



BUXTON TRAINING ENTERPRISES<sup>™</sup>  
EXCELLENCE THROUGH EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

## MALPRACTICE POLICY

### 1. Aims and Objectives of the policy

#### Aims

Buxton Training Enterprises Ltd is committed to ensuring that standards of assessment are consistent, transparent and in line with the requirements of our Awarding Bodies. The way students' work is assessed must serve the stated learning objectives of the programmes we offer and facilitate the achievement and wider development of our students.

#### Objectives

- a) To assess students' work with integrity by being consistent and transparent in our assessment judgements and processes so that the outcomes are fair, reliable and valid.
- b) To ensure that assessment standards and specifications are implemented fully (both in spirit and in letter), so that no risk is posed to the reputation of the Awarding Bodies or the qualifications we offer.
- c) To establish quality control and recording mechanisms for assignments and their assessment through a system of sampling, moderation, internal verification and cross-departmental co-ordination as appropriate to the requirements of the programmes we offer.
- d) To provide learner-centred approaches to assessment, which provide opportunities for students to achieve at levels commensurate with the demands of their course.

### 2. Range and scope of the policy.

The range of the policy covers all courses offered at BTE Ltd from all Awarding Bodies.

### 3. Assessment

Internal Assessment is defined as the process where staff make judgements on evidence produced by students against required criteria for the qualification. *All school devised assessment materials must be internally and/or externally verified before being issued to students.*

- a) Completed student assignments will be assessed internally, be subject to internal verification and external moderation by the Awarding Body.
- b) Students must be left in no doubt that any grade awarded will be subject to internal and/or external scrutiny, (moderation) and that ultimately the final decision rests with the Awarding Body.

- c) The Assessor is responsible for ensuring that assessment processes are consistent and transparent, that evidence is valid, sufficient, authentic and that judgement of evidence is valid and reliable.
- d) Students will be given an interim deadline for each assignment. Following feedback a new deadline will be set after which the work is assessed and the outcome entered on the relevant documentation. The assessment decisions are then internally verified according to the procedure outlined below. There is a further opportunity to improve assignments before the final deadline.
- e) All coursework must be handed in on the stated date. If work is handed in late, a decision about whether it should be marked will be taken by the Managing Director.

### **3.1 Role of the Assessor**

The role of the Assessor is to:

- a) Set tasks which allow students to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do so that they have opportunities to achieve the highest possible grades on their courses.
- b) Ensure that learners are clear about the criteria they are expected to meet in their assignments and that they are fully briefed on the skills which need to be demonstrated in the coursework / portfolio components of a subject.
- c) Encourage students by giving detailed feedback and guidance on how to improve work
- d) Set interim deadlines for coursework and advise students on the appropriate amount of time to spend on the work, ensuring it is commensurate with the credit available.
- e) Mark and return drafts within two weeks of submission.
- f) Adhere to the Awarding Body's specification in the assessment of student assignments.
- g) Record outcomes of assessment using appropriate documentation (see appendix). Outcomes will be held secure for three years, measured from the point of certification. Associated IV records should also be kept, to support and verify the decisions that were made for the cohort.
- h) Ensure each candidate signs to confirm that the work is their own and that it is endorsed by the teacher after marking the work. A completed original document must be securely attached to the work of each candidate and to that of each sample request.
- i) Provide accurate records of internally assessed coursework marks to the Exams Office in a timely manner via the VLE or e-mail for transfer to the Awarding Body.

### **3.2 Internal Quality Assurance**

- a) The Lead IQA is at the heart of quality assurance on all programmes. The role is to ensure that internally assessed work consistently meets national standards but can also lead to staff development and quality improvement.

