



## Learning, Teaching & Assessment Policy

Policy no:	4.1
Version no. & date:	V0.8
Next review due:	Sept 2023
Responsible Committee:	SMT & Assessment Committee & LTA Sub-committee
Approved by & date:	December 2020 (MC)
Linked policies:	2.1 – 2.11 Academic Management Policies and Procedures 4.2 Lesson Observation Policy 4.3 Individual Learning Plan 4.4 Grading Standardisation Policy 4.5 Personal Tutor Code of Practice 4.6 Student Participation and Feedback Policy 4.7 VLE Policy 4.8 Academic Appeals Policy 5.8 Recognition of Prior Learning Policy 7.1 Equality & Diversity Policy 9.5 Disability Policy
External references	UK Quality Code UKSCQA/02 [March 2018] Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) British Council (BC) Pearson (Edexcel) International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), Accreditation Service of International Colleges (ASIC), Office for Students (OfS).
Audience:	Programme Leaders, Tutors, Students

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## 1 Introduction

The following policy provides the information required to understand and implement the College's strategy and procedures on learning, teaching and assessment (LTA). It explains how LTA at the College meets the expectations of all stakeholders, including students, staff and awarding organisations (AOs). It also sets out how the College provides students with opportunities to exceed those expectations. After a description of the College's LTA strategy, there is an overview of the knowledge and skills taught at the College, lesson observations, assessment and examination procedures, internal verification and academic malpractice. This policy should be read as additional to any other instruction, regulation, advice or guidelines on LTA in the UK Quality Code and the College's AOs; the University for the Creative Arts (UCA), Bucks New University (BNU), Pearson (Edexcel) and United Seevic and Palmers (USP).

## 2 Purpose

This policy is needed in order to ensure that the College achieves its mission:

*To be a leader in the field of personalised business education by providing each student with the most supportive learning experience in order to achieve wider societal impact.*

The College recognises that effective teaching and learning together with well designed, transparent and effective assessment and examination arrangements are essential to a successful student learning experience and they are regarded as the reason for the existence of the College. The purpose of this policy, therefore, is to ensure that the College identifies a strategy and procedures which include systematic organisation, careful management, continuous review and planned enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment.

## 3 Terminology

**Awarding Organisations** (AOs) refers to all the organisations the College works with, which award qualifications or validate the awards that the College is able to offer its students. Current AOs include:

- Pearson (Edexcel)
- The University for the Creative Arts (UCA)
- Bucks New University (BNU)
- United Seevic and Palmers College (USP)

**Learning** refers to student learning and to learning on the part of College staff including tutors. The College considers learning to be an active process in which the learner may be a student or any member of staff seeking to improve their knowledge and skills. It is the College view that without their active engagement and participation, learners (students and staff) cannot learn.

**Teaching** applies to all the ways in which the College delivers curriculum to its students and may include a blend of live lessons in physical classrooms or live lessons online using electronic methods of delivery, as well as recorded lessons and webinars.

**Lessons** in physical classrooms are commonly referred to as face-to-face. However, the College considers live interactive lessons in virtual classrooms, with audio and video being fully utilised, to be electronic versions of face-to-face learning and teaching, unlike lessons delivered through pre-recordings such as webinars where no live interaction occurs. The College strategy for learning and teaching is based upon the principle that live interactive lessons, whether in physical classrooms or delivered remotely in virtual classrooms, are the most effective form of learning and teaching. Live interactive lessons can be supplemented with pre-recordings but not replaced by them.

### ***Distance Learning***

According to the Pearson Distance Learning and Assessment Policy, Distance Learning is a mode of delivering education and instruction, often on learners who are not physically present in a traditional setting such as a classroom. It refers to remote courses where less than 50% of the course is delivered in physical classrooms. At Oxford Business College, distance learning refers to courses that are delivered using online learning platforms and conferencing software such Moodle and Zoom. Students can be recruited, enrolled, inducted, taught classes and carry out assessments online. Since March 2020 when it became necessary to move to online learning due to COVID-19, the College has developed remote learning so that is now in able to run its programmes through distance learning as defined above.

**Assessment** is taken to apply to all the ways in which the College appraises a student's knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills with rigour and fairness, and provides supportive feedback to improve student performance. It also refers to the formal process of determining whether a student has met threshold standards or achieved beyond the threshold standards that are 'reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers' (UK Quality Code UKSCQA/02 Expectations for Standards 1&2). This is determined by meeting the qualification requirements of the College and its awarding organisations (AOs).

**Examination** is taken to apply to an invigilated assessment that takes place under timed conditions. Examinations must be conducted at one of the College campuses under supervision of the respective Exams Officer for each programme.

**Tutor** refers to any suitable qualified and experienced teacher or lecturer who plans and delivers lessons to students at the College on any of the College programmes, in physical classrooms or in virtual classrooms online.

**Assessor** refers to any suitably qualified and experienced teacher or lecturer who provides a student with formative or summative assessment feedback and grade. The assessor for a module is usually the tutor who taught the module to the student. In some programmes (UCA) there are two assessors, the tutor and a second marker

**Internal Verifier** refers to a tutor/assessor who has been trained to check that an assignment brief and samples of assessment feedback and grades provided by an assessor are fit for purpose, reliable, consistent, fair, valid, support the learning process and adhere to AO requirements.

**Exams Officer** refers to the academic staff member responsible for the delivery and quality of all assessments and examinations of a programme at a particular campus. The Exams Officer reports to the respective Programme Leader who reports to the Head of Academics.

Learning and teaching **approach** refers to the theoretical assumptions about how to learn and teach.

Learning and teaching **method** refers to an overall systematic process designed for learning or teaching something in line with a particular approach to how it should be learnt and taught.

Learning and teaching **technique** refers to a specific, practical activity or step taken in accordance with a particular method and its corresponding approach to learning and teaching.

**Inclusive** learning and teaching activities are explained in the UK Quality Code UKSCQA/02 [March 2018] as providing all students with parity of quality of learning opportunities, ensuring they are appropriately supported to flourish’.

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** is an inclusive approach to LTA that provides students with equal opportunities to achieve learning outcomes through utilisation of flexible materials and activities that help to remove barriers to learning. UDL is vital for widening access and participation to students for whom higher education would not otherwise be an option, including those who are disabled and those in need of additional educational support.

**Self-efficacy** refers to someone’s belief in their ability to succeed based upon confidence, self-esteem, awareness of their own strengths and limitations and understanding of what they would need to do to overcome their limitations.

**Self-regulated Learning (SRL)** is the process of planning, monitoring performance and then reflecting on the outcome of a given task. Students who are good at SRL, are likely to have well-developed self-efficacy and metacognition; the ability to think about their own thinking and learning processes. Students who are good at SRL and metacognition are likely to be more independent because they are able to develop effective learning strategies that will enable them to overcome challenges and their own limitations.

**Calibration** in education is the extent to which a learner’s judgement about their abilities deviates from their actual abilities. Well calibrated students are those who have an accurate estimation of their actual level of understanding, knowledge, skills and performance, and are, therefore, good at self-regulated learning (SRL). Calibration in education can also apply to how accurately tutors are able to gauge the effectiveness of their own teaching.

## 4 Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy are to ensure that the College’s approach to learning, teaching, and assessment meet the requirements of our AOs, the UK Quality Code and the Framework for Higher Education of UK Degree Awarding Bodies [FHEQ Aug, 2008], whilst also meeting the needs of students in their pursuit of self-improvement, backed up with successful academic and employability outcomes that exceed their own expectations. A variety of delivery methods are adopted for a student-centred approach that encourages independent learning, as well as student engagement with content that is related to real world examples as much as possible.

