

BTEC International Centre Guide to Managing
Quality
2015-16

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Introduction

This guide is designed for BTEC programme teams and provides essential guidance on planning and implementation of internal verification of BTEC qualifications.

The majority of BTEC units are assessed through internal assessment, which means that you can deliver the programme in a way that suits your learners and relates to local need. The way in which you deliver the programme must also ensure that assessment is fair and that standards are consistent over time.

What is quality assurance?

Quality assurance is at the heart of vocational qualifications:

- you use quality assurance to ensure that standardised decisions are made by your managers, Internal Verifiers and Assessors
- we use quality assurance to check that all centres are working to UK national standards. It gives us the opportunity to identify and provide support where it is needed in order to safeguard certification. It also allows us to recognise and support good practice.

Every year we publish an updated **BTEC International Quality Assurance Handbook** to explain our quality assurance processes for the coming academic year. Along with the BTEC qualification specification, this handbook should provide Assessors and Internal Verifiers with the information they need to ensure quality assurance is undertaken successfully.

Which qualifications does this guide cover?

This guide covers all BTEC qualifications at all levels, from Entry Level-Level 7. This includes BTECs accredited on the Qualification Credit Framework (QCF) and Pearson's Self Regulated Framework. For guidance on BTEC Security qualifications, please refer to the BTEC Security Centre Management Handbook.

While the principles of internal verification are the same for all BTECs, there are slight differences in terminology between BTEC (QCF) Entry Level-Level 3 and BTEC Level 4-7. Where relevant, these are identified throughout this guide. **Please note:** Centres delivering BTEC Level 4-7 must also follow the guidance in the **QAA Quality Code for Higher Education**:

www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality

Other essential guidance

This guide has been developed with other guides, also available on our website:

- International Centre Guide to Assessment
- International Signposts to Quality
- International Quality Assurance Handbook 2015-16

BTEC qualification specification

The specification for each BTEC qualification is the document that programme leaders and teams must use as 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 our website.

BTEC International Quality Assurance Handbook

We use quality assurance to check that all centres are working to UK national standards. It gives us the opportunity to identify and provide support where it is needed in order to safeguard certification. It also allows us to recognise and support good practice. Every year we publish an updated Vocational International Quality Assurance Handbook to explain our quality assurance processes for the coming academic year and it is available on our website.

Forms and templates

We publish a range of useful forms and templates for you to use in your centre on our website. These forms are not mandatory, but we strongly recommend using them to help ensure that you are meeting requirements. They include:

- Assessment plan
- Assignment brief
- Internal verification of assignment briefs
- Assessment record
- Internal verification of assessment decisions
- Tutor observation record / witness statement
- Learner declarations.

Quality assurance

As a significant amount of BTEC qualifications are internally assessed, it is important that you have systems in place for ensuring that accurate assessment decisions are made and recorded properly. This helps ensure that the standards and integrity of BTEC is upheld.

Approval

If your centre wants to deliver a BTEC, you first need to get centre approval from Pearson. If your organisation is already an approved centre, you need qualification approval to deliver and assess a BTEC programme. You will only be able to register students if you are an approved centre, running an approved programme. It is important that we know that you are delivering BTEC programmes so we can provide all the necessary support to help you with delivery and assessment.

Approval is a two-step process:

Approval type	Purpose
Centre Approval	Ensuring that you have the human, physical and financial resources to deliver Pearson qualifications
Qualification Approval	Ensuring that you have the required physical and human resources to deliver a particular qualification and have appropriate systems in place to assure the delivery and assessment of the qualification

The requirements for managing BTEC programmes are found in the approval declarations (see Appendix). Please contact your Regional Development Manager for further support with the BTEC Approvals process.

BTEC International quality model

We will appoint a subject specialist Standards Verifier who will visit your centre twice per year. During the visit the Standards Verifier will review delivery, assessment, resources and centre quality assurance. The Standards Verifier will also offer support and guidance to ensure that delivery is in line with UK national standards. Standards Verification applies to all BTEC programmes with internally assessed units.

Full guidance on the International Quality Assurance model can be found in the **BTEC International Quality Assurance Handbook** on our website.

Centre roles

How you manage your BTEC programmes depends on the size and nature of your provision, but there are certain roles that should be involved in maintaining and improving the quality of BTEC programmes within your centre.

- Senior Managers
- Quality Nominees
- Examinations Officers
- Lead Internal Verifiers
- Programme Leaders
- Internal Verifiers
- Assessors

Depending on the size and nature of your centre, an individual may take on more than one of these roles. Full guidance on all of these roles and responsibilities can be found in chapter 3 (Preparing for a Standards Verifier Visit) of the BTEC International Quality Assurance Handbook on our website.

Edexcel Online

Edexcel Online is a secure section of our website for use by centres.

