

ASSESSMENT, INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL VERIFICATION

HANDBOOK 21/22

PURPOSE

The Group is committed to ensuring that all individuals achieve their full potential, and the qualification(s) they achieve retain their credibility, by ensuring assessment is valid, reliable and non-discriminatory. This is achieved through the implementation of rigorous internal verification of the assessment process.

The assessment, internal and external verification process has clear procedures that encompass all programmes which lead to nationally recognised qualifications. It is monitored throughout the year by the Teaching, Learning and Quality team.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

The purpose of an assessment strategy is to provide valid opportunities for learners to demonstrate learning, and for delivery staff to develop an overview of how well learners are progressing and therefore how to plan and deliver future lessons and assessment opportunities.

When planning an assessment strategy, it is expected that delivery staff know what makes an assessment task valid against performance criteria, the difference between formal and informal assessment, and, formative and summative assessment.

An assessment plan should be available to learners on a study programme made available at the start of the course. The significance of this should be reinforced with learners at the start of the programme.

For apprentices, a delivery template overview describes the structure of the course and informs the individual learning plan. The individual learning plan then outlines the planned end dates for each component of the programme. Apprentices should be made aware of the significance of the individual learning plan at the start of the programme, and where it can be viewed in their portfolio.

When planning assessment consider the following:

- Provide clear information on how and when the learner will be assessed as part of the course.
- Careful planning of spacing, timing and volume of assessments to avoid long gaps of inactivity and the bunching of work to ensure that all learners are well prepared for assessment, including external assessments and examinations.
- Give clear information on how, when and to whom feedback will be provided.
- Ensure accurate, up-to-date records of progress in relation to course and qualification outcomes are kept.
- Ensure that learners are aware of the appeals process.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

All staff involved in assessment, internal verification and management of relevant programmes must be aware of and be able to follow requirements for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Please refer to the Awarding Organisation, and Qualification handbooks where applicable, for full guidance. All queries regarding RPL should be raised with your line manager and the Exams team.

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH MISSED DEADLINES ON BTEC COURSES

This procedure is only to be used in **extreme circumstances**. It should not be common practice and the key message to learners absolutely remains that they must meet deadlines. If a learner, or, member of staff, thinks that they might miss a deadline, they should negotiate an extension. If for some unforeseen reason, this opportunity has not been taken, then refer to the following procedure.

The appropriateness of the following procedure will depend on various factors such as attendance, punctuality, behaviour, attitude to learning, prior compliance with deadlines and, position within the disciplinary process.

First submissions

If a learner fails to submit work to the deadline, the following should be followed.

- The learner must be placed on a stage 1 disciplinary (not a cause for concern), or, if they have already received a disciplinary, they should be moved to the next stage up.
- The learner needs to present their case to the Head of Curriculum and Director and/or member of the Quality team, providing a legitimate reason and evidence as to why they a) failed to negotiate an extension prior to the deadline and b) failed to submit work to the deadline. The learner must also present an argument for why they should be allowed a further opportunity to enable them to stay on the course.
- If the panel believes the reason to be legitimate (e.g. personal illness, illness within the family, bereavement, personal accident, serious injury) they may grant the learner one of the following options:
 - An alternative assignment can be completed within a set amount of time
 - Learners may complete the original assignment under controlled conditions within 2 weeks of the original deadline.

Resubmissions

If a learner fails to submit a resubmission to the agreed resubmission deadline, the following should be followed:

- The learner must be placed on a stage 1 disciplinary (not a cause for concern), or, if they have already received a disciplinary, they should be moved to the next stage up.
- If the resubmission targets merit or distinction criteria, then the original grade stands and the resubmission opportunity is in effect revoked.
- If the resubmission targets pass criteria:

- The learner needs to present their case to the Head of Curriculum and Director and/or member of the Quality team, providing a legitimate reason and evidence as to why they a) failed to negotiate an extension prior to the deadline and b) failed to submit work to the deadline. The learner must also present an argument for why they should be allowed a further opportunity to enable them to stay on the course.
- If the panel believes the reason to be legitimate (e.g. personal illness, illness within the family, bereavement, personal accident, serious injury) they may grant the learner the following option:
 - An alternative assignment can be completed within 2 weeks.