In terms of assessment and examinations, the policy aims to ensure that the College takes all appropriate measures to ensure that students have opportunities to achieve the intended learning outcomes of their programmes and that assessment across all programmes is fair, robust, valid, reliable, consistent and in line with requirements of the College's AOs. The aim is also to ensure that assessments are aligned to employability criteria that students need in the workplace.

#### **4.1 Objectives of Learning and Teaching**

- To articulate and implement a strategic approach to learning and teaching which ensures equity of high-quality inclusive learning experiences in all of the College's campuses so that students achieve their intended learning outcomes (see UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance: Learning and Teaching, Guiding Principles 1, 3 and 4, p5)
- To emphasise the importance of active engagement, reflection and the development of independent learning skills
- To select and recruit only qualified teaching staff with an appropriate level of competence for teaching and supporting learning (see UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance: Learning and Teaching, Guiding Principles 3 and 4 p7)
- To ensure that teaching and learning is, as far as is appropriate, informed by scholarship
- To encourage reflective practice among teaching staff and students
- To deliver teaching and organise learning resources in such a way as to ensure that every student can attain intended learning outcomes
- To ensure appropriate and effective management and peer support of all members of staff involved in learning and teaching
- To maintain effective and supportive physical and virtual learning environments
- To provide clear and current information to every student about learning opportunities and support available
- to enable regular and planned engagement between students and teaching staff in order to monitor progress and reflect on development needs
- to ensure that teachers always use varied and co-creative teaching methods

#### **4.2 Objectives of Assessments (including examinations)**

- To establish appropriate assessment and examination procedures which ensure that academic threshold standards are met for each programme and that students have an opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level comparable to other UK providers (*UK Quality Code Expectation of Standards 2*)
- To regularly review assessment practices and procedures and to evaluate their effectiveness
- To ensure that assessment arrangements are fair, reasonable, valid, reliable and consistent; and to publicise them appropriately for students
- To ensure that facilities for delivering assessments and examinations are fit for purpose so that they can be conducted safely and securely in order to prevent opportunities for unfair malpractice or academic misconduct such as cheating
- To ensure that assessment and examination materials are stored safely in locked rooms and cabinets if in hard copy and password protected if held electronically
- To promote effective learning by well-designed and varied assessment practices

- To ensure that formative assessment is used whenever appropriate so as to enhance student learning
- To establish and publicise to students clear and fair assessment and grading schemes
- To ensure that internal verification arrangements are effective and rigorous and that roles and responsibilities relating to the management of assessments are well-defined
- To publish and implement clear rules for progression both within and between programmes
- To provide appropriate, timely and supportive feedback, of both a general and a specific nature, to students on their assessed work.
- To provide internally verified feedback to students within three weeks of submission unless otherwise stipulated by an AO.
- To ensure that all staff involved in assessment are competent and have opportunities to develop further assessment skills
- To encourage students to adopt good academic conduct in assessments, including timely submission of assessed work
- To record all assessment decisions accurately, systematically and securely
- To provide appropriate support for those students who may seek recognition of prior learning

## 5 Scope

This policy is important for all programme leaders, tutors, teaching and student support assistants within the College, and more broadly to all staff involved in delivering and managing learning, teaching and assessment (LTA). The policy covers all LTA (including examinations) in all College campuses as follows:

### **OXFORD Head Office**

65 George Street  
Oxford  
OX1 2BQ

### **LONDON Campus**

Windermere House  
Kendal Avenue, Park Royal  
London, W3 OXA

The policy covers all areas that impact directly on the learning experience of College students across all programmes, accredited and unaccredited (e.g. English language), from entry level 3 (Foundation) through to undergraduate Level 4 to 6 and post-graduate Level 7.

The policy addresses the requirements of the College as an effective learning environment for students, as well as the College's AOs including the interaction of the College with their academic regulations. Current programmes and the corresponding AOs include:

<b>Academic Programmes</b>	<b>Awarding Organisations (AOs)</b>
International Foundation in Business, Law and Engineering	Oxford Business College (OBC)
HND Business	Pearson (Edexcel) validated by United Seevic and Palmers (USP)
BA (Hons) in Business Management with Foundation Year	Bucks New University (BNU)
BA (Hons) in Business Management	
BA (Hons) in Business Management (Top-Up)	
BA (Hons) in Business Innovation & Management	University for the Creative Arts (UCA)
BA (Hons) in Business Innovation & Management (Top-Up)	
International MBA	

## 6 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

The College's learning, teaching and assessment (LTA) strategy consist of five elements:

- Student engagement
- Students as individuals
- Reflective teaching
- Variety of assessments
- LTA for employability

The first element of the strategy is student engagement, which is the active participation of students in the enhancement of their own learning and development. As stated in the UK Quality Code, '[e]ffective learning and teaching encourages and enables students to take an active role in their studies'. The College encourages student engagement through a student-centred teaching approach, by creating the conditions needed for students to meet learning objectives through a variety of student-led activities and constructive interactions with tutors and their peers. The second element of the strategy is meeting the learning needs of students as individuals, realised through differentiated teaching, one-to-one tutorials, individual learning

plans, supplementary workshops and academic clinics. The third aspect is supporting and promoting reflective teaching practice, by providing tutors with constructive feedback on lesson observations, staff appraisals with self-assessments, professional development, tutor discussion forums and class-based action research. The fourth element is variety of assessments including written reports, oral presentations, observations and examinations. The fifth element involves the development and assessment of employability skills, in order to ensure that students are able to succeed in the workplace when they complete their studies.

## **6.1 Student Engagement**

The College recognises that students may fail to engage fully with their studies, tutors and other staff at the College as well as their fellow students. This is particularly the case where classes and services are provided remotely using online learning platforms as required during the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, the College takes a student-centred approach by applying the following methods and techniques:

- Promotion of teaching techniques designed to engage all students as much as possible during lessons. These include, but are not restricted to, controlling teacher talking time (TTT); varying student interaction to ensure that students talk to each other as well as the tutor during lessons; giving students tasks that require them to work collaboratively and co-creatively with the tutor as well as their colleagues; setting high expectations that encourage students to achieve and exceed their learning expectations; motivating students by recognising and celebrating their success; making use of all facilities and equipment such as the VLE (Moodle or Blackboard), Zoom video conferencing software, Smart Board, physical and virtual classrooms including break out rooms.
- Conducting tutorials with each student to ensure that they are able to make the most of the opportunities provided by the College and that they are encouraged to engage with all the services the College provides including lessons, assessments and examinations, workshops, academic clinics, seminars, counselling, the student council and its committee meetings, College board meetings and the College social programme.

## **6.2 Students as Individuals**

In line with the UK Quality Code core practice the College aims to 'actively engage students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience'. The College recognises that Individual students have different learning styles, interests, needs, aptitudes preferences and learning strategies. Some students find certain activities, tasks, learning and teaching methods easier than other students. The College believes that identifying and accommodating as many individual differences of students as possible, will enable students to develop as collaborative and independent learners. In order to accommodate the individual differences of students, the College adopts the following approaches:

- Develop student individual learning plans (ILPs) or personal and professional development plans (PDPs), in order to identify and monitor each student's individual aims and objectives, preferences, strengths and areas where additional support may be needed to achieve their goals.
- Using the information from ILPs or PDPs as well as previous lessons, ensure tutors plan and deliver a variety of differentiated learning, teaching and assessment materials,

activities and tasks that accommodate the different needs of their students in meeting learning objectives.