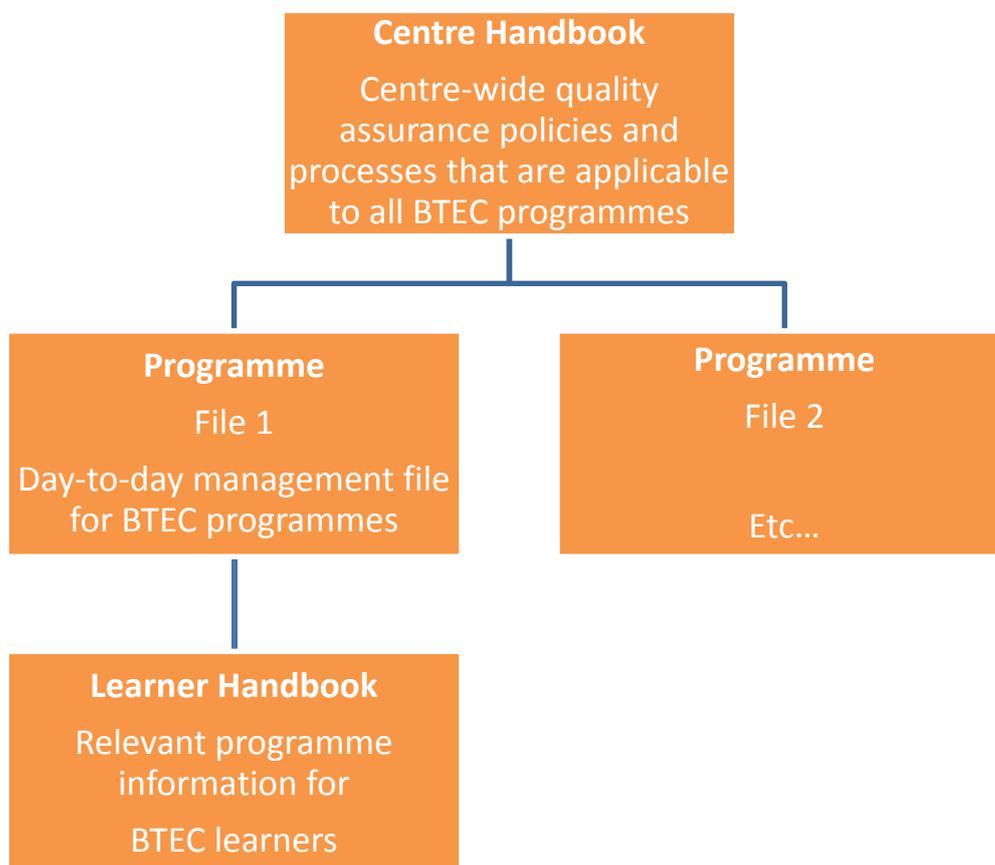
- You can see all of your approved programmes on Edexcel Online including the units that are part of the qualification structure
- All learner information can be registered and accessed on Edexcel Online
- The site provides important information for centres' staff, enabling you to make learners' registrations, report learner achievement and claim certification.
- To use Edexcel Online, you will need to be set up an account. Your regional representative will assist you.
- If your centre is already registered for Edexcel Online, you should contact your Edexcel Online administrator (usually your exams officer) and ask them to create a user account for you, allowing the relevant access levels. You will need a unique and valid email address.
- It is extremely important that the details of your Quality Nominee are kept up to date, as we contact the Quality Nominee with important BTEC messages

Suggested format for maintaining quality assurance documents

You must have:

- functioning quality systems appropriate to your centre's size that enable quality management, review and improvement
- sufficient records that demonstrate the use of the quality system and the outcomes of key monitoring activities
- effective internal and external communications
- systems that are compliant with current BTEC and regulatory requirements.

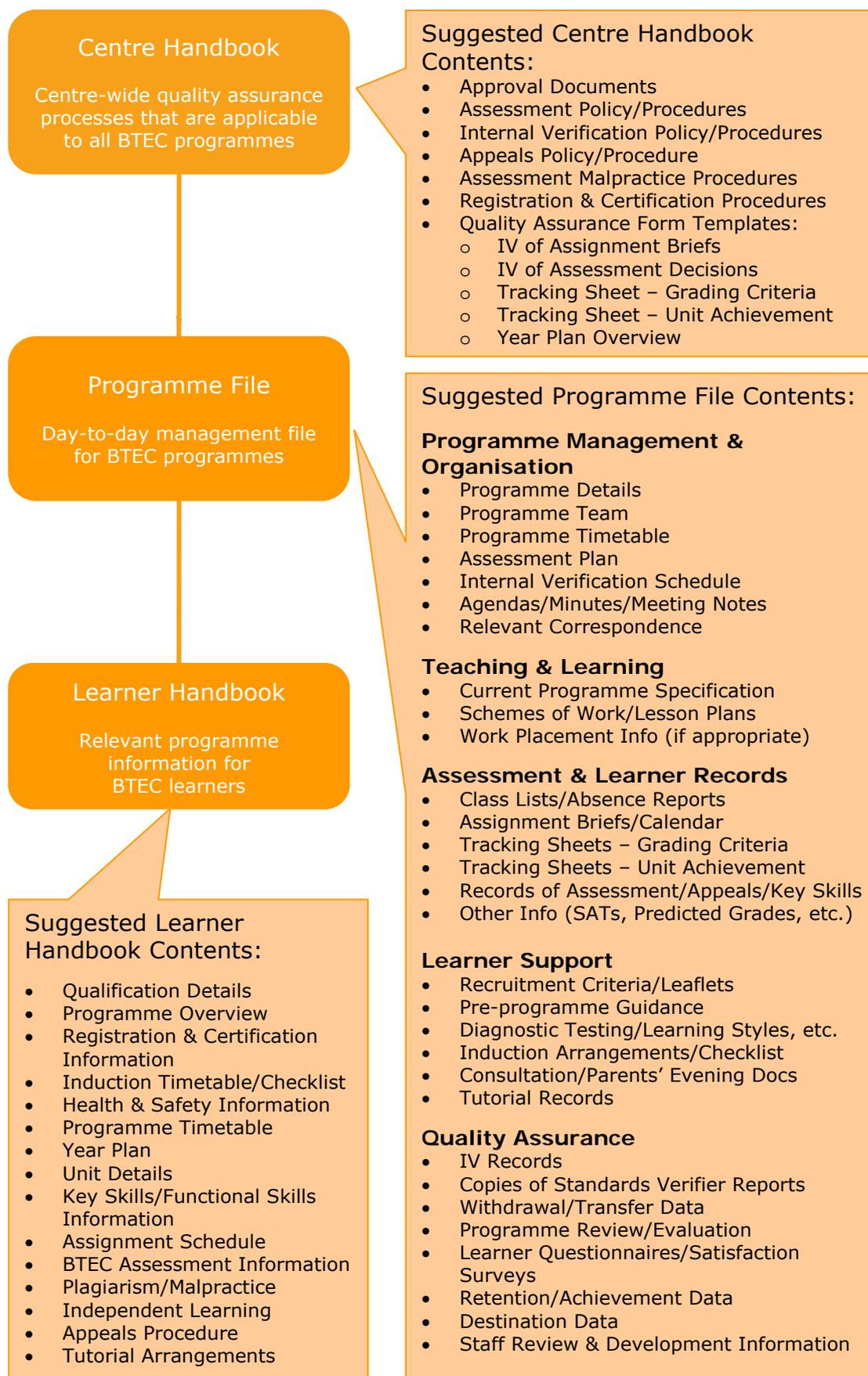
Documents will vary between centres and may be stored electronically. All quality assurance documents must be reviewed and revised regularly. Below is a suggestion of how they can be organised at centre and programme level:



Centre handbook, programme files and learner handbooks

- Holding centre policies and procedures electronically makes them easier to access and update
- These documents will contain much of the information required for standards verification
- Standardised documentation helps the accuracy, consistency and audit of records
- Content varies according to the size and type of each centre. For example, small centres may use a combined centre/programme file.