PROCEDURES FOR LOST WORK OR PORTFOLIOS

In the event of a learner, or member of staff inadvertently losing a portfolio, or, if a major piece of work is destroyed. Firstly, ascertain that the loss is genuine and that the work cannot be retrieved. Work that has never been seen by the tutor is not covered by this procedure. Having ascertained the loss is genuine, the following procedures should be carried out:

- Advise the Internal Verifier, Quality team and the Awarding Organisation's External Verifier as soon as possible to obtain guidance on their specific procedures and requirements.
- Investigate fully the circumstances of the loss and compile a report for the IV and the manager. This should then be signed by all parties including the learner, and, if under 18, their parents. A copy of this report should be sent through to the Quality team.
- Collect all summative records showing progress and achievement in-year, together with registers for all subjects. Collect all the personal tutor records, including in-year reports. Without comprehensive reports being available it is unlikely that any claim for completed units will be successful.
- Arrange a meeting with all tutors and the manager to discuss the progress and achievement to date and agree which subject/units have been completed and are recommended for claiming from the Awarding Organisation. Ensure comprehensive notes of this meeting are retained and update the learner as to the progress being made with the investigation.
- Complete a final report summarising the evidence of progress and achievement and the outcomes of the meeting held. Attach all relevant evidence as appendices.
- Staff and the learner concerned should be available for the EV visit.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

As per the Group's Code of Conduct, employees are required to disclose all conflicts of interest to their line manager. Where the conflict of interest involves the assessment or IV process, the conflict of interest must also be disclosed to the Exams Officer and Head of Teaching, Learning and Quality and 100% of the learner's work must be IVd.

GUIDANCE ON EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

When considering an application for extenuating circumstances the tutor and Lead IV should refer to the following. Valid reasons for the late submission of work should fall into the following categories:

- Personal illness
- Illness within family
- Bereavement
- Personal accident
- Serious injury

To award an assignment extension the tutor should be confident that the learner has been significantly disadvantaged by factors relating to one of the five categories during the period of evidence generation/assignment completion.

Where circumstances which may cause a barrier to the completion of assignments are present prior to setting the assignment, a personalised completion date for the learner should be confirmed to reflect this. This would not constitute an assignment extension and should also not be taken to confer that an automatic extension will be granted.

For an assignment extension to be granted, the learner should be able to demonstrate circumstances which have had specific and unexpected impact since the original assignment date was confirmed.

STANDARDISATION

Standardisation is an important activity in any course team or department as it ensures that all involved are assessing to the same level, and also that all Internal Verifiers are verifying to the same standard.

Standardisation **must** be completed before any assessment takes place. One of the effective ways for standardisation to take place is for the course team to meet and complete an assessment activity on unassessed work.

STANDARDISATION ACTIVITY

- The session should begin with a refresher on how assessment should be conducted on this particular course.
- Two or three pieces of work (or evidence) that cover a range of grade levels (or for non-graded work a top, middle and bottom standard) should be chosen. Ensure that this work does not have the grade decision written on it. The work needs to be copied so that each member of the course team has access to this. Copies of the specification and task/assignment brief should be provided for each person.
- Time should be allowed for each person present to assess the work provided – a consensus must be reached for the grade or assessment decision that should be

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES FORM (IV-EX1)	
Please complete all unshaded boxes and return to your tutor for consideration	
NAME	
COURSE	
UNIT NO	UNIT NAME
Reason Offered for Extension:	
Original Deadline:	
SIGNATURE	DATE
TUTOR COMMENT:	
DECISION:	
AGREED EXTENSION DEADLINE:	
TUTOR SIGNATURE:	DATE
LEAD IV SIGNATURE:	DATE

awarded for each piece of work. The reason why various assessment decisions have been made must be discussed and an agreement must be reached that is in line with guidance and requirements provided by the awarding organisation. Further support may be required for tutors who are making incorrect assessment decisions and who are not currently assessing at the standard required. If a consensus can't be reached then a manager should be involved.

- Units to standardise should be chosen on a risk based approach, taking into consideration factors such as; has the unit been delivered before, have previous issues with assessment been identified. Throughout the duration of the qualification we would expect at least 50% of the units to be standardised.
- All documentation should be kept as a record of the activity and a Record of Standardisation form (IV-RS1) should be completed.

