

BTEC Assessment and Internal Verification Policy

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Introduction

Bolder Academy is committed to ensuring that standards of assessment are consistent, transparent and in line with the requirements of our awarding bodies, in this case Pearson.

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

Objectives:

- To assess learner work with integrity by being consistent and transparent in our assessment judgements and processes so that our outcomes are fair, reliable and valid.
- To ensure that assessment standards and specifications are implemented fully, so that no risk is posed to the reputation of the awarding bodies or the qualifications we offer.
- To establish quality control and recording mechanisms for assignments and their assessment through a system of sampling, moderation, internal verification and cross departmental co-ordination as appropriate to the requirements of the programmes we offer.
- To provide learner-centred approaches to assessment, which provide opportunities for the learner to achieve at the required level.

Range and Scope of the Policy:

The range of the policy covers all BTEC courses offered at Bolder Academy but may well apply to other assignment-based courses should they become a part of the curriculum in future.

In order to do this, Bolder Academy will:

- Ensure that learners are provided with assignments that are fit for purpose, to enable them to produce appropriate evidence for assessment.
- Produce a clear and accurate assessment plan at the start of the programme/academic year.
- Provide clear, published dates for handout of assignments and deadlines for Assessments.
- Assess learner's evidence using only the published assessment and grading criteria.
- Ensure that assessment decisions are impartial, valid and reliable
- Not limit or 'cap' learner achievement if work is submitted late
- 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.
- Provide samples for standards verification/external examination as required by the awarding organisation.
- Monitor standards verification/external examination reports and undertake any remedial action required.
- Share good assessment practice between all BTEC programme teams.
- Ensure that BTEC assessment methodology and the role of the assessor are understood by all BTEC staff.
- Provide resources to ensure that assessment can be performed accurately and appropriately.

Planning

Making time for planning is the best way of ensuring everything is in place for robust assessment.

Assessment Plans

The assessment plan is a working document and as such may need to be changed during the year. The use of version numbers will create a clear audit trail if this happens. Robust assessment plans should be developed jointly by the programme team and be verified by the Lead Internal Verifier

As a minimum requirement, the assessment plan should include:

- Names of all Assessors and Internal Verifiers
- Scheduling for assignment hand out and submission
- Deadlines for assessments
- Scheduling for internal verification
- Scheduling of the opportunity for resubmission
- Scheduling of external assessments so that a full programme plan is shown

Suggested areas of focus when planning for assessment are:

- Unit sequencing or integration – including planning of synoptic assessments
- Rules of combination
- Values of units selected appropriate to size of qualification
- Assignments and projects
- Resource planning, such as when to deploy specialist staff
- Timetabling, events, shows and trips
- Schemes of work
- planning assignment deadlines across the programme to ensure a continually balanced workload for learners
- Feedback from learners and from external sources, such as progression providers
- ensuring authenticity of learner work
- Access to external resources

A BTEC qualification is comprised of individual units that cover specific topics. Both a unit-by-unit approach and an integrated approach are valid and appropriate delivery methods. In designing the assessment plan, the splitting of Learning Aims/Learning Objectives across assignments and/or the provision for extra assignments or tasks to meet the Merit or Distinction criteria must be avoided. Tasks are expected to be written to allow the opportunity for the full achievement of Pass, Merit and Distinction criteria within each learning aim.

If deciding to deliver through an integrated approach, it is important to map the assessment of evidence against assessment criteria across units and

maintain accurate records of learner achievement for each unit. It is also important to consider the published guidance in the unit specification to ensure a coherent programme of study. For example, core units often provide a foundation of knowledge for other units and synoptic assessment should be carefully planned so assessment takes place towards the end of the programme.

For programmes where units are successfully integrated, the assessment plan should provide the appropriate assessment criteria for each unit.

Planning Internal Verification

Internal verification is a quality assurance approach used to monitor assessment practices and decisions.

Good internal verification will ensure that:

- Assignment Briefs are fit for purpose
- assessment decisions accurately match learner evidence to the unit assessment criteria and assessment guidance
- Assessors are standardised to enable consistent assessment and grading across the programme.

The internal verification schedule should be established before the programme commences. There is not a requirement that all learners are internally verified during the lifetime of a programme.