The following lists are suggestions, rather than prescriptive. Only use records that are useful and effective:



BTEC Level 4 to 7: Programme specifications

As required by the [QAA Quality Code for Higher Education](#), BTEC programmes at Level 4 to 7 must have a programme specification, which is a concise description of both the intended outcomes of learning from a programme and the means by which these outcomes are achieved and demonstrated.

The programme specification should not be confused with the standard Pearson BTEC qualification specifications that include the full guidance and units for each qualification

Guides to developing policies and procedures

This section looks at quality assurance policies and procedures to stimulate ideas and inform the structure of programme learning and assessment. Each procedure follows this format:

- **Purpose/Scope:** outlines the procedure's basic purpose and its operational context
- **Definitions/Terminology:** explains the terms used within the section
- **Responsibilities:** allocates people to procedures and roles and responsibilities
- **Procedures:** provides a basic overview of the activities as well as specific requirements
- **Examples:** this is what a specific policy may look like. It can be customised by you. When using any of the sections make sure that you insert the specific information required (this is in the areas identified by asterisks). You may need to add sections
- **Links:** identifies related sources of information for each section.

Policies and procedures need to be communicated appropriately. It should be noted that the policies, procedures and practices you use to manage BTEC assessment are linked: they do not operate in isolation from one another.

Registration and certification policy

Purpose/scope

- To ensure that accurate, up to date and auditable learner registration, achievement and certification records are maintained with Pearson
- That these records are kept for **3 years after certification**, in line with Pearson requirements.

Definitions/terminology

- **Registration:** informs Pearson about learners at the **beginning** of a programme of study
- **Key dates & actions:** deadlines for registration and certification appear in the Information Manual on our website
- **Certification claim:** the process of informing Pearson of learner achievement
- **Unit certification:** learners who have not completed sufficient number of credits to receive the full qualification can be certificated for the units that they have achieved.

Responsibilities

- **Exams Officer:** responsible for timely, accurate and valid registration, transfer, withdrawal and certificate claims for learners
- **Programme Leader:** responsible for ensuring learner details held by Pearson are accurate and that an audit trail of learner assessment and achievement is accessible

- **Quality Nominee:** responsible for coordinating and monitoring the learner details held with Pearson
- **Senior Management:** responsible for overseeing the registration, transfer, withdrawal and certificate claims for learners to ensure that Pearson's deadlines are met

Procedures

- **Registration:** registration starts our Quality Assurance processes. Exams Officers and delivery staff are required to make sure that learners are registered on the correct programme at the beginning of their programme of learning. Learners following a UK standard academic year are registered by 1st November. Learners enrolling into flexible start programmes are registered within one month of enrolment. Your procedures need to make sure that there is accurate and timely registration.
- **Transfer:** learners can transfer their registration and achievement to date between centres. Transfer between programmes is also permitted. Procedures need to ensure transfers are accurate and timely. You must ensure that adequate information about the transferee's position and progress is communicated both to the learner and to Pearson.
- **Withdrawal:** you should let us know when a learner leaves before completion. Withdrawals can be made via Edexcel Online and a withdrawn learner may be reinstated at a later date
- **Certification Claims:** full qualification certification or credit certification is claimed via Edexcel Online. Claims can be made at any time of year. Your claims procedures should prevent fraudulent or inaccurate claims.

Example: Registration and Certification Policy

This is what a Registration & Certification Policy might look like. You may use this as a starting point for your own policy. Use the sections that are relevant to your centre. Customise it for your centre. Specific procedures, based on your policy and relevant to your centre, should be developed.

Your centre:

Registration & Certification Policy

Aim:

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

In order to do this, the centre will:

- register each learner within Pearson's requirements
- provide a mechanism for programme teams to check the accuracy of learner registrations
- make each learner aware of their registration status
- inform Pearson of withdrawals, transfers or changes to learner details
- ensure that certificate claims are timely and based only on internally verified assessment records
- audit certificate claims made to Pearson
- audit the certificates received from Pearson to ensure accuracy and completeness
- keep all records safely and securely for three years post certification.

This policy will be reviewed every *** months by ***.

Links

Information manual: this is published by Pearson each year and provides detailed information for Exams Officers about registration and certification procedures for all Pearson programmes.

Assessment policy

Purpose/scope

- That assessment of BTEC programmes is to the required standard
- That there is equal and fair access to assessment for all learners
- To ensure that learners are given realistic targets and informed of their progress
- That achievement is accurately recorded and tracked
- To ensure that assessment leads to accurate and valid certification claims.

Definitions/terminology

- **Assessor:** the person responsible for making decisions about whether learners' work achieves the standard required for certification
- **Assessment:** the definitive assessment decision of the learner's achievement and must be to the required standards. This assessment contributes to achievement and informs a unit grade (where applicable)
- **For Levels 2-3 only; Resubmission:** If requested, and at their discretion, the Lead Internal Verifier may authorise one resubmission of improved evidence by a learner, following assessment. Resubmissions must not provide a learner with an unfair advantage over others
- **Standardisation:** a method of comparison that enables centre assessors to review the consistency and accuracy of their assessment decisions with those of other assessors
- **Learning aims/outcomes:** what the learner should know, understand or be able to do as a result of completing the unit
- **Unit content:** the unit content gives you the information to devise and plan the programme of learning needed for the learning outcomes to be achieved:
 - All elements of the unit content must be taught, except for anything preceded by 'e.g.' which is merely an example of what can be selected to teach
 - For assessment, a learner is not required to provide evidence for all of the unit content
 - To achieve the unit, learners are required to provide sufficient evidence to address the assessment and grading criteria
 - Assessment guidance is given in each unit to support the achievement of individual grading criteria
- **Unit grading grid:** each unit grading grid contains statements of the assessment criteria used to determine the standard of learner evidence. Merit and Distinction grading criteria refer to a qualitative improvement in the learner's evidence, and not a quantitative one. Please note the big difference in how to award grades between Levels 1- 3 and Levels 4 – 7.