- b) Each course will have an identified Lead IQA (LIQA) who is not otherwise involved in the assessing or setting of work which he or she is asked to verify.
- c) IQA's may also be appointed who will have the knowledge and qualifications relevant to the qualification(s) and other competence-based award(s) for which they are responsible to enable accurate judgements to be made regarding candidate performance in relation to competence criteria.
- d) Provision will be made for communication between course teams to share 'best practice' and areas of concern. Typically, this will be achieved through an annual meeting of Internal Verifiers at which standards and processes are discussed to maximise consistency between courses.
- e) **The role of the IQA:**  
**The IQA should:**
  - Not verify their own work or assignments.
  - Ensure that all assignment briefs are verified as fit for purpose prior to their being circulated to students. They should enable students to meet the unit grading criteria.
  - Make recommendations to the assessor on how to improve the quality of the brief if necessary.
  - Make all IQA evidence available to the EQA.
  - Plan with the course team an annual internal verification schedule linked to assignment plans.
  - Consider the assessment decisions of all units and all assessors to judge whether the assessor has assessed accurately against the unit grading criteria.
  - Verify samples of work – one third of all students per unit and ensure all students' work is scrutinised throughout the duration of the course. New or inexperienced assessors may be given additional support by the IQA.
  - Consider alternative methods of moderation/verification as required for non-written (ephemeral) assessments (e.g. assessments of performance, oral presentations, and work placements). In most cases, the documentary record of the assessor(s) will provide the basis for verification.
  - Maintain secure records of all work sampled as part of their verification process using a standard template.
  - If a concern is raised the IQA should discuss this with the assessor prior to the final confirmation of the marks for all the students taking the assignment. As a result of the IQA process it may be necessary for the assessor(s) to reconsider the marks awarded for the entire cohort of students and, as a consequence, to make changes either to all marks or to some marks.
  - Where re-sampling is necessary the work should be verified again before being sent to the EQA and records kept.

### 3.3 Authentication of Candidate's Work

- a) On each assignment students must sign that the work submitted is their own and teachers/assessors should confirm that the work assessed is solely that of the candidate concerned and was conducted under required conditions.
- b) If the student hands in an assignment and teachers suspect it is not the student's own work, the matter should be reported to the Managing Director, who must proceed in accordance with the provisions coursework policy.

### 3.4 Student Misconduct

Misconduct covers a range of offences, which can be collectively described as cheating. The following is not an exhaustive list and the provision reserves the right to include any other type of cheating under the terms of this policy.

- a) Plagiarism: taking someone else's work, images or ideas, whether published or not, and with or without their permission, and passing them off as your own: thereby not properly acknowledging the original source. This particularly relates to material downloaded from the Internet or copied from books
- b) Copying the work of other students with or without their permission and knowingly, allowing another student to copy one's own work.
- c) Colluding with other students to produce work, which is then submitted individually, except where this is specifically required/allowed by the assessment criteria.
- d) Falsely claiming extenuating circumstances to gain an unfair advantage in assessment outcomes
- e) Submitting work done by another student as your own.

### 3.5 Preventing Student Misconduct

BTE will take positive steps to prevent and reduce the occurrence of malpractice by students. These will include:

- a) Using the induction period and the course handbook to inform students of the provisions policy on malpractice and consequent penalties.
- b) Showing students, the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources including websites. Students should not be discouraged from conducting research; indeed, evidence of relevant research often contributes to the achievement of higher grades. However, the submitted work must show evidence that the student has interpreted and synthesised appropriate information and has acknowledged any sources used.
- c) Introducing procedures for assessing work in a way that reduces or identifies malpractice, eg plagiarism, collusion, cheating, etc. These procedures may include:
  - o The requirement for interim work to be handed in before final deadlines to give a picture of the student's progress.
  - o periods of supervised sessions during which evidence for assignments/tasks/coursework is produced by the student.
  - o altering assessment assignments/tasks/tools on a regular basis.
  - o the assessor assessing work for a single assignment/task in a single session for the complete cohort of students.
  - o using oral questions with students to ascertain their understanding of the concepts, application, etc within their work.
  - o assessors getting to know their students' styles and abilities.

- d) Ensuring access controls are installed to prevent students from accessing and using other people's work when using networked computers.

### **3.6 Investigating Student Misconduct**

There will be an investigation if student misconduct is suspected which may lead to disciplinary action.

- a) Students who attempt to gain an award by deceitful means will automatically have their result(s) suspended (held) pending a thorough investigation by a member of senior staff. The student will be informed at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences.
- b) The outcome of the investigation will determine the appropriate course of action to be taken by the provision. Malpractice is a breach of BTE rules and may invoke an exclusion. Any case where student malpractice is found to be substantiated will be reported to the Awarding Body.
- c) If no evidence is found that the student cheated, then the benefit of the doubt should be given to the student and the grade achieved should be awarded.

### **3.7 Appeals Procedures**

- a) It is the responsibility of BTE as an assessment centre, to make all students aware of the appeals procedure and give them access to a copy of the procedure.
- b) The Managing Director is responsible for managing the formal appeals process. If deemed necessary, a formal appeals panel should be set up comprising at least three people, where at least one member is independent of the assessment process.
- c) Written records of all appeals should be maintained by BTE. These should include a description of the appeal, the outcome of the appeal and the reason for that outcome. A tracking document will be used to follow the course of an appeal, allowing it to be time tracked and verified at each stage.

### **3.8 Grounds for Appeal**

A student/candidate would have grounds for appeal against an assessment decision in the following situations. This list is selective and not exhaustive.