Full guidance on internal verification can be found in the BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Verification.

Conflict of interest

Assessment staff may encounter a potential conflict of interest in their work.

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/Services/myBTEC.htm>

Examples of these may include:

- a close relation, spouse or partner within the centre who is either a learner or another member of staff
- a close relation, spouse or partner acting as a Standards Verifier or other external quality assurance role.

Individuals should be forthcoming in disclosing any activity that might represent a conflict of interest. A formal up to date log of potential and actual conflicts of interest should be kept within your centre and be made available upon request for review if required. This should include any actions taken to minimise risks.

Assessment and Grading

The Assessor should decide when the learner is suitably prepared to undertake the assessment. Once learners are working on assignments which will be submitted for assessment, it is essential they work independently to produce and prepare evidence for assessment.

Before commencing an assessment, the Assessor should take care to ensure each learner understands:

- The assessment requirements
- The nature of the evidence they need to produce
- The importance of time management and meeting deadlines, including the consequences for late submission
- The importance of submitting authentic work

Assessing Unit Content

Professional judgement will always be required but the following principles apply to all BTEC programmes:

- It is not a requirement that all the content is assessed unless specifically directed by the assessment criteria and associated assessment guidance in the unit specification
- Assessors are expected to deliver (i.e. 'teach') the unit content fully. You must cover all the elements of content, apart from anything preceded by 'e.g.' which is merely an example of what you may choose to cover.
- A learner is not required to provide evidence for all the unit content but is required to provide sufficient evidence to address the assessment & grading criteria to successfully achieve the unit.

Submission of Evidence

Only one submission is allowed for each assignment. The Assessor is expected to formally record the assessment result and confirm the achievement of specific assessment criteria.

Each learner should submit:

- Evidence towards the targeted assessment criteria
- A signed and dated declaration of authenticity with each assignment which confirms they have produced the evidence themselves. The declaration can be on the assessment record or a separate learner authenticity declaration or an electronic platform or by incorporating a learner declaration into an Assignment Brief front sheet.

The assessor should then:

- Formally record and confirm the achievement of specific assessment criteria
- Complete a confirmation that the evidence they have assessed is authentic and is the learner's own work to the best of their knowledge

Before your learners start an assessment, you should:

- Be confident they are sufficiently prepared to undertake assessment
- Encourage them to aim at "getting it right" on first submission so they are not relying on a repeat submission or retake where applicable. This should help learners develop responsibility for their own achievement and prepare them for the world of work or Higher Education.

Authenticity and Authentication

Assessors should only accept evidence for assessment that is authentic, i.e. that is the learner's own work and that can be judged fully to see whether it meets the assessment criteria. Learners are asked to authenticate the evidence that they provide for assessment by signing a declaration stating that it is their own work when they submit it.

Assessors should ensure that authenticity is considered when setting assignments. For example, ensuring that each learner has a different focus for research could reduce opportunities for copying or collusion. It is

important that all evidence can be validated through verification. When practical and performance evidence is used, it is important to consider how supporting evidence could be captured through the use of videos, recordings, photographs, handouts, task sheets etc.

The authentication of learner evidence is the responsibility of each centre. If through the assessment process it is found that some or all the evidence is not authentic, Assessors need to take appropriate action, including invoking centre malpractice policies as required.

Resubmission of Evidence - Opportunities for resubmission of evidence

Because every assignment contributes towards the final qualification grade, learners may be eligible for one resubmission of evidence for each assignment submitted. Your Lead Internal Verifier can authorise a resubmission which ensures any resubmissions are fairly and consistently implemented for all learners.

When can a Lead Internal Verifier authorise a resubmission?

The Lead Internal Verifier can only authorise a resubmission if all the following conditions are met:

- The learner has met initial deadlines set in the assignment, or has met an agreed deadline extension
- The Assessor judges that the learner will be able to provide improved evidence without further guidance
- The Assessor has authenticated the evidence submitted for assessment and the evidence is accompanied by a signed and dated learner declaration of authenticity

What if a learner does not meet all of these conditions?