RECORD OF STANDARDISATION (IV-RS1)		
Standardisation ensures all assessors are assessing to the same level, and also that all Internal Verifiers are verifying to the same standard. Standardisation should take place prior to assessing individual student and/or apprentice work.		
CURRICULUM AREA		
DATE		
FACILITATOR		
COURSE		
UNIT		
TYPE OF EVIDENCE/TASK		
ATTENDANCE		
NAME	POSITION	SIGNATURE
GRADE OF ASSESSMENT		
DID ALL AGREE WITH THE GRADE?	Yes/No	
IF NO, WHAT WERE THE KEY DISCREPANCIES?	e.g. Staff A argued the level of detail was insufficient to be classed as an explanation as the learner did not use examples to clarify their understanding. Staff B argued that when viewed holistically the learner had clearly demonstrated enough knowledge to meet the criteria.	
IF NO, WHAT ACTION IS BEING TAKEN TO ADDRESS THIS?		

INTERNAL VERIFICATION

THE ROLE OF THE LEAD INTERNAL VERIFIER

Liaison with the Quality team and awarding organisations

Each subject area will have a nominated Lead Internal Verifier. It is the Lead IVs responsibility to ensure that assessment and verification within an area is conducted in accordance with the group, and awarding organisation requirements.

Other examples of responsibilities include facilitation of standardisation, organisation of documentation and liaison with External Verifiers/awarding organisations.

Lead IVs use the Lead Internal verifier Audit form (IV-VS1) to complete a random sample throughout the year to ensure quality across tutors and Internal Verifiers.

Liaison with External Verifier

Lead Internal Verifiers may be required to liaise with the External Verifier/Standards Verifier for the subject area. The key responsibilities related to this are:

- To arrange an appropriate date and time for a visit or sample to take place
- To inform the Head of Teaching, Learning and Quality of dates and times of external verification activity in advance of the visit taking place.
- To ensure that all documentation required by the group and the Awarding Organisation is accurately prepared
- To share the report and any actions with the Head of Teaching, Learning and Quality after the EV/SV activity.

Meeting Local Needs (BTEC only)

If a member of a programme delivery team wants to make any changes to the basic structure and content of a qualification, via imported units, they must first speak with the Lead Internal Verifier. The guidelines governing the concept of Meeting Local Needs (MLN) are very clear and there is a formal process which must be adhered to. Any application to import units should be circulated to the relevant Director of Curriculum (who will review the rationale behind the application), and the Head of Teaching, Learning and Quality (who will review whether the application meets all awarding organisation rules), for their approval before contacting the relevant Awarding Organisation.

Once internal approval is secured the application to the Awarding Organisation should be sent off. Only when Awarding Organisation approval has been secured and shared with the Quality team, and the Exams team, is it appropriate for the delivery of the imported unit to commence.

THE ROLE OF THE INTERNAL VERIFIER

- To be able to plan and prepare activities which monitor assessment processes.
- To determine whether assessment processes and systems meet and operate according to the requirements of the group and awarding organisation requirements.
- To ensure that learners are adequately prepared for external assessment.
- To check that tutors meet the requirements for their role.
- To check that assessments are planned, prepared for, and carried out according to agreed procedures.
- To check that assessment methods are safe, fair, valid and reliable.
- To check that assessment decisions are made using criteria specified by the awarding organisation.
- To make comparisons of tutors' assessment decisions to ensure consistency.
- To provide feedback, advice and support to tutors to help them maintain and improve their assessment practice.
- To work with others to ensure the standardisation of assessment practice and outcomes.
- To follow agreed procedures when there are significant concerns about the quality of assessment.
- To follow agreed procedures for the recording, storing, reporting and confidentiality of information.

SAMPLING

- What is sampling?
 - IV sampling is completed in order to review the quality of assessment decisions at both formative and summative stages of the course.

- What is interim sampling?
 - This involves 'dipping in' to the assessment and planning process at different stages throughout the course. Formative sampling is an essential part of the process.
- What is summative sampling?
 - Summative sampling occurs at the end of a unit or qualification and allows for an overall view of the quality of assessment.
- How much sampling?
 - The sampling that needs to be completed throughout the course should be outlined at the beginning of the programme.
 - As a guideline, a new tutor, or, a new course, should have 50% of all work sampled to ensure it meets the required standards. A course that is deemed as low risk should have approximately 15% of work sampled.
 - There may be specific amounts required by the awarding organisation which is something that must be checked. When deciding the size of your sample the following must be taken into account;
 - The amount of sampling needed to be completed to check reliability
 - The different types of assessment methods used
 - The number, experience, location and workload of tutors
 - The range of assessment sites
 - The learner cohort(s)
 - The qualification type and whether it is a new or revised one
 - The range of units
 - All relevant records

What is an Internal Verifier checking?

