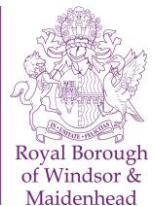# Community Learning *and* **Skills Service**

Accreditation Quality Framework

2019/20 Programme

Service policies and procedures for accreditation

For direct delivery and external providers

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This framework should be read in conjunction with the Service's Quality Assurance Framework and – for external providers – with the Contract Management Guidance.

Ratified by Leadership:	
Version	201920.110320.1.5
	Updated Procedure for internal quality assurance

1. Registration and certification policy and procedure

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this policy is to ensure learners are registered and supported with their examination/portfolio in line with awarding body requirements. The objectives are:

1. To register suitable learners with the awarding body.
2. To deliver a secure, accurate and accessible process so that the learner takes their examination or completes their portfolio to awarding body requirements.
3. Certification claims can be tracked to the certificate which is issued for each learner.
4. All records for accreditation are kept centrally, safely and securely for three years post certification.

1.2 Responsible Officers

- The **curriculum lead** is responsible for the delivery of this policy and managing the tutors involved. The "Curriculum Lead" is the Learning and Skills Manager, or, in their absence, another Curriculum Manager. The Curriculum Lead and the Funding and Compliance Manager will manage the administration of this policy carried out by the MIS and Examinations Officer.
- The **MIS and Examinations Officer** is responsible for ensuring the administration of each examination/portfolio is planned effectively, organised and completed correctly and on time.
- The **authorised tutor** is responsible for providing accurate records. Authorised tutors will agree to each awarding body regulations– the line manager is responsible for maintaining a list of authorised tutors.
- The **Funding and Compliance Officer** and the **Customer Service Advisors** are responsible for undertaking administrative tasks under the direction of the MIS and Examinations Officer.
- **The "key holder"** who can collect the confidential material from reception and take it to the secure storage. The key holder is typically the MIS and Examinations Officer. In the latter's absence it is the Funding and Compliance Officer (Slough), Funding and Compliance Manager, and the Customer Service Advisor (Slough).

1.3   Procedure

Stage 1:   Preparation for exam/portfolio

1. At the beginning of every term the MIS and Examinations Officer uploads the qualification aims onto the MIS.
   The MIS and Examinations Officer are responsible for ensuring all aims are correct on the MIS.

2. As part of planning for every term the Curriculum Managers with the MIS and Examinations Officer set exam dates.

3. MIS and Examinations Officer provide Customer Service Advisors with course level exam spreadsheet template to send to individual tutors to populate. Customer Service Advisors send out the sheets with instructions and monitor their prompt return.

4. The respective tutor selects learners for registration (based on mock exam grade) and populates the details required by the awarding body onto the spreadsheet, and returns the spreadsheet to the Customer Service Advisor. Tutors add on the spreadsheet prior learning information and additional support needed.

5. Customer Service Advisors check the individual sheets and then return them to the MIS and Examination Officer who collates the data onto the service level spreadsheets.

   The tutor is responsible for providing accurate learner registrations and making each learner aware of their registration status. The tutor is responsible for informing their line manager of any prior learning and additional support requested at any stage.

   The MIS and Examination Officer are responsible for the exam spreadsheet and the management of all exam data on the spreadsheet and in the Shared/Awarding Body folder (currently number 33.)   Data is returned on the spreadsheets, completed, correct, and on time, and uploaded to a Z aim qualification on the MIS.

   Customer Service Advisors are responsible for the prompt collection of data.

6. Customer Service Advisors register learners for exams on the awarding body portal and resolve any errors with tutors. Customer Service Advisors download a copy of the data and share with the MIS and Examinations Officer who completes a final check for errors. The MIS and Examinations Officer informs relevant tutors directly of any changes made to learners on the spreadsheet.

7. Under the guidance of the MIS and Examinations Officer the Funding and Compliance Officers arrange room bookings for exams, and any other activities and resources to be made available and ready to use for the exam e.g. door notices, dictionaries, USB fobs, recorders etc.

   MIS and Examinations Officer are responsible for ensuring rooms and resources are organised sufficiently in time so bookings and resources are secured.

8. The MIS and Examinations Officer will make the necessary arrangements for any learners to apply for additional support during their exam.