If a learner has not met these conditions, the Lead Internal Verifier must not authorise a resubmission. Remember – a resubmission is another chance to undertake the same assignment and all criteria are available

Procedure for resubmission of evidence

If the Lead Internal Verifier does authorise a resubmission, there is a clear, simple procedure which will be applied consistently across all learners and centres.

Forms and Deadlines

If the Lead Internal Verifier does authorise a resubmission, it must be:

- Recorded on the assessment record
- Giving a deadline for resubmission within 15 working days* of the learner receiving** the results of the assessment
- Undertaken by the learner with no further guidance.

* 15 working days must be within term time, in the same academic year as the original submission and must not fall over a holiday period

** Feedback must be received by learners close to the assessment date. It is not permissible for Assessors to retain the feedback until the following term for example, just before a resubmission week or at the end of the year once the learner's overall achievement for the qualification is known.

Standards Verification

Our Standards Verifiers will require you to include evidence of resubmitted work in sampling, including:

- Evidence of Lead Internal Verifier authorisation signed and dated, with the resubmission deadline clearly stated
- The initial assessment record - the resubmitted learner evidence accompanied by a signed and-dated declaration of authenticity by the learner
- The resubmission assessment record, detailing the additional learner evidence submitted and showing any related changes to the assessment decisions - confirmation from the assessor that the resubmitted evidence is authentic and is the learner's own work.

Conditions for retaking a new assignment

If a learner has met all of the conditions listed above in the opportunity for resubmission, but has still not achieved the targeted pass criteria following the resubmission of an assignment, the Lead Internal Verifier may authorise one retake opportunity to meet the required pass criteria. The Lead Internal Verifier must only authorise a retake in exceptional circumstances where they believe it is necessary, appropriate and fair to do so.

- The retake must be a new task or assignment targeted only to the pass criteria which were not achieved in the original assignment.
- The assessor must agree and record a clear deadline before the learner starts a retake.
- The learner and the assessor must sign declarations of authentication as they both did for the previous submissions.
- The assessor cannot award a merit or distinction grade for a retake assignment.
- The learner will not be allowed any further resubmissions or retakes.
- Standards Verifiers will require you to include evidence of any retakes in sampling where applicable.

See Appendix A

Meeting Deadlines

Setting and meeting deadlines for assessment is an essential part of BTEC delivery. Learners should be assessed fairly and consistently and learners should not be advantaged by having additional time to complete assignments.

You should have in place a clear assessment procedure for a learner to formally apply for an extension if they have genuine reasons for not meeting a deadline, such as illness. If an extension is granted, the new deadline should be adhered to and recorded. This should be covered with learners in their induction at the start of the programme,

Please note that once evidence is accepted for assessment, learners are not to be penalised purely for submitting work late, unless this is explicitly included in the Merit or Distinction assessment criteria and/or the associated assessment guidance. Only the assessment criteria for the units can be used for assessment decisions.

If a learner is not able to use an extension opportunity then it may be appropriate to request **special considerations See Policy**. At all stages the **schools Behaviour Policy** is implemented with the sanctions of missing deadlines.

Feedback Stages

Teaching and Learning

During teaching and learning, you are using your best professional judgement about the nature, quantity or level of feedback.

Your feedback could include, for example:

- Identify areas for learner progression, including stretch and challenge.
- Explain clearly how BTEC assessment works and what learners need to do to achieve a Pass, Merit or Distinction.
- Set “dry run” or “mock” tasks and scenarios to help learners understand what level they have reached and prepare for assessment.
- Feedback on how to improve knowledge, skills, understanding, behaviour, approach, grammar etc.

During Assessment

While learners are working on an assessment, you can continue to give general feedback and support, particularly around the development of knowledge, understanding and skills.

Your feedback could include, for example:

- Guidance on how to approach the knowledge and skills requirements.
- Guidance on appropriate behaviour and approach, confirmation of deadlines etc.
- Confirmation of which criteria the assessor is targeting and clarification of what the assignment brief requires.

Following Assessment

On the assessment record, you should give clear feedback on:

The criteria the learner achieved (explaining the assessor’s decisions) - The criteria not achieved (and why) although you should not provide a list of instructions on how to get a higher grade. Your feedback could include, for example:

- Which assessment criteria the learner has achieved and what the learner has done well.