- Ensure that tutors employ a universal design for learning (UDL) approach rather than one-size-fits-all. This is accomplished by tutors offering students a flexible variety of inclusive learning and teaching materials and methods that will remove barriers to learning and provide all students with equal opportunities to learn and achieve.
- Incorporate differentiated learning into lesson planning and delivery so students can independently build upon their strengths, whilst others are can develop in the areas where they need additional support. This approach ensures that students are stretched with challenging and comprehensible input and learning beyond their current level, but not beyond their ability to cope.

### **6.3 Reflective teaching**

Ensuring effective quality of learning, teaching and assessment requires a continuous process of tutor self-reflection and evaluation. As stated in the UK Quality Code: 'Effective learning and teaching is informed through reflective practice and providers enable staff to engage in relevant, timely and appropriate professional development that supports students' learning and high-quality teaching'. The following will provide regular opportunities for teachers to reflect on their teaching practice individually and collaboratively:

- Lesson observations are conducted by senior academic staff and detailed feedback is provided to tutors on the following five areas, which the College considers crucial to the effective execution of its LTA strategy:
  - Evidence of effective planning
  - Evidence of independent learning
  - Engagement and participation by students
  - Effective teaching of subject knowledge
  - Effective teaching of higher-level thinking skills
- Staff appraisals consider the outcomes of lesson observation reports and the implementation of an agreed development plan based upon recommendations from the lesson observation report.
- Continuous professional development workshops and collaborative tutor discussion forums based around teachers own reflections on learning, teaching and assessments, as well as themes that arise from lesson observations.
- Tutors encouraged to take part in Action Research with their students in order to identify the pedagogical implications of different theories, and to base the effectiveness of their own tailored approaches to learning and teaching upon empirical evidence they have gathered and analysed reflectively themselves.

### **6.4 Variety of LTA**

The College adopts a universal design for learning (UDL) approach to learning and teaching in order to accommodate the individual differences of students and ensure that they have equal opportunities to learn and achieve. The following are some of the LTA methods employed at the College in order to ensure that all students have opportunities to engage as active learners:

- Different methods of learning and teaching at the College include lectures, discussions, use of visual aids, websites and online resources, handouts of readings, exercises and worksheets, workshops, pair and group work, presentations, seminars and one-to-one sessions with the tutor. Inductive and deductive learning and teaching, guided discovery, research-based learning, inquiry-based learning, task-based or project-based learning, case studies, QR codes, Jigsaws, dictogloss, flipped classroom, process-based writing and listening.
- Different methods of assessment at the College include written examinations, written coursework (reports, essays, plans, proposals and research projects), power-point slides or posters with oral presentations, observations of practical tasks either simulations or real-life work-based activities.

## **6.5 LTA for Employability**

The College recognises that students need to develop employability knowledge and skills that will enable them to succeed in the workplace. Therefore, the learning, teaching and assessment of employability knowledge and skills form an important aspect of the College LTA and include the following:

- The development of knowledge and skills required by employers
- Developing assignment briefs based upon live projects that are of actual use to real businesses
- Developing a network of employers in order to potentially provide students with real business projects to work on which may also lead to future employment opportunities

## **6.6 LTA through Distance Learning**

The College strategy for learning teaching and assessment remains the same regardless of whether it is delivered in physical classrooms or using online learning platforms. In order to ensure the College LTA strategy is implemented through distance learning the College has taken the following steps:

- Each tutor and student support staff are provided with their own College email address and Zoom account for video conferencing.
- Students are provided with their own College email address, VLE login details and are sent regular invitations to join live schedule lessons on Zoom.
- Full Guided Learning Hours (GLH) that are recommended by AOs are provided whether they are taught remotely or in physical classrooms
- The College has its own database system for secure storage and monitoring of student documentation by admissions and academic staff
- A comprehensive academic English test conducted fully online using Zoom for interview, writing test and reading comprehension test to ensure that all students meet course entry requirements
- Use of Microsoft Teams for some further interactive features including the recording of lessons
- Webinars by tutors to supplement live interactive online teaching

- Full use of Virtual Learning Environments (Moodle and Blackboard) for course content and submission of student assignments including written reports, power point slides (PPT).
- Assessments are designed to ensure they can be submitted online, marked and feedback given electronically.
- Use of Turnitin software on the College VLE for monitoring plagiarism
- Student marked assessments are downloaded from the VLE and stored securely in a shared drive for access by key staff
- Use of Zoom for video recording oral assessments online
- Use of Zoom for staff meetings and workshops
- Full training is provided for tutors on use of Zoom, the College VLE and techniques for effective online teaching and learning such as the use of break out rooms, share screens and other interactive features
- Regular lesson observations during lessons on Zoom
- Additional support staff regularly monitor student attendance and engagement during online lessons, carry out risk assessments on individual students with tutorials and development of individual learning plans online.
- Student surveys on the impact of online learning including Zoom polls and qualitative interviews are regularly conducted to ensure students' needs are met and to promote the enhancement of learning and teaching.
- Online social programme and events are organised regularly for students

## 7 Knowledge and Skills

The College recognises its responsibility for teaching students the requisite subject knowledge and skills they need in order to meet the expectations of AOs and employers, as well as providing students with opportunities to achieve beyond those expectation. Academic programme content for LTA include, but are not restricted to, the following knowledge and skills.

### 7.1 Subject knowledge

Business students will be able to demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding of business organisations and enterprises, the internal and external environments in which they operate and how they are managed and led. In particular, students gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

- ***Businesses and the Business Environment:*** different types of organisation, their legal status, organisational structure and an analysis of internal and external factors that affect their achievement of organisational objectives.
- ***Entrepreneurship:*** the establishment of different enterprises and the traits and characteristics of the entrepreneur including creativity, innovation, leadership and management
- ***Business planning and strategy:*** the development of appropriate strategies and plans, positioning, compliance with national and international regulatory environments, quality assurance and high performance working within a changing environment
- ***Operations:*** the management of operations and resources to meet organisational objectives effectively and efficiently in order to maximise value and sustain competitive advantage

- **People:** recruitment, motivation, retention, talent management and development of staff
- **Accounting and Finance:** understanding the purpose, management, methods, tools and sources of accounting and finance for meeting organisational objectives, monitoring, budgeting, forecasting, , feasibility studies, risk assessments and strategic planning
- **Customers:** understanding what customers expect, segmentation, targeting and customer relationship management (CRM)
- **Markets and marketing:** the development and operation of national and international markets and marketing of resources, goods and services
- **Digital technology:** understanding and using digital technologies for business development and management including for social media, databases, CRM and E-commerce software and hardware
- **Ethical issues:** organisational culture and values, business practices and behaviour, sustainability, corporate social responsibility, diversity and equal opportunities, public relations and risk management
- **Business Research:** business-related research question and objectives, appropriate methodology, secondary and primary research, analysis of findings and proposing recommendations

## 7.2 Skills development

Students need to develop transferrable skills that will help them to succeed academically and in the workplace. Skills include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- Oral and written communication and academic literacy (e.g. Harvard Referencing)
- Digital technology and IT skills including use of hardware and software for writing, creative presentations, data gathering and analysis, accounting and finance
- Personal and professional development planning
- Self-motivation, time-management, behaviour management, integrity and work ethic
- Self-efficacy (self-belief), self-regulated learning (SRL), self-awareness (calibration)
- Empathy, openness and sensitivity to issues of equality and diversity
- Critical thinking, analysis, evaluation, synthesis, self-reflection and making judgements
- Practical application of theory and ability to view issues from multiple perspectives
- Problem solving and decision making based on well supported reasoning
- Strategic and operational management and planning
- Leadership, teamwork, people and project management skills, negotiation and persuasion
- Research skills for business and management projects and proposals

## 8 Lesson Observations

Tutors carry out peer observations of their colleagues at the College twice per annum, and the College's senior academic staff carry out formal lesson observations for all teachers a minimum of twice per annum. New tutors are normally observed within the first month of starting teaching at the College.