Responsibilities

- **Programme Leader:** responsible for managing programme delivery and assessment of the learners, to ensure coverage of all units and grading criteria
- **Assessor:** responsible for carrying out assessment to the required standards. The assessor provides feedback to learners; assures the authenticity of learner work; records and tracks achievement
- **Internal verifier:** a member of staff able to verify assessor decisions, and validate assignments. The Internal Verifier records findings, gives assessor feedback, and oversees remedial action

- **Lead Internal Verifier:** The Lead Internal Verifier must agree and sign off assessment and internal verification plans. **For Levels 2-3 only;** the Lead Internal Verifier will play an important role in authorising resubmissions and retakes.

Procedures

- **Learner induction:** should inform learners about how assessment works. Learners must also be informed about how their progress will be monitored. Reference should be made to the qualification specification, assessment deadlines, the need for authentic work, and how the learner can make an appeal against an assessment decision
- **Assignment design:** should have a practical vocational focus and reference the grading criteria. A variety of assessment methods is encouraged. A schedule of assignments and assessment dates should be planned and monitored during delivery of the programme
- **Assessment Plan:** At the start of the programme the assessment plan needs to be agreed and signed off by the Lead Internal Verifier. The assessment plan is an important document which is required for standards verification. At the start of the Standards Verification process, the Standards Verifier will request a copy. The plan should include:
 - A list of all Assessors and the units they are assessing
 - A list of all Internal Verifiers and when Internal Verification will take place
 - Confirmation of the learners registered on the programme
- **Assessment of learner work:** should be to the published unit assessment and grading criteria only. Capping or limiting of learner grades is not allowed
- **Tracking assessment:** a secure audit trail must be maintained. It should record assessment decisions; internal verification documentation for assignments and learner work; learners achievement both at unit level and at qualification level. These records will be held securely for 3 years after certification
- **Certification claims:** need to be based on accurate, audited records.

Example: Assessment policy

This is what an Assessment Policy might look like. You may use this as a starting point for your own policy by using those sections relevant to your centre. Customise it for your centre. Specific procedures, based on your policy and relevant to your centre, should be developed.

Your centre

Assessment Policy

Aim:

- 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 the required standard
- To ensure that there is accurate and detailed recording of assessment decisions.

In order to do this, the centre will:

- ensure that learners are provided with assignments that are relevant and 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 assessment
- 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 as required by Pearson
- monitor standards verification 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.

This policy will be reviewed every *** months by ***.

Links

- **BTEC qualification specifications:** these provide guidance on assessment for each BTEC qualification. All staff teaching on BTEC programmes should have access to the relevant specification. They are published on our website
- **Pearson BTEC Assessment & Grading Policy:** this is our policy on the application of grading criteria when assessing BTEC programmes
- **BTEC Centre Guides to Assessment:** A valuable resource for centres in planning, quality assuring and delivering BTEC programmes

Internal verification policy

Purpose/scope

- That assessment is accurate, consistent, current, timely, valid, authentic and to BTEC standards
- That the assessment instruments (assignment briefs) are fit for purpose
- To quality assure the assessment of all BTEC programmes delivered by a centre
- To be part of an audit trail of learner achievement records
- To provide feedback to inform centre quality improvement.

Definitions/terminology

- **Internal Verification:** a centre devised quality assurance process which assures the assessment against the BTEC unit grading criteria. It ensures that assignments are fit for purpose
- **Standards Verification:** an external verification process used by Pearson to check that centre assignments, assessment decisions and internal verification processes are reaching the required standard

Responsibilities

- **Quality Nominee:** the Quality Nominee ensures that centre internal verification and standardisation processes are operating effectively. S/he acts as the centre coordinator and is the main point of contact for Pearson. The Quality Nominee ensures Pearson quality assurance reports are monitored and any required action is carried out
- **Lead Internal Verifier (BTEC Entry Level –Level 3):** a member of the programme team who oversees the implementation of an effective internal verification centre system in their subject area.
- **Internal Verifier:** a member of staff able to verify assessor decisions, and validate assignments. The Internal Verifier records findings, gives assessor feedback, and oversees required action

Procedures

- **Staff briefing:** all Assessors, Lead Internal Verifiers and Internal Verifiers require regular briefing and updating on BTEC processes
- **Verification schedules:** annually agreed to cover all Assessors, units and assignments. Schedules should be drawn up at the beginning of the programme and monitored through the year
- **Internal verification of assignments:** carried out before the assignment briefs are given to learners, to ensure that they are fit for purpose, and that any recommendations are acted upon. Records of effective internal verification must be kept
- **Internal verification of assessment decisions:** must verify a sufficient sample of Assessor assessment and grading decisions to ensure accuracy. Assessors do not internally verify their own work. Assessor feedback and support should be given
- **Internal verification records:** must be correctly maintained and kept securely for 3 years after certification. We recommend that you use our standard templates for internal verification available on our website
- **Standards verification:** you should have in place monitoring and review procedures for Standards Verification outcomes. Procedures are required to deal with unsuccessful standards verification samples

Example: Internal verification policy

This is what an Internal Verification Policy might look like. You may use this as a starting point for your own policy by using those sections relevant to your centre. Customise it for your centre. Specific procedures, based on your policy and relevant to your centre, should be developed.

Your centre

Internal Verification Policy

Aim:

- To ensure there is a Lead Internal Verifier in each principal subject area for Level 1-3 qualifications
- To ensure that Internal Verification is valid, reliable and covers all Assessors and programme activity.
- To ensure that the Internal Verification procedure is open, fair and free from bias
- To ensure that there is accurate and detailed recording of Internal Verification decisions.