An Internal Verifier will check learner work to ensure it is:

- VALID – Relevant to the awarding organisation standards
- AUTHENTIC – Produced by the learner in an appropriate manner
- RELIABLE – Accurately reflects the level of performance
- CURRENT – Sufficiently recent
- SUFFICIENT – Meets in full the awarding organisation criteria

FEEDBACK TO TUTORS

The Internal Verifier must provide written feedback to the tutor after each sampling session, using the IV feedback record, or OneFile form. Feedback should relate to tutor decisions, ongoing progress, record keeping, quality of planning, and tutor feedback. Where action is identified, this should be reviewed with the tutor as soon as possible and clearly indicated on the feedback form that should be dated and signed.

HOW TO ORGANISE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL VERIFICATION

STEP 1 – AWARDING ORGANISATION REQUIREMENTS

Your first step with internal verification needs to be understanding what the requirements are of your Awarding Organisations and the quality assurance system that they use. Different Awarding Organisations will use different systems. The most common systems are detailed below.

Remote Sampling followed by EV Visit

- Remote sampling may be used to initially look at assessment decisions, which will then be followed by a visit later in the year to allow for certification to be claimed.

External Verifier/EQA Visit

- This system is where an external moderator, verifier or EQA visits the centre to check the internal verification and assessment decisions.

Centre Accreditation

- Nominees within a centre are required to sit assessments which then accredits the centre to complete verification of assessment itself. This is often a risk-based system and a centre can be sampled at any time.

Remote Sampling

- This system is where you will send evidence of assessment to an allocated External Verifier, moderator or EQA and they will check the assessment and internal verification of that sample.

You will also be able to find out any specific internal verification or sampling requirements that the awarding organisation may have on their websites.

Where will I find out the Awarding Organisation requirements?

Firstly check on the Awarding Organisation website. If this does not explain it fully, contact the organisation directly, your colleagues, Head of Curriculum or the Quality team for support.

STEP 2 – INTERNAL VERIFICATION PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

The next thing to do is to familiarise yourself with the group requirements for internal verification. Alongside this document, training is given by the Quality team at the start of the academic year, and throughout the year where needed.

STEP 3 – PREPARING AN ASSESSMENT PLAN

All courses and programmes must have a detailed assessment plan (IV-AP1) before delivery commences. The assessment plan is used to set out when assessment/assignments will be set, submitted and marked throughout a course. It is important to ensure assessment/assignments are evenly spaced throughout the year, learners are not assessed until they are ready.

This then allows for the planning of internal verification in conjunction with the sampling plan (IV-SP1).

An assessment schedule would typically show the following key elements:

- Unit Name
- Assignment Name/Number
- Tutor Name
- Type of assessment
- Hand out date
- Date of submission or activity completion

However, you will need to carefully check the information from the Awarding Organisation as different qualifications have different requirements, particularly BTECs.

For apprentices, a delivery template overview outlines the course plan. This overview informs the framework or standards' templates within OneFile, which are applied to all new apprentices when portfolios are created.

It is the responsibilities of the Lead IV or manager to ensure the Framework or Standards Programme template is correctly set up with planned months of completions for unit / aims. This then auto populates unit end dates based on the planned month of completion from each apprentice's individual start date. It is the tutor's responsibility for meeting with the apprentice and employer to select any optional units, and set dates as appropriate.



STEP 4 – SET UP THE INTERNAL VERIFICATION FILE

The next thing to do is ensure that you have set up an internal verification file for the course. The Internal Verification File can be either paper based or electronic, however should not be a mix of both.

What documents do I need?

- IV-F1 - Internal Verification File Contents
- IV-CS1 - Course Information Sheet

INTERNAL VERIFICATION FILE (IV-F1)

The information required for this file can either be stored electronically or in a physical folder. The important thing is that you have all of the content listed below and that it is organised as described.

