barred from entering for one or more examinations for a set period of time.



## 6. Appeals

This policy applies to enquiries or appeals made where:

- The centre disagrees with the outcome(s) from Pearson's external quality assurance activities (e.g. Standards Verifier report);
- The centre disagrees with a qualification decision made by Pearson (e.g. rejection of a late certification or registration request);
- A learner considers that a centre decision continues to disadvantage her/him even after the outcome of the centre's internal appeals procedure (e.g. a decision concerning assessment outcomes or reasonable adjustments).

An enquiry or appeal concerning an individual learner must be made through the learner's centre and submitted by the Deputy Head. The Deputy Head is required to submit the appeal on the behalf of the learner to the awarding body

The awarding bodies (JCQ) expects most enquiries or appeals from individual learners to be resolved within the centre and will only consider an individual learner's enquiry or appeal after the centre's internal enquiries or appeals procedures have been fully utilised.

The role and purpose of this policy is to:

- Enable the learner to enquire, question or appeal against an assessment decision, to attempt to reach agreement between the learner and the assessor at the earliest opportunity
- To standardise and record any appeal to ensure openness and fairness
- To facilitate a learner's ultimate right of appeal to the awarding body where appropriate

In order to do this the centre will:

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

### Appeals Procedure

As part of the quality assurance procedure and the equality of opportunity of each learner, you have the right to appeal against the grade you have been awarded for submitted coursework. However, before an appeal is made the student should raise this informally with the assessor (the teacher who marked the work) for consideration.

If you are unable to agree you have the formal right to a Formal Appeal. All appeals must be made in writing to Chris Lacey (Centre Quality coordinator) stating clearly the:



- Course title
- Unit name and number
- Assessor
- Type of work submitted
- Reason for the appeal

You will receive a written response inviting you to a meeting where you will be given the opportunity to put your case to the Appeals Panel. You will be entitled to bring a representative with you, such as a parent/guardian or friend.

The Appeals Panel will consist of at least 4 people:

- i. Principal
- ii. Quality Nominee
- iii. The Assessor
- iv. The Internal Verifier

This meeting must be minuted.

You will receive the Panel's final decision in writing, within 5 working days of the meeting.

Before embarking on a formal appeal it is essential that you are clear about why you disagree with the grade awarded. This is not the forum for you to express disappointment with your grade. An appeal can only be made against the grades awarded to the work submitted by you, and not for other miscellaneous issues. It is in your best interest that Appeals are made within one month of receiving feedback from your assessor, to ensure any amendments can be made before submission of grades to the exam board.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies;

- a. Vocational Appeals policy
- b. staffing structure
- c. Exam policy
- d. Controlled assessment policy