Before carrying out lesson observations tutors are required to provide a scheme of work, module booklet with assignment brief if relevant and lesson plan using the College's lesson plan template.

Formal lesson observations normally last for 45 minutes and the observer looks for the following evidence:

**8.1 What evidence is there of effective planning?**

- Staged and detailed plan
- Class profile, pen portrait
- Skills audit, initial assessments
- Scheme of work aligned with programme specifications
- Learning objectives integrated and aligned to learning outcomes and assessment criteria

**8.2 What evidence is there of independent learning?**

- Students challenged
- Student centred approach used
- Students able to work unassisted
- Students developing and demonstrating higher level thinking skills
- Students asking good questions to assist learning

**8.3 Is there effective engagement and participation by students?**

- Students are engaged
- Students are given equal opportunities
- The lecturer has made the subject interesting
- Teaching methods help to facilitate engagement
- Participation supports achievement of intended learning outcomes

**8.4 How effective is the teaching of subject knowledge?**

- The lecturer is confident about the subject
- The lecturer can answer questions on the topic
- The lecturer provides reliable, up to date information
- Relevant examples are used to explain different aspects of the topic
- There has been prior learning beyond the scope of the learning objectives

**8.5 How effective is the teaching of higher-level thinking skills?**

- Students developing the ability to critically evaluate
- Students developing the ability to apply theory in practice
- Students developing the ability to make effective judgements
- Students developing the ability to analyse and synthesise information
- Students developing employability skills and self-reflection on performance

After the observation, tutors receive feedback, grades on each of the areas above, an overall grade and an action plan with recommendations. If a lesson fails to achieve a good, very good or outstanding grade, the tutor will be observed again within six weeks. Tutors are provided with an opportunity to appeal against the observer's feedback and grade awarded.

The College has a separate Lesson Observation Policy containing further details including templates for lesson planning, feedback form to tutors and tutor's feedback form to the observer.

## 9 Assessment Procedures

Assessment and examinations apply to all the ways in which the College appraises a student's knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills with rigour, reliability, consistency, fairness and validity, and provides supportive feedback to help students improve performance in future. It also refers to the formal process of determining whether a student has met threshold standards or achieved beyond the threshold standards that are required by AOs and are 'reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers' (UK Quality Code UKSCQA/02 Expectations for Standards 1&2).

### 9.1 Assessment Aims

- To ensure quality, reliability, consistency, fairness and validity of assignment briefs and any other assessment materials used including examinations.
- To communicate assessment processes and ensure they are embraced by all staff and students who are involved in the College's academic programmes of study
- To adhere to all the requirements of AOs with regard to assessments
- To monitor assessment processes as part of the monitoring and quality assurance process

### 9.2 Approach to Assessment

The assessment procedures relating to specific programmes will be made available to all students prior to the commencement of their course and will be reinforced throughout their programme of study. Students are given information and guidance on assessments at key points; inductions, on the College VLE, tutorials and during their lessons. Students must follow the assessment guidelines given to them for their particular programme of study and which are posted on noticeboards in their classroom(s) and on the College VLE.

Guidance to students must ensure they understand the reason for assessment and how their learning and teaching at the College aligns with assessment objectives laid down by the relevant AO. Guidance ensures students understand how they can use assessment and feedback to their advantage. It also ensures that students understand how to appeal against assessment decisions.

Assignment briefs, where permitted by validating partners, will be based on scenarios allowing students as much choice as possible in the selection of organisational context. The College will work as closely as possible with industry such as local businesses, in order to develop briefs based upon live projects that are of actual use to the businesses the student is basing their assignment upon.

Assessment opportunities will comprise the following elements:

- Assessment planning including assignment handout, formative and summative assessments, submissions, referrals and resubmission deadlines
- Agreed assessment procedures amongst tutors/assessor and internal verifiers
- Interesting, challenging and realistic assessments
- The inclusion of common/basic skills as appropriate

- Internal verification of assignment briefs
- Interim verification and standardisation meetings for assessment marks and feedback
- Intelligence led and risk-based internal verification sampling
- Comprehensive feedback mechanisms with timely turnaround (three weeks)
- Clear and accurate recording of grades
- Assessment Board minutes of meetings
- Internal verification report by a trained Internal Verifier (IV) with supporting comments for the assessor on their assessment feedback and grades
- Formal written feedback to students on the outcome of assessments after verification
- Feedback from students on the assessment process

The academic team aim to promote understanding of the use of assessment and best practice through group meetings including termly meetings of the Assessment Board and Academic Board. Meetings will address topics ranging from the design of tasks, minimising opportunities for plagiarism, accommodating differences between students with principles of UDL, to sharing new approaches to formative and summative assessment.

### **9.3 Formative Assessment**

Formative assessment is provided for each module around the middle of term, in order to help students to understand what is expected of them and improve the standard of their work before submitting their final assignment for summative assessment. Students are given an opportunity through formative assessments to calibrate and self-regulate themselves by reflecting critically upon the level and quality of their academic work and being able measure their own progress and development.

### **9.4 Summative Assessment**

Summative assessment provides a formal indication of how well a student has managed to meet assessment criteria and achieve the learning outcomes of the unit. It can be given for coursework such as written reports and presentations, time-constrained examinations or a mixture of both.

Summative assessment for HNC/D programmes is usually conducted at the end of each term when an assignment for each unit that was studied during the term has been submitted. The HNC/D summative assessment feedback and grades are recorded formally at the College Assessment Board meeting, which takes place at the end of each term. There is a final Exam Board meeting that takes place with the validating partner (USP) when a cohort of students complete an academic year and are ready to either progress from HNC L4 to HND L5 or to graduate with HND L5.

Summative assessments for UCA and BNU programmes are also conducted at the end of each term but there is no Assessment Board meeting. The internal verification of assessments and Exam Board meeting is conducted by UCA and BNU for their respective programmes at the end of the year.

### **9.5 Reasonable Adjustments**

The College applies the principles of universal design for learning (UDL) as much as possible in order to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment for disabled students or those requiring additional educational support. The College will make reasonable adjustments where possible to the design of assessment materials and the assessment procedures in order to accommodate students with disabilities and in need of additional support.

## **9.6 Work-based Assessments**

Where possible the College aims to liaise with employers so that students can carry out work-based formative and summative assessments in the workplace during work experience. Employers will be asked to make assessment decisions and provide witness statements indicating how well students have performed in the workplace in terms of meeting relevant learning and employability objectives.

## **9.7 Assessment Process**

The Programme Leader or Module Leader shall have management responsibility for all assessment matters relating to a particular module. There will also be a Tutor, Assessor and an Internal Verifier (IV) for each module and an overall Lead IV for the Programme. Generally, the Tutor will be the Assessor. However, for some programmes (UCA) there are two markers in addition to the internal verifier. The first marker is the Tutor/Assessor and the second marker is usually the Programme Leader. The IV on UCA and BNU programmes, like the External Examiner (EE), is appointed by UCA or BNU respectively.

The IV or second marker shall normally resolve disagreements between the Tutor/Assessor on marks/grades by discussion and reach a consensus, but not an average. Where consensus is not reached, another appropriate view (e.g. the Lead IV) shall be sought by the Programme Leader and a majority position reached. All marks/grades are provisional pending the approval of the Assessment Board and may also be subject to ratification by the Pearson (Edexcel) or the AOs Exam Boards (UCA and BNU).