- a) The work is not assessed according to the set criteria or the criteria are ambiguous.
- b) The final grade of the work does not match the criteria set for grade boundaries or the grade boundaries are not sufficiently defined.
- c) The internal verification procedure contradicts the assessment grades awarded.
- d) There is evidence of preferential treatment towards other students/candidates.
- e) The conduct of the assessment did not conform to the published requirements of the Awarding Body
- f) Valid, agreed, extenuating circumstances were not taken into account at the time of assessment, which BTE was aware of prior to the submission deadline.
- g) Agreed deadlines were not observed by staff.
- h) The current Assessment Plan was not adhered to.
- i) The decision to reject coursework on the grounds of malpractice.

### **3.9 Formal appeal procedures**

- a) If, after informal discussion with the LIQA, the candidate wishes to make a formal appeal, the candidate must ask the LIQA, in writing, for a re-assessment. This must be done within 10 working days of receiving the original assessment result.
- b) The Managing Director with the Lead IQA, on receipt of the formal appeal from the candidate, will try to seek a solution negotiated between the relevant assessor and the candidate. If it is not possible to reach an agreement, the Managing Director and the LIQA will set a date for the Internal Verification Appeals Panel to meet.
- c) The Internal Verification Appeals Panel will normally meet within 2 weeks of the receipt of the appeal by the LIQA, with re-assessment, if deemed necessary by the panel, taking place within 15 working days of the appeals panel meeting.
- d) The outcome of the appeal may be:
  - Confirmation of original decision;
  - A re-assessment by an independent assessor;
  - An opportunity to resubmit for assessment within a revised agreed timescale.

### **3.10 Staff Malpractice**

The following are examples of malpractice by BTE staff. This list is not exhaustive.

- a) Failure to keep any Awarding Body mark schemes secure
- b) Alteration of Awarding Body assessment and grading criteria
- c) Assisting students 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 BTE staff producing work for the student
- d) Producing falsified witness statements, for example for evidence the student has not generated
- e) Allowing evidence, which is known by the staff member not to be the student's own, to be included in a student's assignment/task/portfolio/ coursework
- f) Facilitating and allowing impersonation
- g) Misusing the conditions for special student requirements,
- h) Failing to keep student computer files secure
- i) Falsifying records/certificates, for example by alteration, substitution, or by fraud
- j) Fraudulent certificate claims, that is claiming for a certificate prior to the student completing all the requirements of assessment

**Where staff malpractice is suspected, an investigation will take place under staff disciplinary procedures.**

## **4 Responsibility**

- Responsible for Policy: Managing Director.
- Responsible for implementation: Course Assessors, IQAs.

### **4.1 It is the responsibility of teachers to:**

- a) Provide assessment processes that are fair and meet the requirements of students and of the qualification;
- b) Provide students with a schedule of assessment;

- c) Provide accurate, timely and informative assessment feedback to inform students of their individual progress and tell them what they need to do to improve.
- e) Record assessment decisions regularly, accurately and systematically, using agreed documentation,
- f) Comply with the School and Awarding Body guidelines regarding work that is submitted after the submission date and work that is re-submitted following a referral decision;
- g) Familiarise themselves and learners with BTE's Assessment Appeals procedure(s);
- h) Be aware of and keep up-to-date with Awarding Body guidance in respect of assessment, standardisation, moderation and verification;
- i) Ensure that the quality of assessment is assured by carrying out internal standardisation, moderation or verification as required by the School and Awarding Body.
- j) Record internal standardisation, moderation and verification decisions accurately and systematically using agreed documentation,
- k) Provide special arrangements for learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities according to regulations of the Awarding Body.

#### **4.2 Internal verifiers are responsible for:**

- a) Verifying assignment briefs prior to distribution to learners.
- b) Verifying a sample of assessment decisions.
- c) developing the skills of assessors, especially those new to assessment.
- d) maintaining the consistency of assessment decisions by holding standardisation meeting of assessors.

#### **4.3 It is the responsibility of the Managing Director:**

- a) To facilitate the IQA process.
- b) To meet the deadlines for registering learners with the Awarding Body.
- c) To ensure that Awarding Body data is kept up to date with timely withdrawal or transfer of learners.
- d) To claim learners' certificates as soon as appropriate.
- e) To claim unit certification when a learner has not been able to complete the full programme of study.

### **5 Access to Policy**

- a) Copies of the policy will be available to all staff and kept in the office.

- b) Student induction programmes and course handbooks will highlight key aspects of this policy.
- c) Training for assessors will be given as part of staff induction if necessary.

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