CURRICULUM AREA

SECTION	CONTENTS
1	Course Information Sheets
2	Previous Reports Correspondence with Awarding Organisation and/or External Verifier/Moderator Action Plan(s) from previous report
3	Specifications
4	Assessment Plan Sampling Plan Record of Resubmissions signed by Lead IV
6	Internal Verification Records - organised by units IV of assignment briefs IV of assessment decision
7	Minutes from meetings (including Standardisation and Team Meetings)
8	Staff CVs/Competence Reports

COURSE INFORMATION SHEET (IV-CS1)

COURSE NAME		
AWARDING BODY		
METHOD OF EXTERNAL VERIFICATION/MODERATION		
Visit by EV/EM		Provide Details of EV/EM if required here...
Remote Sampling		
Accredited Lead IV		Does this course have Direct Claim Status? Yes/No
Other		
TUTORS TEACHING ON COURSE		
Unit Number/Name	Tutor Name	
INTERNAL VERIFIERS ON COURSE		
Unit Number/Name	Internal Verifier Name	

STEP 5 – ASSIGNMENT BRIEFS

Assignment briefs should be used whenever an assignment or task is written by the course team.

Where applicable, you will need to internally verify assignment briefs relating to assessments. An Internal Verifier is checking that awarding body organisation requirements are present and that the brief is appropriate for the learners who will use it.

You must **not** release assignment briefs to learners that have not been internally verified, including authorised assignment briefs from an Awarding Organisation.

How do I internally verify assignment briefs?

- Assignment briefs should be verified to check for appropriate assessment methods are used, deadline are suitable and meets the specification provided by the Awarding Organisation. If you need assistance with this please contact your Lead IV, colleagues or the Quality team.

INTERNAL VERIFICATION RECORD – ASSIGNMENT BRIEF (IV-AB1)

UNIT	
ASSIGNMENT NAME/NUMBER	
CRITERIA	
ASSESSOR	
INTERNAL VERIFIER	
CRITERIA TO BE MET:	INTERNAL VERIFIER'S COMMENTS:

- The Internal Verification of assignment briefs must be completed on group paperwork (IV-AB1) or using awarding body paperwork.

STEP 6 – PREPARING A SAMPLING PLAN

The sampling plan can be used for standard long and short qualifications. It allows you to look at sampling unit by unit and is effective for demonstrating sampling practices that are across a learner cohort.

The sample should show that:

- All tutors are sampled
- All cohorts are sampled
- All units are sampled
- The assessment method (where applicable)
- Formative and summative assessment sampling

SAMPLING PLAN (IV-SP1)

	Unit 1		Unit 2		Unit 3	
TUTOR NAME	TUTOR		NEW TUTOR (50%)		TUTOR	
IV NAME	INTERNAL VERIFIER		INTERNAL VERIFIER		INTERNAL VERIFIER	
STUDENT NAME	Planned IV	Actual IV	Planned IV	Actual IV	Planned IV	Actual IV
STUDENT A	October					
STUDENT B	October					
STUDENT C			January			

A sampling plan must be completed on group paperwork (IV-SP1) or Awarding Body paperwork.

For apprentices and learners who are using OneFile as their portfolio. All new learners are automatically added to the sampling plan, when a new portfolio is built. However, the sample selection **is not** automatically populated.

The IV is responsible for checking and updating the sampling plan regularly, at least on a monthly basis, to ensure all learners have a sampling plan.

STEP 7 – ALLOCATE INTERNAL VERIFIERS

Where the Awarding Organisation allows, you should try to involve a range of colleagues in the internal verification process. This will be good for professional development and allows for standardisation throughout the team.

Can anyone internally verify?

Some Awarding Organisations and qualifications may have specific requirements for an Internal Verifier, including holding a specific qualification. If not, the general rule is someone with vocational competence and experience of assessing would be a reliable choice.

STEP 8 – UNDERTAKE INTERNAL VERIFICATION ACTIVITY

When you are internally verifying, you are checking that assignment briefs are fit for purpose, the assessment decisions are correct and an appropriate assessment decision has been awarded. You will also be checking that feedback provided to the learner is appropriate and, where applicable, leads to relevant actions. You should ensure you have a copy of the task/assessment/assignment brief and qualification specification when internally verifying to ensure that all necessary criteria have been covered.

What documents do I need?