The College holds termly Assessment Board meetings in line with the requirements of all AOs in order to approve of grades, student progress, referrals, deferrals, withdrawals and extenuating circumstances. The Exams Officer must ensure that marks/grades are submitted to the Head of Academics three working days before the Assessment Board meeting is scheduled to take place.

## **9.8 What Students Can Expect**

All students will be entitled to the following:

- Advice and guidance on assessment given by tutors/assessors through timely feedback
- Access to assessment policies and procedures as part of their induction process
- An explanation of the internal verification process
- A copy of the Academic Appeals Procedure which is given to all students as part of the induction process
- A copy of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) procedures

- Written and, where appropriate, oral feedback will be given to students within three weeks of submission of their work by the approved deadline

## **9.9 Marking Schemes**

Assessment of student work is based upon marking schemes which provide indicative characteristics of grades. The College will adhere to the guidelines from AOs and make use of their approved marking schemes when assessing student assignments.

The module booklets (HND) and assignment briefs (HND, UCA, BNU, OBC) will include the AO's marking schemes if available. If they are not available, the College will create appropriate marking schemes with weightings to show how each part of the assessment is assessed and graded, reliably, consistently fairly and validly.

## **9.10 Extenuating Circumstances**

Students who are unable to submit their work by the deadline for good reasons such as illness or bereavement, may apply for an extension with extenuating circumstances before the deadline arrives. The Academic Board will consider all requests and grant an extension if there are genuine extenuating circumstances that prevented the student from being able to meet the deadline. In this case there will be an agreed extended deadline for the student to submit their work without penalty.

If a student misses the deadline without having extenuating circumstances, they will be given a final opportunity to submit the work on the resubmission deadline. The resubmission deadline is also for students who have submitted their work by the deadline but failed to pass. All work that is submitted on the resubmission deadline will be capped at a pass.

## **9.11 Retrieval of Failure**

Students who neither pass nor submit their first assessment or reassessment may be given one opportunity to retake the module so they can complete and pass the course. A student in this situation may need to re-enroll to retake the module and there may be a tuition fee to pay. A student who has passed a unit will not be able to re-sit an exam or resubmit the assignment to try and get a higher grade.

## **9.12 Feedback**

Students will normally be provided with written assessment feedback (internal assessment) within three weeks of the date of submission. If students miss the deadline to submit their work, there may be a delay in providing assessment feedback.

Formative feedback will be provided to students during the learning process and must inform students constructively on how to improve their performance in time to affect their final mark (summative assessment).

Summative feedback on final assessments including examinations (if the examination is internal) will aim to provide constructive comments and guidance in relation to the extent to which specified learning outcomes have been achieved and ways in which performance could have been improved. All marks/grades for summative assessments are conditional on approval by the relevant Assessment Board and AO Exam Board.



### 9.13 Student Obligations Regarding Assessment

It shall be the responsibility of students to familiarise themselves with the assessment regulations and with the examination and coursework submission timetables to ascertain when they need to submit assignments for assessment.

It shall be the responsibility of students to submit work for assessment by the specified deadlines and to attend examinations on time. Students are required to confirm that all work submitted for assessment is their own. For undergraduate level programmes, the recommended word limit of the assignments is normally about 2500 but this is subject to external AO assessment regulations.

It shall be the responsibility of students who believe they have valid reasons for absence from an examination or for non-submission of an item of assessed work to familiarise themselves with the Extenuating Circumstances procedures for making a claim and the circumstances in which they are allowed to do so.

It shall be the responsibility of students who believe they have grounds for requesting reviews of decisions to submit a request to the Head of Academics in accordance with the College's Assessment Appeals procedure. This must state the student's intention to appeal and to set out the putative grounds for that appeal.

Students are also expected to:

- Follow guidelines on Harvard Referencing conventions
- Maintain good academic conduct, avoiding collusion and plagiarism as noted in the Student Handbook, Student Induction and Academic Misconduct Policy
- Actively engage with formal and informal assessment feedback
- Meet or go beyond the assessment criteria for a pass set out in the grading specifications.
- Strive where possible to achieve the highest possible grade they can

### 9.14 HNC/D Assessments

- All BTEC HNC/D units are individually graded as 'pass', 'merit', 'distinction' or 'refer'. The College is required to assess learners' evidence against published learning outcomes and assessment criteria
- All units have a standard format which is designed to provide clear guidance on the requirements of the unit for learners
- Each unit contains statements of the evidence that each learner should produce in order to receive a pass. Learners must meet all assessment criteria in order to pass the unit.
- Students must pass every learning outcome in a module in order to pass the module.
- Students must submit 8 HNC units (120 credits) and pass 7 (105 credits) to pass HNC
- Students can progress to HND after passing 6 HNC units (90 credits)
- Students must pass HNC, submit 7 HND units (120 credits) and pass 6 (105 credits) to pass HND.
- Students must pass Unit 11 *Research Project* (30 credits), in order to pass HND

- The overall qualification grade for the HND will be calculated on student performance in Level 5 units only.

Grades are calculated according to a system that award points per credit as follows:

Grade	Points per credit	Point Boundaries
Pass	4	420 – 599
Merit	6	600 – 839
Distinction	8	840 +

*e.g. for a Pass in Unit 11 Research Project (30 credits) a student would receive  $4 \times 30 = 120$  Points for a Merit the student would receive  $6 \times 30 = 180$  Points and for a Distinction  $8 \times 30 = 240$  Points*

- Decisions regarding the interim HNC award, progression of students from HNC to HND and approval for the final HND award will be made by the USP-OBC partnership Exam Board at the end of the third term when all the modules have been submitted, assessed and internally verified.

### 9.15 UCA (top-up) Assessments

- Students must pass all six units (Pass is 40%) in order to pass the top-up degree
- Students must attain a first-class result (70% plus) in a minimum of three units in order to attain an overall first-class degree
- Students must attain an upper second-class result (60% – 69%) in a minimum of three units and pass the other three units in order to attain an overall upper second-class degree (2.1)
- Students must attain a lower second-class result (50% – 59%) in a minimum of three units and pass the other three units in order to attain an overall upper second-class degree (2.2)
- Students must submit two assignments per term and will receive provisional internal feedback three weeks after submission.
- Final results will be provided after the UCA Exam Board meets at the end of the year.

### 9.16 Safe Custody of Assessment Materials

The Head of Exams reports to the Head of Academics and has overall responsibility for the secure transportation and storage of assessment and examination materials in all College campuses. There is an Exams Officer in each campus who reports to the Head of Exams.

## 10 Examination Procedures

The College currently provides examinations for its own International Foundation programme. These examination procedures are designed to be used as a general guide for any examinations that the College may deliver in future.