- Which assessment criteria the learner has not achieved and what was missing generically.
- Information or guidance available to the learner they could have drawn on (e.g. class notes; handouts; resources in assignment brief)
- General behaviour and conduct, approach, grammar etc.

Teaching and learning: giving feedback to learners

Teaching and learning – preparing for assessment

As a BTEC teacher you are using your best professional judgement to actively monitor and support progression during teaching and learning, although you must stop short of confirming grades before the assessment is complete.

Teachers providing additional supported learning are already aware of the line between helping a learner achieve their full potential, and doing the work for them, and the framework of rules for BTEC assessment reinforces these principles.

The evidence learners submit for assessment must always be their own work. This means that during teaching and learning phase, learners should develop decision making and personal skills to support their achievement of the assessment criteria.

Predicted grades and on-going progress reporting

Predicted grades are a useful indicator of expected achievement – but its important learners understand that they are just an indicator rather than a confirmation of final achievement.

They do not count as formal assessment nor confirmation of achievement. The assessment rules help to reinforce this by making a clear separation between:

- The feedback given during teaching and learning (which could include predicting grades and on-going progress reporting) and
- Support supervision and feedback during and following assessment.

Once a learner has started to receive results from their assessments, they will have concrete information on how well they are achieving and how that

achievement translates into a grade. This means that BTEC teachers, assessors, internal verifiers and learners can all be clear about how they are achieving and progressing during the programme or course, and this information can also:

- Inform predicted grades
- Help identify and focus on areas for stretch and progression

During assessment: giving feedback to learners

The teacher or tutor must decide when the learner is fully prepared to undertake the assessment.

Once learners are working on assignments which they will submit for assessment, they must work independently to produce and prepare evidence for assessment.

While learners are undertaking an assessment, teachers and tutors can continue to give general feedback and support, particularly around the development of knowledge, understanding and skills.

However, your feedback should not include assessment of the specific assignment evidence as your learners are generating it or confirm the achievement of specific assessment criteria – this happens only when formal assessment takes place. Teaching teams should also supervise learners when they are undertaking assignment work in class – although the work itself must be produced by the learners themselves, either in or outside class.

Resources available to help learners generate evidence.

Preparing for Assessment

Before starting an assessment, the tutor must ensure each learner understands the:

- Assessment requirements
- Nature of the evidence they need to produce
- Importance of time management and meeting deadlines.

Working on an assessment

Once the learner begins work for the assessment, the tutor must not:

- Provide specific assessment feedback on the evidence produced by the learner before it is submitted for assessment
- Confirm achievement of specific assessment criteria until the assessment stage

Resources available to help learners generate evidence

Once learners are working on assignments, they still have access to a range of information to help them generate evidence:

- Knowledge and skills gained during teaching on the programme
- Handouts and learning resources available for the programme
- The unit content, assessment criteria and assessment guidance in the qualification specification T
- The assignment brief, detailing the scenario, specific tasks, evidence and information sources.

Following assessment: giving feedback to learners

Following assessment, the assessor formally records their assessment decisions against individual assessment criteria on the assessment record.

The assessment record provides a formal opportunity for the assessor to give feedback to support learner progression:

The Assessor should:

- Give feedback on which criteria the learner has achieved – and not achieved – giving clear reasons why so the learner can learn and progress.
- Avoid giving direct, specific instructions on how the learner can improve the evidence to achieve a higher grade.

Where learners have achieved the higher grade criteria it is not necessary to give full feedback on the lower criteria achieved by default, e.g. if D3 is achieved there does not need to be detailed feedback on M3 and P3 that flow into this.

During teaching and learning, you are using your best professional judgement about the nature, quantity or level of feedback. The assessment rules for BTEC do not cover formative feedback – only feedback during and following assessment. Remember that a sample of assessment decisions

should be Internally Verified before returning the work and feedback to the learners.

Annotating learner work

We recognise that it is good practice to make annotations on learner work during feedback. This helps the learner, Assessors, Internal Verifiers and Standards Verifiers identify where evidence towards specific assessment criteria can be found. However, the annotations themselves do not constitute confirmation of achievement of specific assessment criteria; they are merely indicators to where the evidence can be found. Marking spelling, punctuation and grammar

It is good practice for Assessors to "mark" spelling and grammar i.e. correct mistakes on learner work and expect the learner to correct them.

