Vocational Courses and Coursework Policy

2020-2021

Signature:

Headteacher

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This policy and procedure relates to all the vocational courses offered at West Somerset College (BTEC, OCR Cambridge Nationals and Cambridge Technicals, IMI and City and Guilds qualifications). Courses will be assessed through teacher-marked assignments (in this document, referred to as assessments and/or coursework) and external assessments under exam conditions. Students should be aware of the volume of work that needs to be generated on an on-going basis to complete these qualifications and the importance of getting that work handed in for each assessment by the given deadline.

Aims

Registration

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

Assessment/Coursework

- 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 is open, fair and free from bias and to national standards.
- To ensure that there is accurate and detailed recording of assessment decisions.

Internal verification

- To ensure that internal verification is valid, reliable and covers all assessors and programme activity.
- To ensure there is a Lead Internal verifier for every subject.
- To ensure that the internal verification procedure is open, fair and free from bias.
- To ensure that there is accurate and detailed recording of internal verification decisions.

Certification

- To complete relevant processes in order to claim valid learner certificates within agreed timescales.
- To ensure verification trails are in place to verify certification.

Appeals

- 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.
- To protect the interests of all learners and the integrity of the qualification.
Procedure
Registration

- Register each learner within the awarding body requirements
- Provide a mechanism for programme teams to check the accuracy of learner registrations
- Inform the awarding body of withdrawals, transfers or changes to learner details
- Ensure that individual exam or coursework unit entries are made where necessary
- Newly appointed assessors and Lead IVs will complete the induction programme through the department teams and the QN. They will also be assigned an experienced member assessor/LIV to mentor and support.
- Ensure students that join after the cohort are registered within a timely period.

Assessment/Coursework

- Ensure that learners are provided with assignments that are fit for purpose, to enable them to produce appropriate evidence for assessment.
- Assess learner’s evidence using the published assessment and grading criteria.
- Ensure that assessment decisions are impartial, valid and reliable.
- Develop assessment procedures that will minimise the opportunity for malpractice.
- Maintain accurate and detailed records of assessment decisions.
- Maintain a robust and rigorous internal verification procedure.
- Monitor reports and undertake any remedial action required.
- Share good assessment practice between all vocational programme teams.
- Ensure that assessment methodology, and the role of the assessor, are understood by all relevant teaching staff.
- Provide resources to ensure that assessment can be performed accurately and appropriately.
- Every learner will have units and assignments marked and internally verified according to the schedule for their course.
- Ensure that the students are aware of the assessment requirements and regulations prior to them starting an assessment.
- Ensure that students are granted access arrangements where applicable and where possible.
- The assessor must not provide the students with specific assessment feedback directly related to the achievement of specific assessment criteria.
- The feedback from the assessor must be completed on the appropriate awarding body’s feedback form and within the specified time allocated within the assessment plan.
- The feedback should confirm which assessment criteria have been achieved and what evidence has been provided towards criteria not achieved. The must not be feedback on how to improve.
- Ensure all work is authenticated on the awarding body’s authentication forms.
- If the internal verifier questions the award of grades this must be reviewed and resolved with the assessor before the work is given back to the student.
- Units can be awarded up to a maximum of 3 years following the course or when the specification expires.
- All student work will be secured in a locked cabinet or secure drive (electronic copies).
- Each HOD will liaise with the exams officer to ensure certification is accurate.
- Each Lead IV will meet with exams officer to verify all results.
- Generally, only one submission is allowed for each assignment task. At their discretion, the Lead IV may authorise for a student to resubmit evidence to meet assessment criteria targeted by an assignment. The following conditions must be met;
The students has met the initial deadline set in the assignment (or agreed extension).

- The assessor judges that the students can produce the evidence without further teacher guidance.

In the case of a resubmissions the following information is required on the assessment feedback form:

- Programme Title:
- Unit Name and Number:
- Learner Number:
- Learner Name:
- First submission Grade:
- Resubmission Grade:

- Resubmissions must be completed within 15 school days of the student receiving feedback from the assessment.
- Resubmissions must be authenticated by the student and the assessor.
- Staff malpractice will be dealt with in accordance with the professional code of conduct.