### 10.1 Examination Responsibilities

The Exams Officer is responsible for:

- Managing the administration of all exams at the campus they are appointed to

- Advising the tutors and other relevant support staff about the exam timetables and application procedures as set by the various AOs
- Administration of all examinations, including liaison with AOs, ensuring that all exams are conducted in accordance with deadlines and regulations
- Production and distribution to staff and candidates of a calendar/schedule for all exams
- Remaining on-site at all times when exams are taking place
- Liaising with the Programme Leader, reporting to the Head of Exams and the Head of Academics
- Appointing, instructing and guiding Invigilators for all exams at the selected campus

The Invigilators are responsible for:

- Reporting to the Exams Officer at their selected campus
- Collecting and checking exam papers and other exam material from the Exams Officer before the start of each exam
- Maintaining the integrity of the exam
- Distributing exam papers within the exam room in accordance with the seating plan
- Completing the exam register
- Recording the details of each exam in the exam logbook including full reports on any exceptional circumstances or incidents of malpractice
- Collecting all exam papers and scripts in the correct order at the end of each exam and returning them safely to the Exams Officer
- Upholding the rules and guidance for Invigilators as outlined by the Exams Officer

Candidates are responsible for:

- Checking their own exam timetables and attending all scheduled exams on time
- Informing the Exams Officer if they wish to be withdrawn from a particular exam
- Understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration, authenticating internally produced work as their own

## 10.2 Campus Locations

Examinations are conducted at one of the following College campuses:

OXFORD Head Office	LONDON Campus
65 George Street	Windermere House
Oxford	Kendal Avenue, Park Royal
OX1 2BQ	London, W3 OXA

The Exams Officer is responsible for ensuring that all candidates attend the correct campus and that the rooms for exams are appropriately prepared as follows:

- Suitable arrangements for heating, lighting, ventilation and exclusion of unwanted noise.
- No visible material which might be helpful to candidates displayed in the exam room
- Each candidate can see an accurate clock in the exam room

- All relevant exam information including any AO requirements and the start and end times of the examination adequately displayed for all candidates to see
- The seats are arranged so that they are a minimum distance of 1.25 m (centre-centre) apart, all candidates face the same direction and are not able to see each other's work even by accident.
- Each candidate should have their own suitably sized desk and chair and must sit in a prearranged order
- A map of the room with each candidate's position should be recorded
- The same rules above apply to candidates who may be in a different room due to a disability or additional support needs.

### **10.3 Safe Custody of Examination Materials**

When examination materials arrive, they must be checked carefully to ensure:

- There are no discrepancies between what is required and what is received
- There is no damage to the materials rendering them unfit for use
- There is no evidence of a breach of security

### **10.4 Examinations Security**

When any examinations are delivered to the centre the Reception staff at each campus are responsible for ensuring that they are handed to the Exams Officer (EO) as soon as possible. The Reception staff must hold onto the delivery until the EO collects them and signs for them.

There must be an allocated exam storeroom with storage cabinets at the campus. If the storeroom has windows and is on the ground floor, effective security bars (e.g. Metal bars) should be fitted. The door itself needs to be very solid with strong hinges and a key. Examination papers must be locked up in a strong, fireproof and non-portable metal cabinet in the exam storeroom. The following members of staff are authorised to have access to the Exam Storeroom:

- Head of Academics
- Programme Leader
- Head of Exams
- Exams officer

No other stakeholder is permitted to enter the storeroom unsupervised. If security is breached, or if there is a fire, robbery, damage or disclosure of exam contents that has not been authorised, the Exams Officer must be informed.

The stored examination papers cannot be opened any sooner than four hours before the start of the exam unless otherwise instructed. Once opened, the examination papers should be carefully secured and should not be allowed to leave the premises.

### **10.5 Invigilation Arrangements**

The Exams Officer must ensure that all the Invigilators have DBS, appropriate qualifications, experience and training to invigilate. The Invigilator is responsible for remaining in the exam room and the making sure the candidates do not breach any rules during the examination. The Invigilator cannot be a relative of any of the candidates.

The Exams Officer will provide Invigilators with training prior to the examination. Invigilators are not permitted to carry out activities during the examination and Invigilators cannot talk about anything to each other. They may only talk to the Invigilator about information required to complete the examination correctly. Invigilation must meet the following requirements:

- For up to 30 candidates there must be at least one Invigilator
- Invigilators can take breaks if another one replaces them
- If an Invigilator is alone, they must have quick access to support from other relevant staff if needed including the Exams Officer.
- The Invigilator must be able to see every candidate clearly when they are taking the exam
- Invigilators must know these guidelines and should read out the key rules to candidates before the exam begins
- The Invigilator must take a register before the exam starts and must check the identities of each candidate asking for proof of ID if in any doubt
- The Invigilator must try to deal with problems that may arise during the examination
- Exam question papers should be handed to the Exams Officer and taken to the exam storeroom and locked away after the exam has ended.

Invigilators and the Exam Officer may need to use their discretion if a situation arises that could not have been predicted during the exam. The main guiding principle should be that any decision taken by the Invigilator should ensure that candidates have not been placed at a disadvantage and should be recorded in the exam room logbook.

Invigilators must be in the examination room at least 30 minutes before the exam starts to make sure that the room is prepared before the candidates arrive. Invigilators must be vigilant. They should not just sit down the whole time but walk around the room once in a while as long as they do not disturb the students. As they walk around, they should examine what students have on their desks. Invigilators must ensure that all examination question and answer papers are collected at the end of the exam and passed to the Exams Officer to be stored in the exam storeroom.

## **10.6 Examination Conduct**

- Candidates must follow the instructions they receive from the Invigilator
- Candidates should show the Invigilator their proof of identity upon request.
- If a candidate needs to ask the Invigilator something e.g. to use the bathroom, they should raise their hand.
- The Exams Officer should be told if there is any doubt about a candidate's identity.
- Candidates can enter the exam no more than 15 minutes before the exam starts.
- Candidates who have arrived one hour late will be allowed to sit the exam and the Invigilator will need to record their time of arrival.
- Candidates who arrive later than one hour late will not be able to sit the exam.

- Candidates should not leave the room before the exam ends, unless they have permission from the Invigilator
- Candidates should remain silent throughout the exam. If a candidate talks to another candidate, they may be disqualified.
- Candidates may not eat or drink anything other than water during the exam unless for medical reasons
- Any items that a candidate has with them such as a bag, books, phone or any other electronic device must be left in a designated place in the room until the candidate finishes the exam and leaves.
- The College will not tolerate any form of cheating and candidates who are caught cheating will be disqualified and reported to the Awarding Organisation(s).

### **10.7 Academic Misconduct**

Candidates, Invigilators and the Exams Officer should familiarise themselves with the College's Academic Misconduct Policy. Any candidate found to have committed malpractice by the Invigilator must be reported to the Exams Officer, who can take the decision to disqualify and expel a candidate from the room, especially if they are causing disruption affecting other students. All candidates who have been disqualified by the Exams Officer must be referred to the Head of Academics together with a report and all evidence such as witness statements. Please see the section on Academic Misconduct (13) below and the College's full Academic Misconduct Policy for further details.

### **10.8 Finishing Exams**

- Candidates will be warned when it 5 minutes before the exam ends
- Candidates who arrive late may be allowed extra time at the end to make up the lost time as long as they started the exam within 1 hour of the exam starting.
- The Invigilator must ensure that the candidates have completed any cover pages to the examination papers when they hand them in
- When all scripts have been collected, the candidate must leave the exam room
- The Invigilator should organise all the exam papers at the end in the order of the attendance register then hand them with the attendance register, room map and any logbook notes about exceptional circumstances or misconduct if relevant to the Exams Officer.

### **10.9 Administration**

The Exams Officer is responsible for ensuring:

- All the examination papers are correctly ordered and labelled
- The attendance register is completed accurately
- Examination papers are sealed in envelopes if they need to be sent to examiners for marking
- Examination papers are sent to markers/assessors no longer than one day after the exam was taken
- Examination papers are locked up in the storeroom if left overnight
- Seating plans, registers, room maps and logbook exam details are also stored until the results have been received

### **10.10 Disability & Special Considerations**

According to the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equalities Act, the College is legally required to ensure that there are reasonable arrangements in place to provide access and special considerations for candidates with disabilities or additional support needs who wish to take exams.