- IV-PS1 – Portfolio Sampling
- IV-AD1 – Assessment Decisions Record of IV
- Or, refer to the sampling plan within OneFile where applicable

Apprenticeships and NVQ-style programmes

For these programmes there is also a requirement for assessment observations and learner interviews to take place. Please refer to the Awarding Organisation requirements and guidance from your EQA for the expected volume of activity to take place throughout the year. A record of IV observations and learner interview should be completed on group paperwork.

- IV-AO1 – Assessment Observation Schedule and Tracker
- IV-SR1 – Student Interview Record
- Or, refer to the learner interview record embedded within OneFile where applicable

There are other documents available, please take the time to look through and see which ones are relevant for your course. Some Awarding Organisations may provide you with documentation to use, in which case use this in place of the group documentation.

All group documentation referred to within this handbook are located within SharePoint here: [Our NHC> Teaching, Learning and Quality> Quality> Documents> Quality Processes, Documents and Templates> Assessment, IV and EV](#)

STEP 9 – MONITORING INTERNAL VERIFICATION ACTIVITY

You will need to monitor internal verification for your courses on a regular basis and during team meetings. For paper-based records, good practice would be Internal Verifiers initialling and dating the sampling grid so that progress can be checked. For those using electronic systems to IV, this signature is automatically generated. All completed internal verification documentation should be held safely as it will be needed for Quality team audits, external verification/standards verification or inspection purposes.

STEP 10A – EXTERNAL VERIFICATION/MODERATION

After you have found out what the Awarding Organisations procedures are you need to make sure you organise the external verification/moderation of your course. Generally, Awarding Organisations will contact you or the group with details of allocated external verifiers/standards verifiers. However, this will not happen until learners are registered with the Awarding Organisations. It is good practice to contact the Awarding Organisation as early as possible to arrange a visit. If you do this, it means that any actions can be implemented early on, and the External Verifier/Standards Verifier will then be able to check actions in the second visit if there is one.

This checklist should be completed prior to the visit of an external moderator or verifier. It ensures that you have undertaken all of the key things to ensure your visit has a successful outcome.

STEP 10B - CHECK LIST FOR EXTERNAL VERIFICATION/MODERATION VISIT

Organising the visit

- Agree a suitable date and confirm the date with the EV
- Book a room in which the EV can work for the duration of the visit and will not be disturbed. Also, book a car park space for the EV

- Inform a member of the Quality team of the date of the visit
- Obtain information from the EV of what they would like to see and do during the visit. It is essential at this point to ensure the EV has the correct site address and directions

Preparing for the visit

- Re-visit the last EV report for this course and ensure that all actions have been addressed and completed. If they haven't been addressed, take urgent action to do so.
- Ensure that all internal verification is up-to-date
- Prepare all required documentation and sample

On the day of the visit

- Ensure that all required samples and documentation are readily available for the EV
- Ensure that the Head of Curriculum is available to meet the EV at the start of the day and is present for feedback
- Arrange refreshments for the EV if required

STEP 11 – AFTER THE VISIT/SAMPLE

Following your visit, or sampling, you will be issued with a report. Please send this directly to the Head of Teaching, Learning and Quality. The report will include an action plan detailing any actions or recommendations that have arisen from the sampling. You will need to add any actions to the departmental QIP.

ASSESSMENT POLICY

SCOPE

- The assessment policy embraces assessment practice and procedures across the group to ensure that national standards are applied consistently. It applies to all accredited programmes and assessed programmes for which a certificate is awarded.

PURPOSE

- The assessment process must be authentic, valid, reliable, fit for purpose and inclusive.
- All arrangements associated with assessment must give priority to maximise the opportunity to experience success. The assessment process needs to cover formative assessments leading to summative assessments.
- Learners must meet formal assessment deadlines in order for a tutor to accept evidence for assessment. There may be times when there is a legitimate reason for not being able to meet a deadline and it is important that all involved are aware of the procedure for negotiating and authorising a revised submission deadline. Learners must approach the tutor prior to the deadline and submit an extenuating circumstances form. If the tutor deems the circumstances as legitimate, they can award a deadline extension of up to 1 week (or longer - only if the qualification requires this). If there are more serious, longer term issues, then special consideration will be given to learner with identifiable needs subject to approval from the Awarding Organisation.
- Learners must be given advance notice of assessments in order that they may have sufficient preparation time.
- Assessment plans must be prepared in advance, and in consultation with other team members in order to avoid an overload of assessment at particular times.
- Formal assessment must be taken in a suitable environment, with appropriate equipment. Sufficient preparation time must be allowed between assessments. Assessment criteria will be made clear in advance.
- All assessments must meet the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation and evidence will only be assessed against the published assessment and grading criteria.
- Comprehensive, timely and constructive feedback supporting assessment decisions will be given in a timely manner. For BTEC courses in particular, it is crucial that tutors, Internal Verifiers and Lead IVs are aware of, and rigorously uphold the rules around assessment.
- Formal records of progress will be kept and regularly updated as appropriate. On-programme assessment must conform to Awarding Organisation requirements and be formally recorded.
- Tutors will co-operate fully with Internal Verifiers, External Verifiers/Standards Verifiers and afford access to all relevant documents in accordance with the Awarding Organisation quality assurance requirements.