In order to do this, the centre will ensure that:

- where required by the qualification, a Lead Internal Verifier is appropriately appointed for each subject area
- each Lead Internal Verifier oversees effective Internal Verification systems in their subject area
- staff are briefed and trained in the requirements for current Internal Verification procedures
- effective Internal Verification roles are defined, maintained and supported
- Internal Verification is promoted as a developmental process between staff
- standardised Internal Verification documentation is provided and used
- all centre assessment instruments (assignment briefs) are verified as fit for purpose
- an annual Internal Verification schedule, linked to assessment plans, is in place
- an appropriately structured sample of assessment from all programmes, units, sites and Assessors is Internally Verified, to ensure centre programmes conform to the required standard
- secure records of all Internal Verification activity are maintained
- the outcome of Internal Verification is used to enhance future assessment practice.

This policy will be reviewed every *** months by ***.

Links

- **BTEC qualification specifications:** These provide guidance on assessment for each BTEC qualification. All staff teaching on BTEC programmes must have access to the relevant specification. They are published on our website
- **Pearson BTEC Assessment & Grading Policy:** This is our policy on the application of grading criteria when assessing BTEC programmes: www.edexcel.com/policies
- **BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Verification:** A valuable resource for centres in planning, quality assuring and delivering BTEC programmes available on our website

Appeals policy

Purpose/scope

- That there are clear procedures for learners to enable them to enquire about, question or appeal an assessment decision
- That any appeal is recorded and documentation is retained for 18 months following the resolution of the appeal
- That the Head of Centre facilitates the learner's ultimate right of appeal to Pearson, once the centre's appeal procedure is exhausted.

Definitions/terminology

- **Appeal:** a request from a learner to revisit an assessment decision which s/he considers to disadvantage him/her
- **Appeals procedure:** a standard, time limited, sequenced and documented process for the centre and learner to follow when an appeal is made.

Responsibilities

- **Learner:** responsible for initiating the appeals procedure, in the required format, within a defined time frame, when s/he has reason to question an assessment decision
- **Assessor:** responsible for providing clear achievement feedback to learners. If assessment decisions are questioned, the Assessor is responsible for processing the learner's appeal within the agreed time
- **Internal Verifier/Lead Internal Verifier/Senior Management:** responsible for judging whether assessment decisions are valid, fair and unbiased
- **Head of Centre:** responsible for submitting an appeal in writing, to Pearson if the learner remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the centre's internal appeals procedures.

Procedures

- **Learner induction:** Should inform the learner of the appeals procedure
- **Learner appeals procedures:** A staged procedure to determine whether the assessor:
 - used procedures that are consistent with Pearson's requirements
 - applied the procedures properly and fairly when arriving at judgements
 - made a correct judgement about the learner's work
- **Appeals procedure stages:**
 - **Stage 1 – Informal:** Learner consults with Assessor within a defined period of time following the assessment decision, to discuss an assessment decision. If unresolved, then the issues are documented before moving to stage 2

- **Stage 2 – Review:** Review of assessment decisions by Manager and/or Internal Verifier/Lead Internal Verifier. Learner notified of findings and agrees or disagrees, in writing, with outcome. If unresolved, move to stage 3
- **Stage 3 – Appeal hearing:** Senior Management hears the appeal: last stage by the centre. If unresolved, move to stage 4
- **Stage 4 – External appeal:** The grounds for appeal and any supporting documentation must be submitted by the centre to Pearson within 14 days of the completion of Stage 4: a fee is levied
- **Recording appeals:** each stage should be recorded, dated and show either agreement or disagreement with decisions. Documents must be kept for a minimum of 18 months
- **Monitoring of appeals:** undertaken by Senior Management to inform development and quality improvement.

Example: Appeals Policy

This is what an Appeals Policy might look like. You may use this as a starting point for your own policy by using those sections relevant to your centre. Customise it for your centre. Specific procedures, based on your policy and relevant to your centre, should be developed.

Your centre

Appeals Policy

Aim:

- To enable the learner to enquire, question or appeal against an assessment decision
- To attempt to reach agreement between the learner and the Assessor at the earliest opportunity
- To standardise and record any appeal to ensure openness and fairness
- To facilitate a learner's ultimate right of appeal to Pearson, where appropriate
- To protect the interests of all learners and the integrity of the qualification.

In order to do this, the centre will:

- inform the learner at induction, of the Appeals Policy and procedure
- record, track and validate any appeal
- forward the appeal to Pearson when a learner considers that a decision continues to disadvantage her/him after the internal appeals process has been exhausted
- keep appeals records for inspection by Pearson for a minimum of 18 months
- have a staged appeals procedure
- will take appropriate action to protect the interests of other learners and the integrity of the qualification, when the outcome of an appeal questions the validity of other results
- monitor appeals to inform quality improvement.

This policy will be reviewed every *** months by ***.

Links

- **BTEC qualification specifications:** These provide guidance on assessment for each BTEC qualification. All staff teaching on BTEC programmes should have access to the relevant specification. They are published on our website: www.btec.co.uk
- **Policy on Appeals Concerning BTEC & Pearson NVQ Qualifications:** This is Pearson's policy on learner appeals. Please note, this does not apply until internal centre processes have been exhausted: www.edexcel.com/policies

Plagiarism and assessment malpractice

Purpose/scope

- That centres have policies and procedures in place to deal with malpractice
- To ensure that issues are dealt with in an open, fair and effective manner
- That centres provide appropriate deterrents and sanctions to minimise the risk of malpractice.

Definitions/terminology

- **Learner malpractice:** any action by the learner which has the potential to undermine the integrity and validity of the assessment of the learner's work. (plagiarism, collusion, cheating, etc.)
- **Assessor malpractice:** any deliberate action by an Assessor which has the potential to undermine the integrity of BTEC qualifications
- **Plagiarism:** taking and using another's thoughts, writings, inventions, etc. as one's own
- **Minor acts of learner malpractice:** handled by the Assessor by, for example, refusal to accept work for marking and learner being made aware of malpractice policy. Learner resubmits work in question
- **Major acts of learner malpractice:** extensive copying/plagiarism, 2nd or subsequent offence, inappropriate for the Assessor to deal with.