### **10.11 Access Arrangements**

Upon disclosure a student with additional support needs or disabilities will be referred to the College Counsellor. The College Counsellor will inform Programme Leaders which candidates require disability or additional support arrangements in order to study and take exams. Programme Leaders will pass this information to the Exams Officer, who will take reasonable steps to ensure that candidates with additional support needs and disabilities will be able to take the exams. If required, the Exams Officer will submit completed access arrangement applications to the AO.

The Exams Officer needs to ensure that rooms and equipment provide reasonable access to candidates with additional support needs or disabilities. In some cases, a candidate may be provided with a separate room in which to take the exam and the invigilation of such candidates will be arranged by the Exams Officer.

### **10.12 Examination Materials and Equipment**

Apart from pens or pencils, any materials and equipment needed to take an exam will be provided by the College such as paper, computer or calculator.

Any materials or equipment not needed by candidates for the exam must be left outside the exam room or handed over to the Invigilator to hold at the front desk of the exam room until the candidate completes the exam and leaves.

### **10.13 Online Examination**

In response to the COVID-19 health crisis, the College may deliver and invigilate some of its Foundation examinations online e.g. Core Maths 1 & 2. In such cases there must be one Invigilator for every candidate. The following rules and guidelines will apply:

- The examination will be invigilated online via Zoom
- The Invigilator will arrange a Zoom meeting 10 minutes before the start of the exam
- The student will show the Invigilator a passport with name and photograph so that the Invigilator can check candidate identification
- The Invigilator will give an overview of the examination paper: number of questions, and time allowed
- The Invigilator will share their screen with the examination tasks on it
- The examination will be recorded
- Each examination paper will be divided into separate parts, with each part being no longer than 60-minute and with a 15-minute break between them

- The candidate will scan/ photograph each paper at the end of each part and email written work to the Invigilator
- In case of technical issues, the Invigilator and the student will be on a video call via WhatsApp until the issues are resolved
- If the issues last longer than 15 minutes, the examination will be cancelled, and a new date arranged

Additional guidelines for the candidate:

The candidate must have enough paper and writing materials to complete the assessment. In general, a good choice of paper would be:

- A4 letter or similar size format
- Feint-ruled (preferably wide) with margins
- White (or minimally coloured)
- Non-reflective

Use *only* dark ink (preferably black or blue) and write on white or lightly coloured paper for high contrast. Keep left and right margins clear to help examiners mark the work. At the top of each page, write a distinct page number and, where relevant, a specific question number. This will help when the work is ordered and scanned/ photographed, and thus help examiners mark the work. When scanning/ taking photos of answers, make sure that the answers are:

- Scanned in the correct order
- Oriented properly
- Legible (e.g. scans are not blurred, and all fine detail can be sufficiently magnified for reading)
- Complete (e.g. relevant work has not been accidentally cropped out)

The candidate should ensure they have all the Invigilator's details (email address and telephone number) in case of technical problems with the online platform.

Although the examination will be administered online, all College policies and procedures that govern how exams are to be conducted in physical classrooms still apply. For details of these please refer to the section in this policy on Examination Processes, the Academic Misconduct Policy and Student Disciplinary Policy.

## **11 Internal Verification Procedures for HND**

The College's internal verification policy is designed to ensure that the quality of the assessment practices meets the threshold standards as well as the requirements of Pearson (Edexcel) AO.

### **11.1 Purpose of internal verification (Pearson HNC/D programmes)**

Internal verification ensures that assessment is accurate, consistent, current, timely, valid, authentic and to awarding organisation standards. It also ensures that assessment

instruments/assignment briefs are fit for purpose and provides feedback which informs quality improvement

### **11.2 Pearson/HNC/D programmes**

The College is responsible for the internal verification of all assessments for Pearson (BTEC HNC/D) programmes. BTEC HNC/D assessments are prepared, verified and marked by the College and moderated by the Pearson external examiner.

### **11.3 Expectations**

- the chosen assessment instruments and assessment guidelines are valid and applied consistently by all assessors for the same qualification across all candidates
- arrangements are effective for the safe storage of internal assessment materials
- access to assessment materials is effectively managed
- the final assessment decisions made by assessors are accurate, reliable and recorded
- steps are taken to minimise the risk of plagiarism
- assessment evidence is the candidate's own work
- the effectiveness of the assessment and internal verification system is monitored and reviewed any changes required by Pearson are implemented

### **11.4 The internal verification process: an overview**

- The assessors decide how they are going to assess the candidates. For example, if candidates are required to demonstrate competence in a practical skill, then a practical exercise would be designed.
- The internal verifier confirms that the assessments are valid and that the assessment specification and marking schedule are appropriate. This will be done by discussion at internal verification and/or standardisation meetings and recorded on the IV form.
- Assessment is carried out using internally verified materials which the internal verifier has checked.
- The assessors evaluate the candidate's evidence to ensure that it meets requirements of the qualification. Agreed marking schedules should be used
- The internal verifier confirms that assessors are marking consistently, applying the standards defined for the Unit. He or she usually does this by sampling the work of the assessor.
- Assessment records, materials and evidence are retained in line with Pearson/BTEC requirements.

Guidance documents from Pearson which relate to requirements and exemplars of good professional practice are maintained in the Pearson/BTEC Centre Management File.

## 11.5 Internal verification procedures

It is important that internal verification procedures are consistent across the whole College and the following procedures are applied:

- an internal verification plan should be drawn up for each unit
- assessment briefs and preliminary papers should be scrutinised to ensure they meet Pearson standards and are reliable, valid and secure
- all assessment briefs must be internally verified before being distributed to students
- sample size is the square root of the total number of assignments to assess. Hence if there are 12, four are sampled. The verifier will try to select a range of grades from Pass, Merit, Distinction and Referred to verify. The assessor will try to select work from different students in each module rather than the same student in each module where possible.
- the internally verified pieces of work should be signed by both assessor and internal verifier
- interim IV sampling will be conducted during standardisation meetings prior to full marking going ahead by assessors in order to identify any potential issues of consistency and validity of assessment decisions.
- assignment briefs with comparatively high non-submission or referral rates will be revisited before being reused in order to identify risk associated with the briefs.
- all student work should be assessed within two weeks of submission and samples should be verified within one week after assessments have been completed.
- IV forms should be completed by the IV providing developmental feedback to the assessor.
- the generic College checklists and forms should be used and retained as evidence for external verification and appeals.
- all evidence should be retained securely in accordance with Pearson regulations after the student leaves the College

## 11.6 Responsibilities

### 11.6.1 Pearson/HNC/D Quality Nominee

- develops and implements improvements to quality assurance systems
- liaises with Pearson
- arranges for the training of internal verifiers and assessors
- coordinates the operation of the internal verification system
- arranges for the induction of candidates
- coordinates external verification activity on behalf of the College
- coordinates appeals

#### **11.6.2 HNC/D Programme Leader**

- operates systems to standardise assessment and ensure that the work of all assessors is sampled over a defined period
- monitors consistency of assessment records
- supports assessors by offering guidance and advice, particularly in the case of new or inexperienced assessors. [The work of these assessors should be sampled more often].
- prepares a plan for internal verification
- decides on the methodology/ mechanisms to be used
- samples assessment materials
- liaises with external verifiers and Pearson/BTEC coordinator
- coordinates meetings of assessors
- produces records of internal verification for external verification and as evidence for appeals

#### **11.6.3 Assessor**

- contributes to the design and review of assessment materials
- plans the assessment process with the programme coordinators and candidate
- assesses evidence against the Pearson standards and makes judgements
- completes the assessment records
- liaises with other assessors and the internal verifier and participates in internal and external verification

#### **11.6.4 Internal Verifier's (IV) Responsibilities**

The IV must ensure that assessors are producing assignments that comply with Pearson (Edexcel) requirements. BTEC HNC/D Unit briefs must include:

- The teaching programme and assignment deadlines
- Grade descriptors contextualised where appropriate
- Assignment task(s) designed to elicit evidence from the students at the level required
- An appropriate scenario or case study

The Internal Verifier must carry out the following processes:

- Verify assignment briefs before they are handed out to students
- Ensure that Pearson set assignment briefs are verified by Pearson (Edexcel)
- If in doubt, have other assignment briefs verified by Pearson (Edexcel)
- Carry out risk-based sampling for verification of assessed student submission
- Verify and/or second mark samples of assessed student submissions
- Provide feedback/recommendations to the Tutor/Assessor with regard to the assessment feedback and the grading decisions no more than one week after receiving the assessed student work
- Provide reports on verification of assignment briefs and assessments to be considered at meetings of Tutors, the Assessment Committee, Exam Board and Academic Board.