- Evidence of learner achievement will be kept within departments, in accordance with the requirements of external agencies, in order to provide reference points for the assurance that year on year standards of assessment are consistent.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

Hart Learning Group is committed to open and fair assessment. As a learner you should be involved in the assessment process. There may occasionally be times when you are unhappy about an assessment decision (internal or external). The process described below covers internal decisions. For any appeals regarding external decisions, you should in the first instance, raise your concerns with your tutor so that the appropriate action can be taken. Awarding body or EPAO (End Point Assessment Organisation) policy will then be followed.

STAGE 1

- If you disagree with an assessment decision, discuss this with your tutor as soon as possible. Explain your reason for concern and they will provide a clear explanation and re-examine the evidence with you.
- Most appeals will proceed no further than this.
- If you are still unhappy, the appeal can proceed to Stage 2 and will be registered as a learner appeal.

STAGE 2

- The Appeal Procedure Form (IV-SA1 – This form can be provided to you by your tutor), together with the assignment/assessment activity, and your evidence, or work, and any explanation you wish to include, will be sent to the Internal Verifier within 24 hours. The Internal Verifier will reconsider the decision and inform you of his/her decision within 5 working days.
- This decision will be entered on the Appeal Procedure Form.
- In the rare event that you are unhappy with the reconsidered assessment decision, the appeal will move to stage 3.

STAGE 3

- At this stage, the Appeal Procedure Form and relevant evidence will go to an Appeals Panel which includes you, a friend (if you wish), the original tutor, the Internal Verifier (stage 2) and 2 independent people appointed by the Quality team, one of whom will be the chair.
- The panel will reach a decision within 10 working days and notify, in writing, all parties of the outcome. The decision of the Appeals Panel is final for most qualifications. For some qualifications, the External Verifier, appointed by the Awarding Organisation, may be requested to investigate the appeal and the Awarding Organisation's decision is final. The Awarding Organisation may charge a fee payable by you. You would be informed of any charges prior to proceedings.

Following the completion of the appeals procedure, you are still unsatisfied with the assessment decision, in most cases, you are able to contact the Awarding Organisation directly. A member of the Quality team will be able to offer you guidance on who you would need to contact.

If you remain unhappy with the decision made by the Awarding Organisation, you may then raise your appeal to the relevant qualification regulator. Again, a member of the Quality team will be able to offer you guidance on who you would need to contact.

MALPRACTICE AND MALADMINISTRATION

MALPRACTICE

Definition

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) defines malpractice as, “any act, default or practice which is a breach of the Regulations or which:

- gives rise to prejudice to candidates; and/or
- compromises public confidence in qualifications; and/or
- compromises, attempts to compromise or may compromise the process of assessment, the integrity of any qualification or the validity of a result or certificate; and/or
- damages the authority, reputation or credibility of any awarding body or centre or any officer, employee or agent of any awarding body or centre.”

Staff Malpractice

The carrying out of any malpractice activity by a member of staff within the group is not permitted. The following is a list of examples of malpractice. It should be noted that there may be other examples of malpractice that may be determined by the Group and its partners.

- Failure to keep mark schemes in a secure location, potentially leading to their misuse.
- Alteration or amendment of mark schemes or grading criteria set by an Awarding Organisation.
- Assistance given to learner that could influence the outcome of an assessment.
- Falsifying of witness statements or records.
- The allowance of evidence into a portfolio or assessment which is known to not be the learner’s own work.
- The allowance of impersonation during assessment.
- Inappropriate use of any special arrangements or concessions provided to a learner with a specific learning need where the outcome of an assessment may be influenced.
- Falsifying of records or certificates. Claiming of certificates/awards/credit where the learner has yet to successfully complete the expected criteria or full requirements of assessment.
- Failure to keep assessment or examination papers in a safe and secure location, potentially leading to their misuse.