Responsibilities

- **Centre:** should seek proactive ways to promote a positive culture that encourages learners to take individual responsibility for their learning and respect the work of others
- **Assessor:** responsible for designing assessment opportunities which limit the opportunity for malpractice and for checking the validity of the learner's work
- **Internal Verifier/Lead Internal Verifier:** responsible for malpractice checks when internally verifying work
- **Quality Nominee:** required to inform Pearson of any acts of malpractice
- **Heads of Centre or their nominees:** responsible for any investigation into allegations of malpractice.

Procedures

- **Addressing learner malpractice:**
 - Promote positive and honest study practices
 - Learners should declare that work is their own: check the validity of their work
 - Use learner induction and handbook to inform about malpractice and outcomes
 - Ensure learners use appropriate citations and referencing for research sources
 - Assessment procedures should help reduce and identify malpractice
- **Addressing staff malpractice:**
 - Staff BTEC induction and updating should include BTEC requirements
 - Use robust Internal Verification and audited record keeping
 - Audit learner records, assessment tracking records and certification claims
- **Dealing with malpractice:**
 - Inform the individual of the issues and of the possible consequences
 - Inform the individual of the process and appeals rights
 - Give the individual the opportunity to respond
 - Investigate in a fair and equitable manner

- Inform Pearson of any malpractice or attempted acts of malpractice, which have compromised assessment. Pearson will advise on further action required
- Penalties should be appropriate to the nature of the malpractice under review
- Gross misconduct should refer to learner and staff disciplinary procedures.

Example: Assessment Malpractice Policy

This is what an Assessment Malpractice Policy might look like. You may use this as a starting point for your own policy by using those sections relevant to your centre. Customise it for your centre. Specific procedures, based on your policy and relevant to your centre, should be developed.

Your centre

Assessment Malpractice Policy

Aim:

- To identify and minimise the risk of malpractice by staff or learners
- To respond to any incident of alleged malpractice promptly and objectively
- To standardise and record any investigation of malpractice to ensure openness and fairness
- To impose appropriate penalties and/or sanctions on learners or staff where
- Incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice are proven
- To protect the integrity of this centre and BTEC qualifications.

In order to do this, the centre will:

- seek to avoid potential malpractice by using the induction period and the learner handbook to inform learners of the centre's policy on malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice
- show learners the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources
- ask learners to declare that their work is their own
- ask learners to provide evidence that they have interpreted and synthesised appropriate information and acknowledged any sources used
- conduct an investigation in a form commensurate with the nature of the malpractice allegation. Such an investigation will be supported by the Head of Centre / Principal / CEO and all personnel linked to the allegation. It will proceed through the following stages:
 - ***
- make the individual fully aware at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven
- give the individual the opportunity to respond to the allegations made
- inform the individual of the avenues for appealing against any judgment made
- document all stages of any investigation.

Where malpractice is proven, this centre will apply the following penalties / sanctions:

- ***

Definition of Malpractice by Learners

This list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by this centre at its discretion:

- plagiarism of any nature
- collusion by working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as individual learner work
- copying (including the use of ICT to aid copying)
- deliberate destruction of another's work
- fabrication of results or evidence
- false declaration of authenticity in relation to the contents of a portfolio or coursework
- impersonation by pretending to be someone else in order to produce the work for another or arranging for another to take one's place in an assessment/examination/test.

Definition of Malpractice by Centre Staff

This list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by this centre at its discretion:

- improper assistance to learners
- inventing or changing marks for internally assessed work (coursework or portfolio evidence) where there is insufficient evidence of the learners' achievement to justify the marks given or assessment decisions made
- failure to keep learners' coursework/portfolios of evidence secure
- fraudulent claims for certificates
- inappropriate retention of certificates
- assisting learners in the production of work for assessment, where the support has the potential to influence the outcomes of assessment, for example where the assistance involves centre staff producing work for the learner
- producing falsified witness statements, for example for evidence the learner has not generated
- allowing evidence, which is known by the staff member not to be the learner's own, to be included in a learner's assignment/task/portfolio/coursework
- facilitating and allowing impersonation
- misusing the conditions for special learner requirements, for example where learners are permitted support, such as an amanuensis, this is permissible up to the point where the support has the potential to influence the outcome of the assessment
- falsifying records/certificates, for example by alteration, substitution, or by fraud
- fraudulent certificate claims, that is claiming for a certificate prior to the learner completing all the requirements of assessment.

This policy will be reviewed every *** months by ***.

Links

- **Pearson BTEC Assessment Malpractice Policy:** This is Pearson's policy on assessment malpractice relating to BTEC programmes on our website

Appendix: BTEC approval criteria

The following criteria are taken directly from the following forms:

- Pearson International Vocational Centre Recognition Form
- Pearson International Vocational Qualification Approval Form

By signing the completed form, the Head of Centre confirms that the centre will comply with the following obligations.

Vocational centre recognition criteria

Agreement by Principal or Chief Executive or Head of Organisation/Institution

My organisation will

- Co-operate fully with Pearson.
- Research the need for and obtain, prior to the delivery of any programme, at its own responsibility and expense all necessary licences, permissions or other form of authorisation required to operate as a centre in the jurisdiction in which the centre seeks approval. Pearson disclaims all liability in connection with and arising from the need for and procurement of or failure to procure any and all such licences, permissions or authorisations.
- Not undertake any activity or advertising that could bring the name of Pearson into disrepute.
- Not use Pearson and or JCQ/Ofqual/SQA/QAA/QQI and other relevant Standards Setting Body name or logos without consent from the owner.
- Not deliver any Pearson approved qualifications at any other address other than that approved, without prior approval from Pearson.
- Adhere to all of Pearson, JCQ/Ofqual/SQA/QAA/QQI and other relevant Standards Setting Body policies and procedures, and terms and conditions for continued Centre Recognition and qualification approval, as amended from time to time, and whether provided in hard copy or made available on the relevant body's website.
- Fully indemnify Pearson for all loss, damage, costs and expenses (including legal fees) caused by my organisation's breach of the policies and procedures.
- Retain a copy of the centre approval application for the validity of recognition once approval has been granted.
- Fully support Pearson's centre/qualification monitoring process, including, but not limited to, allowing nominated representatives of Pearson, full access to all relevant records, premises and learners which can include short notice and or unannounced visits.
- Assist Pearson and/or Ofqual/JCQ/SQA/QAA/QQI and other relevant Standards Setting Body in any investigations being conducted by them and provide them with all information or documentation they request as soon as practicable.
- Retain evidence of learner work for a minimum period of 15 weeks following certification of the learner.
- Retain records of assessment and internal verification records for a minimum period of three years following certification of the learner.
- Deliver qualifications in accordance with the law including any relevant Equalities, anti discrimination, Copyright, Freedom of Information Acts and Data Protection laws.
- Operate required internal/external assessments in full accordance with Pearson and JCQ/Ofqual/SQA/QAA/QQI and other relevant Standards Setting Body policies and procedures.
- Monitor, review and evaluate our operations, policies and procedures and keep auditable records.
- Monitor the approval and accreditation period for all of the qualifications approved and seek re-approval as and when required.
- Commit sufficient managerial and other resources to allow it to efficiently and effectively undertake the delivery of Pearson qualification(s).