Mistakes in spelling and grammar should not influence assessment decisions unless:

- The mistakes are so problematic that they undermine the evidence of learner understanding, or
- Specific assessment criteria require good communication, spelling and grammar and/or correct use of technical language.

If learner work has consistently poor spelling, grammar or language below the standard expected at the level of the qualification, marking should be delayed before the first submission until the learner has resubmitted work considered to be up to standard. This should be within in a timeframe not considered to provide an unfair advantage to the learner.

Learner appeals and malpractice

You should have in place a means for ensuring all learners and staff are aware of the following:

- What constitutes an appeal and what is considered assessment malpractice
- The related processes for instigating an appeal or investigating malpractice
- The possible outcomes that may be reached
- The consequences of both internal and external outcomes
- The process that exists to enable learners to make an appeal with Pearson relating to the external or internally awarded assessment outcomes

Procedures should be known and understood by learners and staff. Malpractice issues can be minimised by ensuring learners/staff are aware of the issues (including: plagiarism, collusion, fabrication of results, falsifying grades, fraudulent certification claims, referencing skills) and promoting a zero tolerance approach.

The appeals process must be understood by learners and staff. It should be transparent and enable formal challenges to assessment grades. A thorough learner induction programme covers this. The learner handbook is also a useful way to ensure the key information about your assessment and appeals policies are communicated.

Assessment tracking and recording

It is necessary to track and record learner achievement throughout your BTEC programme. All assessment should be recorded in a way that assures the following

- Assessment evidence is clearly measured against national standards
- Learner progress can be accurately tracked
- The assessment process can be reliably verified
- There is clear evidence of the safety of certification

Tracking learner progress, recording what each learner has achieved per criteria and what still has to be done on a unit by unit basis, helps to ensure full coverage of the units and provide opportunities for grading. It also helps enable internal verification and to provide samples for Standards Verifiers and other external audits as required.

Up to date, securely stored assessment records help to minimise the risk of assessment malpractice, or potential issues if an assessor leaves during a BTEC programme.

Retention of learner evidence and assessment records

Original learner evidence must be kept current, safe and secure for 12 weeks after learners have been certificated. Please note that the 12 weeks starts once the certificates have actually been received by the centre. Work that has been certificated will not be called for standards verification sampling.

Following learner certification

BTEC documentation should be retained for a minimum of three years

- Assignment briefs,

- Assessment records (feedback sheets)
- The associated internal verification documentation
- Achievement tracking at criteria level.

This will require:

- Storing all assessment records securely and safely relating to both internally and externally set assessments. This may be electronic. It is essential records are securely kept for a Pearson audit if required and in case of learner appeals or certification issues, for example
- Maintaining records of learner achievements that are up to date, regularly reviewed and tracked accurately against national standards having all current learner evidence available for verification purposes. Once learners have received their BTEC certificates, you may return their work to them 12 weeks after the certification date.
- Retaining records of assessment decisions at criterion and unit level for centre and awarding body scrutiny for a minimum of three years following certification.

All assessment records should be made secure against hazards like theft and fire, etc. The records should be of sufficient detail to show exactly how assessment decisions were made (i.e. to assessment criterion level). Data should only be accessible by relevant staff.

Current learner work needs to be made available to Pearson as required. On occasion, the regulator may also request portfolios of learner work and assessment records.

It is a risk to allow learners to keep work long-term while on the programme. Evidence produced by learners still on the programme should be kept at the centre. Electronic archiving is acceptable, providing it is secure and accessible on request.

BTEC Qualification Specification

The specification for each BTEC qualification is the document that programme leaders and teams should use as their first point of reference for all planning and assessment. Specifications are accompanied by important assessment and delivery guidance which provide instructions and advice for each unit in the qualification. All BTEC specifications are freely available on the BTEC Website Forms and templates.

We publish a range of useful forms and templates for you to use in your centre: BTEC Assessment and Verification Tools page. These forms are not mandatory, but we would recommend that you use them to assist and support you throughout the programme.

Appendix A

BTEC Assessment Submission Process (Level 1 – 3 excluding NQF Level 1/2 Firsts)