- Obtaining unauthorised access to examination or assessment materials where authorisation has not been given.
- Failure to make sure that the course content has been sufficiently planned to ensure that learner completing the programme will be suitably prepared for assessment.
- Sharing of passwords for Learn or OneFile logins.

Learner malpractice

The carrying out of any malpractice activity is not permitted. The following is a list of examples of malpractice. It should be noted that there may be other examples of malpractice that may be determined by the Group and its partners.

- Plagiarism by the copying and passing off of others' work as one's own.
- The collaboration on work with others, where that work is then submitted as one's own individually completed work.
- Impersonation of others with the intention of completing work, assessment, examination or test on their behalf.
- The fabrication of results and/or evidence.
- The failure to abide by instructions or advice in relation to assessment rules, mandatory guidance by the awarding organisation or instructions to promote and ensure safety and security.
- The inappropriate use of examination and assessment material.
- The use of materials which are not authorised for examinations and assessments.
- The obtaining or passing of information, where not authorised, within an assessment or examination.
- The alteration of any results documents.
- Cheating to gain an unfair advantage.
- Sharing of passwords that will jeopardise system security.

MALADMINISTRATION

Definition

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) defines maladministration as any activity or practice that results in non-compliance with the regulations set out by an Awarding Body.

Examples of maladministration

The carrying out of any maladministration activity by a member of staff within the group is not permitted. The following is a list of examples of maladministration. It should be noted that there may be other examples of maladministration that may be determined by the Group and its partners.

- Failure to adhere to the regulations regarding the conduct of controlled assessments, coursework, examinations and non-examination assessments.
- Failure to comply with regulations in the conduct of examinations/assessments and/or the handling of examination question papers, scripts, mark sheets, cumulative assessment records, results and certificate claim forms.
- Failure to retain learners' controlled assessments, coursework or non-examination assessments securely after the authentication statements have been signed or the work has been marked.
- Failure to maintain the security of scripts prior to despatch to the awarding body or examiner.
- Failure to ensure that learners' controlled assessment, coursework, non-examination assessment or work to be completed under controlled conditions is adequately monitored.
- Failure to use the correct tasks/assignments for assessments.
- Failure to adequately train invigilators.
- Failure to issue to learners the appropriate notices and warnings including outside all rooms where examinations are held.
- Failure to prevent the introduction of unauthorised material into the examination room or to remind learners that any mobile phones or other unauthorised items found in their possession must be handed to the invigilator prior to the examination starting.
- Failure to properly monitor, grant and record access arrangements.
- Breach of the published arrangements for the release of examination results.
- Inappropriate retention or destruction of certificates.
- Failing to recruit learners with integrity, including the recruitment of learners who have not met the qualification's minimum entry requirements wherever stipulated and/or the recruitment of learners who are unable or otherwise unlikely to complete the qualification.

INVESTIGATION OF SUSPECTED OR KNOWN MALPRACTICE/MALADMINISTRATION

Should there be evidence or suspicion of malpractice taking place, appropriate steps will be taken to deal with this.

Investigation of learner Malpractice

- The appropriate manager will initiate an investigation into the known or suspected malpractice. Dependent on the level of malpractice the learner will face appropriate disciplinary action and sanctions for that and future assessment. Where the malpractice has involved completed examination or assessment for which a claim may have been made, the appropriate member of the Exams or Quality team will contact the relevant awarding organisation.

Investigation of Staff Malpractice

- The appropriate manager will notify the Quality team and relevant Director of Curriculum of the suspected or known malpractice. The area manager in conjunction with a member of the Quality team will investigate and report back to the Director of Curriculum who will then inform Human Resources of relevant findings. Dependent on the severity and actual malpractice, the tutor will either have all assessment decisions monitored during this period, or, be removed from responsibilities pertaining to the assessment of work. Where the malpractice has involved completed examination or assessment for which a claim may have been made, the appropriate member of the examinations, assessment or Quality team will contact the relevant awarding organisation. Malpractice will be dealt with in accordance of the Capability and Staff Disciplinary Policies owned by Human Resources.

- My NHC provides links to copyright and plagiarism information for learners.