I confirm

- My organisation or key members of the management/assessment team have not previously been involved with a centre which has had centre recognition/qualification approval withdrawn by any Awarding Organisation, nor had sanctions at level 3 or above from the tariff of sanctions set out in the NVQ Code of Practice 2006 applied by Pearson or another Awarding Organisation, other than as set out above in section I.
- No material supporting this centre approval has been plagiarised. I confirm that any material supporting this application that is the intellectual property of another person or organisation is used with the express permission of that person or organisation.
- We are fully committed to employ, train and update sufficient number of appropriately qualified staff to ensure appropriate management, delivery, assessment and quality assurance as per qualification requirements.
- My organisation will commit sufficient managerial and other resources to allow it to efficiently and effectively undertake the delivery of Pearson qualification(s).
- The roles, responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities of the assessment and verification team across all sites are clearly defined, allocated and understood.
- We will promptly make available records, information or documents associated with the delivery/review of the qualification(s) and allow Pearson and or Ofqual/SQA/QAA/QQI or other relevant officials access to such materials, records, premises and learners which can include short notice and or unannounced visits.
- We will keep confidential the names and contact details of Pearson and or JCQ/Ofqual/SQA/QAA/QQI and other relevant personnel.
- We will implement the agreed equal opportunities access and fair assessment policies and procedures.
- Students/Learners are located within the Country as stated in section I and that we will not deliver Pearson qualifications across international borders/overseas without prior written authorisation from Pearson.
- Information supplied to Pearson for the purposes of registration and certification will be complete, accurate and fully comply with Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts, learners will also be informed of their registration and certification status.
- The assessment procedure will be open, fair and free from bias.
- Pearson will be notified of any changes, or Adverse Effects which put at risk my organisation's ability to meet the centre approval criteria.
- Pearson will be notified immediately of any changes to my organisation which materially affect the way in which we conduct business, including but not limited to a change in the management or ownership of the organisation, and changes to the sites at which qualifications are provided.
- If we require further guidance or assistance from Pearson in respect of the provision of Pearson qualifications in accordance with our obligations set out in this application form and/or Pearson, JCQ/Ofqual/SQA/QAA/QQI and other relevant Standards Setting Body's policies and procedures, and terms and conditions for Centre Recognition, as amended from time to time, we will inform Pearson immediately in writing of the same.
- My organisation will forward to Pearson a copy of all complaints received, which are not resolved by my organisation within 28 days of receipt, and co-operate with Pearson in respect of any action Pearson needs to take to resolve such matters.
- If any of the matters I have agreed to on behalf of my organisation, as set out in this Section 4, changes, I will immediately notify Pearson in writing of the same.
- My organisation consents to Pearson sharing information relating to my organisation with Ofqual and other awarding organisations, as it sees fit

Financial

- My organisation will comply with Pearson's terms and conditions for payment of invoices.
- I understand that approval of a qualification by Pearson does not imply or guarantee that it will be supported by public funding bodies.
- I understand that as part of the centre approval process Pearson may undertake a credit check.
- I understand that in exceptional circumstances, Pearson may withhold Learners' certificates from the centre if Pearson reasonably determines that this is a necessary and proportionate measure in the event of a debt owed to Pearson by the Centre.

Approval

- I understand that Pearson has the right to refuse centre/ qualification approval without giving reasons as to their decision.
- I understand that there is no right of appeal against approval decisions.
- I understand that my centre will be asked by Pearson on an annual basis to confirm that, unless as previously notified to Pearson, there have been no material changes that would affect Centre Recognition or qualification delivery.

Disputes

- I agree that this application, any subsequent Centre Recognition and qualification approval, and all aspects of the relationship between the applicant and Pearson (together the "Agreement") are governed by and shall be construed in accordance with English law.
- My organisation submits to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts for all purposes relating to and in connection with the Agreement or its subject matter (including its formation, enforceability, validity and interpretation).
- I agree that if any provision of the Agreement is or becomes, or is declared by any competent court or body to be, illegal, invalid or unenforceable under the law of any jurisdiction this shall not affect or impair the legality, validity or enforceability of the remaining provisions of the Agreement.
- My organisation will notify Pearson in writing of any issues or concerns it has in respect of Pearson or its representatives promptly or within 1 month of becoming aware of such issues by completing the online complaints form available at www.edexcel.com/complaintsandfeedback.
- I agree that, following Centre Recognition, if any dispute arises in connection with the Agreement (other than in respect of a decision by Pearson to withdraw Centre Recognition for reasons set out below), the parties' respective representatives shall meet together as soon as reasonably possible, and in any event within 2 months of the dispute first being notified, and seek to resolve the dispute and agree any necessary action, and if the dispute cannot be settled by such discussions, the dispute shall be referred to mediation before a mutually agreed mediator, or if such mediator cannot be agreed, by a mediator appointed by CEDR.
- I note that nothing in the Agreement limits Pearson's liability for death or personal injury resulting from Pearson's negligence or fraud.
- I agree that Pearson's aggregate liability in respect of any loss or damage suffered by my organisation and arising out of or in connection with the Agreement, whether in contract, tort (including negligence) or for breach of statutory duty or in any other way, shall not exceed the amount of the fees actually paid to Pearson under the Agreement.
- I understand that Pearson will not be liable for any loss of profits, business or opportunity, any loss of goodwill or reputation, or any indirect or consequential loss or damage suffered or incurred by my organisation or any third party arising out of or in connection with the Agreement.
- I understand that this application constitutes the entire agreement and understanding between the parties and supersedes all previous agreements between the parties relating to its subject matter. I acknowledge that, in signing this application, that I do not rely on and shall have no right or remedy in respect of any assurance, statement, warranty or representation made (whether innocently or negligently) of any person, including a Pearson regional representative, but note that nothing in this paragraph excludes Pearson's liability for fraud.