## **The Lead IV**

The Lead IV is responsible for

- Providing an assessment and internal verification plan with timelines
- Recording internal verification decisions on work sampled
- Giving feedback to IVs and Assessors to support them in their decision making
- Resolving disagreements between IVs and Assessors
- Ensuring that feedback and recommendations from IVs are followed up by Assessors
- Collating documentation to provide an audit trail of IV activities

### **11.7 IV Sampling Strategy**

At the end of each term for BTEC HNC/D programmes the College will take a risk-based approach to sampling each unit for internal verification:

- The work of each student enrolled will be verified (up to 30% depending upon risk) during their programme of study
- Each unit for every cohort of students will be sampled (up to 30% depending upon risk)

Internal verification is risk-based and will, therefore, be more frequent when

- The qualification is revised
- There are problem units
- There are problem students
- There are problem Tutors/Assessors

In instances of a new course, new module, new delivery method or new Tutor/Assessor, 50% of the course/ cohort will be verified. If over 50% of the verified work is found to require changes, the full 100% will be verified.

In instances that an established course, module or Tutor is found to have more than 25% grade changes following verification, a larger sample (up to 100%) will be verified.

### **11.8 Internal verification records**

#### **11.8.1 Internal verification schedule**

- a list of the units for which the assessors have responsibility
- a list of the assessors with whom the internal verifier liaises

#### **11.8.2 Records relating to the design of assessment**

- record of comments made about the assessments
- the source of each individual question used

#### **11.8.3 Records relating to the delivery of assessment**

- notes of meetings with assessors
- confirmation that assessment complies with the unit standards

#### **11.8.4 Records relating to the review of the assessment**

- feedback from the external verifier, assessors and candidates
- changes made to the assessments in the light of feedback

(Forms are provided as an appendix to this procedure)

#### **11.9 Internal verification methods**

The programme coordinator is responsible for working with his/ her department to ensure that verification can take place smoothly. In terms of the actual mechanisms used for internal verification, there are many options. These may include:

- checklists; these are particularly useful when relying on observation or conducting interviews or role plays
- model solutions and suggested answers; for use when any assessment has been carried out
- discussions about assessment; it may be necessary to discuss levels of performance for particular candidates
- cross-assessing/ block marking; it is sometimes useful for assessors to agree standards by marking each other's work
- a bank of material; assessments which have already been agreed.

#### **11.10 Claiming certification**

Certificates may only be claimed after an Assessment Board meeting. Once certification has been approved, two members of the Academic team must be present to make certification claims. One member makes the claim online whilst the other member checks the grades off on the tracking sheet.

## 12 External Verification of HND

Pearson Edexcel is the awarding body for the College's HND programmes and as such are responsible for allocating an External Examiner (EE).

- The EE helps ensure that the academic standard of each award and its component parts is set and maintained at the appropriate level, and student performance s properly judged against this standard.
- The assessment process measures student achievement appropriately against the intended outcomes of the programme, is rigorous, consistent and reliable.

The EE in also reports on:

- Whether the academic standards set for the awards, or part thereof, are appropriate.
- The extent to which the College's assessment processes are rigorous, ensure equity of treatment for students and have been fairly conducted within the organisational regulations and guidance
- The standard of student performance in the programmes or parts of programmes for which they have been appointed to examine
- Where appropriate, the comparability of the standards and student achievements with those in other higher education institutions (HEIs)
- Good practice they have identified.
- Prior to certification the EE will confirm grades awarded to students who meet the learning outcomes of the assessment

## 13 Academic Misconduct

The College treats academic misconduct, covered by the Academic Misconduct Policy 2.1 very seriously and distinct from non-academic misconduct, which is covered by the Student Disciplinary Policy 2.3. Academic misconduct may occur when students are submitting assignments or taking examinations. The following is a non-exhaustive list of conduct which will normally constitute academic misconduct if proven:

- Plagiarism, which is defined as the knowing or reckless presentation of another person's work or ideas as one's own, and includes the use of published or unpublished work without acknowledging the source
- Cheating, which is defined as acting dishonestly or unfairly in order to gain an academic advantage. This includes the falsification of information and cheating in examinations
- Collusion, which is defined as aiding or attempting to aid another member of the in gaining an unfair academic advantage
- Obtaining or purchasing work from another person or organisation and submitting it as one's own
- Breaches of any College rules, regulations, policies or procedures relating to academic activity or assessment

The College has a set of procedures for reporting, investigating and adjudicating allegations of academic misconduct, which are detailed in the Academic Misconduct Policy 2.1. The following

section provides a breakdown of penalties that students may face if a case of academic misconduct has been proven against them

### **13.1 Penalties for Academic Misconduct**

In all proven cases of academic misconduct, the decision maker will seek to remove any academic advantage gained by the student through the identified misconduct. The decision maker will normally impose a penalty for proven cases in accordance with the following scheme:

Type of Misconduct	Penalty
First offence or less serious cases	A mark of zero will be assigned to the piece of work in question and to the associated assessment block. Reassessment will be permitted (or a further attempt in the case of an offence that occurs during reassessment), but the maximum achievable grade in the assessment block will be capped at 40 (Pass) or the relevant threshold grade. In the case BTEC HND, the affected assessment block will contribute grade point 0 to the Edexcel calculation for the classification of an award.
Second offence or more serious cases	The student will be expelled from the College and barred from re-entry. A mark of zero will be assigned to the piece of work in question and to the associated assessment block. The Panel will determine whether the student should retain any credits previously gained. Where credits are retained, the student may be awarded an intermediate award.
Cheating and/or causing disruption to other students in an examination	The student will be expelled from the examination room and disqualified by the Exams Officer. Their case will be forwarded to the Head of Academics and passed to the Academic Misconduct Panel to determine if any further action is necessary.

An Academic Misconduct Panel Hearing may, in addition or as a substitute to the above scheme, apply the following penalties:

- Issue a formal written warning
- Require the student to attend a relevant training programme
- Require the student to apologise to the aggrieved party
- Ban the student from attending graduation
- Ask the student to pay compensation for the damage or loss caused (value to be specified by the College).
- Exclude the student from specified areas of the College or from specified College activities (including placements), services or facilities (including residences) for a defined period.
- Exclude the student from the whole College for a defined period
- Suspend the student's studies, in whole or in part, for a defined period
- Permanently expel the student from the College (with or without credit or award already achieved)

For further details on penalties, extenuating circumstances and appeals relating to academic misconduct please refer to the College's Academic Misconduct Policy 2.1.