**Internal verification**

- Ensure that all centre assessment instruments (assignment briefs, assessment plans and internal assessment decisions) are verified as fit for purpose.
- All subjects to have one member of staff to register and complete the online standardisation process and assessment in order to become Lead IV.
- The Lead IV will inform the QN if there are concerns over the marking of assignments by a member of staff.
- In instances where the Lead IV is also the assessor, the lead IV must ensure there is an appropriately trained member of staff to verify their assessment judgements.
- Verify an appropriately structured sample of assessor work from all programmes, sites and teams, to ensure centre programmes conform to national standard requirements.
- Verify an appropriately structured sample to include pieces of work from all levels of achievement, including more of the most common grade.
- Plan an annual internal verification schedule, linked to assignment plans.
- Support assessors, who are new to the role, by increasing the verification sample size.
- Define, maintain, and support effective internal verification roles.
- Ensure that identified staff will maintain secure records of all internal verification activity.
- Brief and train staff of the requirements for current internal verification procedures.
- Promote internal verification as a developmental process between staff.
- Provide standardised internal verification documentation.
- Use the outcome of internal verification to enhance future assessment.
External Moderation
- Ensure entries for units requiring external modification are made before applicable deadlines.
- Work with the exams officer to send off any samples
- Liaise with the boards to arrange external visits where necessary.

External Assessments/Exams
- Ensure students are aware that some units will be conducted under exam conditions.
- Exams will be conducted according to the board requirements and JCQ regulations where applicable. See Exam Policy.

Certification
- Ensure that certificate claims are made within board deadlines
- Audit certificate claims made to the awarding body
- Audit the certificates received from the awarding body to ensure accuracy and completeness
- Keep all records safely and securely for three years post certification.

Appeals
Any appeals will be dealt with in accordance with the Internal Appeals Procedure (IAP) document. The following procedure has been put in place for appeals against decisions made by awarding bodies, and for internal assessments made by the School:
- Appeals can only be made against the procedure used in arriving at internal assessment decisions not against the grade or mark allocated
- The parent/carer of the candidate must make the appeal in writing to the examinations officer at least two weeks prior to the last externally assessed paper of the series.
- The internal process will be led by a member of the senior leadership team in conjunction with the Examination Officer. The member of the senior leadership team involved must not have been involved in the original internal assessment procedure
- The investigation will consider whether the procedures laid down by the Awarding Body and the “Code of Practice” were adhered to.
- The investigation will be completed within 10 school days.

The criteria for the internal assessment of work is specified by the awarding body who must moderate the assessment and make the final decision of marks awarded.

The appellant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal.
The appellant is able to appeal against a decision taken by the centre but it must first of all go through the centre’s appeal process.

Responsibilities
Senior Leadership Team
- Accountable for the safe and secure conduct of coursework. Ensure assessments comply with the JCQ guidelines and awarding bodies’ subject specification.
- At the start of the academic year, begin coordinating with HODs to schedule coursework. The school will ensure coursework tasks are spread throughout Years 10-13.
- Map overall resource management requirements for the year. As part of this resolve:
  o clashes/problems over the timing or operation of the coursework.
  o issues arising from the need for the particular facilities (rooms, IT networks, time out of school etc.)
- Ensure that all staff and students have a calendar of events
- Create, publish and update an internal appeals policy for coursework.

**HODs**
- Decide on awarding body and specification for a particular qualification.
- Obtain the coursework task details from the examination board.
- Confirm to the examination office details of all unit codes for coursework and overall certification and provide assessment schedule for the year.
- Manage programme delivery and assessment of the learners, to ensure coverage of all units and grading criteria.
- Advise exams officer of new students/late arrivals needing registration.
- Liaise with exams officer re exam entry requirements including retakes.
- Choose the most appropriate time for the coursework to take place (usually during timetabled time) and inform the relevant member of the senior leadership team of the date(s) as early as possible in the academic year.
- Plan when and how the assessment will take place, taking into account the accommodation and resource required.
- Standardise internally the marking of all teachers involved in assessing an internally assessed component.
- Ensure that individual teachers understand their responsibility with regard to coursework.
- Ensure that individual teachers understand the requirements of the awarding body’s specification and are familiar with the relevant teachers’ notes and any other subject specific instructions.
- Ensure absentees are contacted to confirm arrangements for completing coursework.
- Ensure relevant display materials are removed/covered up in all rooms used for coursework.
- Ensure staff are aware of the relevant level of control permitted (high, medium or low) as this will determine the level of supervision.
- Ensure all assessment material is securely stored in a suitably place at the end of each session.
- Where candidates produce coursework electronically, ensure their work is backed-up regularly and stored securely on the IT system.
- Ensure separate user accounts for exams are used for high control level work. These must have no access to the internet or e-mail and must only be accessible during coursework sessions.
- Ensure that special consideration is applied for, for students on long absence.
- Ensure entries for coursework are made at the appropriate time.
- Quality assure all final submissions checking for incidents of plagiarism or other forms of malpractice.
- Report all cases of suspected malpractice to the relevant Senior Leadership line manager.
- Report all instances of lost work to the examination board.
- Ensure that authentication forms are signed by the teachers and candidates.
- Submit marks through the exam office to the awarding body when required, keeping a record of the marks awarded.
- Submit samples of students work for external moderation in accordance to the awarding body requirements. Precautions are made to ensure that the package in which the work is dispatched is robust and securely fastened.
- Liaise with exam office to arrange external moderation visits.
- Sensitive digital media is encrypted in line with the awarding body guidance.
• Retain candidates’ work securely until the closing date for enquiries about results. In the event that an enquiry is submitted, retain candidates’ work securely until the outcome of the enquiry and any subsequent appeal has been conveyed to the centre.
• Ensure learner details are accurate and that an audit trail of learner assessment and achievement is accessible.