Withdrawal of Approval

- I understand that Pearson reserves the right to withdraw Centre Recognition and or qualification approval if Pearson considers, in its absolute discretion, that:
 - my organisation fails to continue to meet the Centre Recognition and or qualification approval Criteria or quality is otherwise not maintained
 - there is any breach of, failure to comply with, Pearson's centre policies and procedures
 - my organisation remains inactive for 2 years or more
 - qualifications remain inactive for 1 year or more
 - continued approval would bring examination/assessment systems into disrepute or otherwise harm or potentially harm Pearson's reputation.
 - any of the matters set out in this application form are or become incorrect and Pearson has not been informed in writing of such a change and/or such a change is not acceptable to Pearson.

- my organisation fails to comply with any of the obligations I have agreed to on behalf of my organisation as set out in this Section 4.
- an insolvency event has occurred, including, but not limited to, circumstances where:
 - my organisation suspends, or threatens to suspend, payment of its debts, is unable to pay its debts as they fall due, admits inability to pay its debts or is deemed unable to pay its debts within the meaning of section 123 of the Insolvency Act 1986.
 - my organisation commences negotiations with its creditors with a view to rescheduling any of its debts, or makes a proposal for or enters into any compromise or arrangement with its creditors.
 - a petition is filed, notice is given, a resolution is passed, or an order is made, for or in connection with the winding up of my organisation.
 - an application is made to court, or an order is made, for the appointment of an administrator, a notice of intention to appoint an administrator is given, or an administrator is appointed to my organisation; or
 - my organisation fails to pay Pearson's invoices within 30 days of such invoices falling due.
- I understand that Pearson reserves the right to notify other Awarding Organisations of such actions.

International Vocational qualification approval criteria

Agreement by Principal or Chief Executive or Head of Organisation/Institution

My organisation will

- Co-operate fully with Pearson.
- Research the need for and obtain, prior to the delivery of any programme, at its own responsibility and expense all necessary licences, permissions or other form of authorisation required to operate as a centre in the jurisdiction in which the centre seeks approval. Pearson disclaims all liability in connection with and arising from the need for and procurement of or failure to procure any and all such licences, permissions or authorisations.
- Not undertake any activity or advertising that could bring the name of Pearson into disrepute.
- Not use Pearson and or JCQ/Ofqual/SQA/QAA/QQI and other relevant Standards Setting Body name or logos without consent from the owner.
- Not deliver any Pearson approved qualifications at any other address other than that approved, without prior approval from Pearson.
- Adhere to all of Pearson, JCQ/Ofqual/SQA/QAA/QQI and other relevant Standards Setting Body policies and procedures, and terms and conditions for continued Centre Recognition and qualification approval, as amended from time to time, and whether provided in hard copy or made available on the relevant body's website.
- Fully indemnify Pearson for all loss, damage, costs and expenses (including legal fees) caused by my organisation's breach of the policies and procedures.
- Retain a copy of the centre approval application for the validity of recognition once approval has been granted.
- Fully support Pearson's centre/qualification monitoring process, including, but not limited to, allowing nominated representatives of Pearson, full access to all relevant records, premises and learners which can include short notice and or unannounced visits.
- Assist Pearson and/or Ofqual/JCQ/SQA/QAA/QQI and other relevant Standards Setting Body in any investigations being conducted by them and provide them with all information or documentation they request as soon as practicable.
- Retain evidence of learner work for a minimum period of 15 weeks following certification of the learner.
- Retain records of assessment and internal verification records for a minimum period of three years following certification of the learner.
- Deliver qualifications in accordance with the law including any relevant Equalities, anti discrimination, Copyright, Freedom of Information Acts and Data Protection laws.

- Operate required internal/external assessments in full accordance with Pearson and JCQ/Ofqual/SQA/QAA/QQI and other relevant Standards Setting Body policies and procedures.
- Monitor, review and evaluate our operations, policies and procedures and keep auditable records.
- Monitor the approval and accreditation period for all of the qualifications approved and seek re-approval as and when required.
- Commit sufficient managerial and other resources to allow it to efficiently and effectively undertake the delivery of Pearson qualification(s).

I confirm

- My organisation or key members of the management/assessment team have not previously been involved with a centre which has had centre recognition/qualification approval withdrawn by any Awarding Organisation, nor had sanctions at level 3 or above from the tariff of sanctions set out in the NVQ Code of Practice 2006 applied by Pearson or another Awarding Organisation, other than as set out above in section 1.
- No material supporting this centre approval has been plagiarised. I confirm that any material supporting this application that is the intellectual property of another person or organisation is used with the express permission of that person or organisation.
- We are fully committed to employ, train and update sufficient number of appropriately qualified staff to ensure appropriate management, delivery, assessment and quality assurance as per qualification requirements.
- My organisation will commit sufficient managerial and other resources to allow it to efficiently and effectively undertake the delivery of Pearson qualification(s).
- The roles, responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities of the assessment and verification team across all sites are clearly defined, allocated and understood.
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- We will keep confidential the names and contact details of Pearson and or JCQ/Ofqual/SQA/QAA/QQI and other relevant personnel.
- We will implement the agreed equal opportunities access and fair assessment policies and procedures.
- Learners are located within the UK and that we will not deliver Pearson qualifications overseas without prior authorisation from Pearson.
- Information supplied to Pearson for the purposes of registration and certification will be complete, accurate and fully comply with Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts, learners will also be informed of their registration and certification status.
- The assessment procedure will be open, fair and free from bias.
- Pearson will be notified of any changes, or Adverse Effects which put at risk my organisation's ability to meet the centre approval criteria.
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