Teaching Staff/Assessors
• Understand and comply with the general guidelines contained in the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting coursework.
• Understand and comply with the awarding body specification for conducting coursework, including any subject-specific instructions, teachers’ notes or additional information on the awarding body’s website.
• Obtain confidential materials/tasks set by awarding bodies in sufficient time to prepare for the assessment(s) and ensure that such materials are stored securely at all times.
• Ask the SENCO for any assistance required for the administration and management of access arrangements.
• Supervise coursework (at the specified level of control). Undertake the tasks required under the regulations, only permitting assistance to students as the specification allows.
• Where the specification permits, students may work with others – e.g. during collection of data. Ensure any descriptions of joint work are in each candidate’s own words.
• Ensure attendance records from assessment sessions are kept.
• Ensure work is handwritten in black ink or word processed, and that printouts, charts and videos are included where appropriate.
• If required, ensure the students include references and produce a bibliography which lists the full details of publications used to research and support their coursework, even where these are not directly referred to.
• Sign any relevant authentication forms on completion of coursework/assessment.
• Mark internally assessed components using the mark schemes provide by the awarding body.
• Ensure a student has the chance to make up time if absent.
• Ensure any need for special consideration goes through the exams officer as soon as possible.
• Carry out assessment to national standards.
• Formally record and confirm the achievement of specific assessment criteria on the appropriate assessment feedback forms.
• Provide appropriate feedback to learners; assure the authenticity of learner work; records and tracks achievement.
• Provide clear achievement feedback to learners. If assessment decisions are questioned, the Assessor is responsible for processing the learner’s appeal within the agreed time.
• Design assessment opportunities which limit the opportunity for malpractice and for checking the validity of the learner’s work.

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)
• Ensure access arrangements have been applied for and advise HODs accordingly.
• Work with teaching staff to ensure requirements for support staff are met.
Exams Officer:
- Ensure timely, accurate and valid registration, transfer, withdrawal and certificate claims for learners.
- Ensure candidates are registered on the course according to relevant deadlines and that any entries for individual coursework units are also made for the relevant exam series.
- Where applicable, enter students’ cash-in codes for the terminal exam series.
- Provide teachers with legal names of students.
- Where confidential materials are directly received by the exams office, to be responsible for receipt, safe storage and safe transmission, whether in CD or hard copy format. Comply with JCQ regulations re distributing material to teachers.
- Liaise with HODs/SLT to ensure the relevant centre declaration forms are submitted to the exam boards.
- Work with HODs to ensure marks are submitted before board deadlines.
- Work with HODs to enable samples to be sent to external moderators or arrange visits.

Internal verifier:
- Verify assessor decisions, and validate assignments.
- Produce an IV schedule as part of the annual assessment plan, and will keep a record of which learner work has been sampled and in which units.
- Record findings, gives assessor feedback, and oversees remedial action.
- Judge whether assessment decisions are valid, fair and unbiased.
- Perform malpractice checks when internally verifying work.

Lead Internal Verifier:
- Agree and sign off assessment and internal verification plans. A member of the programme team who oversees the implementation of an effective internal verification centre system in their subject area.
- Register annually and undertake the necessary standardisation processes. Judge whether assessment decisions are valid, fair and unbiased.
- Perform malpractice checks when internally verifying work.

Quality Nominee:
- Oversee the registration, transfer, withdrawal and certificate claims for learners to ensure that awarding body deadlines are met.
- Ensure that centre internal verification and standardisation processes operate.
- Act as the centre coordinator and main point of contact for vocational programmes.
- Ensure quality assurance reports are monitored and any remedial action is carried out.
- Complete annual declaration or agreement forms.
- Inform boards of any acts of malpractice.
- Judge whether assessment decisions are valid, fair and unbiased.
- Verify assignment briefs in instances where the Lead IV is the course leader.
Head of Centre

- Submit an appeal in writing if the learner remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the centre’s internal appeals procedures.
- Conduct any investigation into allegations of malpractice.