9. Curriculum Lead will check and inform the MIS and Examinations Officer of any changes to the local (spreadsheet) and online (awarding body) records.

Tutors are responsible for informing the Curriculum Lead of any changes relating to learners.

10. Typically, the MIS and Examinations Officer is the "key holder" for the secure storage of official documentation. The MIS and Examinations Officer will check the received documentation is correct with the Curriculum Lead or Funding and Compliance Officer present.

    The "key holders" are responsible for receiving examination and portfolio documentation from Business Support staff and immediately placing them in the secure store.

    MIS and Examinations Officer is responsible for ensuring all examination/portfolio fees have been paid, and, if not, escalating to the Curriculum Lead (to raise with tutors).

Stage 2:   Operation of exam/portfolio

11. MIS and Examinations Officer manages the organisation of the examination including learners with additional needs, the provision of exam packs, equipment, and ensure the attendance record is captured by the invigilator.

    The MIS and Examinations Officer is responsible for the planning and organisation of the examination on the day.

12. At the end of the exam the MIS and Examinations Officer/invigilator collects all used and unused exam papers ensuring safe transport and storage (sealed and in order.)

    The MIS and Examinations Officer is responsible for safe storage of awarding body documentation and submitting examination documentation to the awarding body by the given deadline.

13. For portfolios tutors will assess portfolio and recommend the learners' award credit. Tutors are responsible for the submission of an agreed sample of these portfolios. The sample of portfolio will be verified by the internal verifier. External verifier verifies internal verification. Curriculum Manager agrees with the MIS and Examinations Officer any actions from the verification process.

Stage 3: Post-exam/portfolio

14. For portfolios the MIS and Examinations Officer will ensure that certificate claims are timely and based solely on internally verified assessment records, and keep a record of these.

15. MIS and Examinations Officer receive certificates from Business Support staff and verifies they are correct, and then passes them to Customer Service Advisors.

16. Customer Service Advisors will provide administrative assistance with the organisation of EV visits.

    Curriculum Lead is responsible for EV visits.

17. The MIS and Examinations Officer updates exam results on to the MIS, checking for and resolving errors.

MIS and Examinations Officer is responsible for monitoring and downloading exam results from awarding body portals and delivered through the post, ensuring they are safely stored with RBWM certificates securely delivered to Riverside.

18. Customer Service Advisors prepare the certificate collection letters for the learners and contacts the respective learners (via phone/email) about how to collect their certificate and make arrangements so all involved staff are aware of the process and which learners have been informed.

19. *The MIS and Examinations Officer is responsible for resolving any outstanding matters raised after the examination.*

20. The Curriculum Lead agrees any resits and delegates the MIS and Examinations Officer to organise, following the process above.

Specific Curriculum Manager Responsibilities

1. Ensure tutors understand their roles as stated within this process.
2. Ensure compliance with the requirements of the examining bodies and JCQ.
3. To manage a plan for the internal verification of exams carried out.
4. Liaise with examining bodies to confirm EV visits and communicate to MIS and Examinations Officer and tutors.
5. To be responsible for the running of EV visits.
6. Ensure learners, identified by tutors with additional needs, have been registered and arrangements are organised by the MIS and Examinations Officer.
7. Ensure resits for learners requested by tutors are organised by the MIS and Examinations Officer.
8. To run exam moderation meetings with tutors.
9. To arrange training with the examining body.
10. Inform the MIS and Examinations officer of any new aims planned.

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2.   Internal quality assurance policy and procedure

2.1   Introduction

The aim of this policy is to ensure that internal quality verification (IQA) is valid, reliable and covers all assessors and programme activity. The objectives are:

1. To ensure that the internal quality assurance procedure is open, fair and free from bias.
2. To ensure that there is accurate and detailed recording of internal verification decisions.
3. To ensure that all centre assessment documentation are verified as fit for purpose.

2.2   Responsible Officers

- The **service lead internal quality assurer** is responsible for a pool of internal quality assurers and up to date details of them on the staff record.
- The **curriculum lead** is responsible for the execution of this policy and managing tutors involved. The curriculum lead is any curriculum manager nominated with responsibility for qualifications.
- The **MIS and Examination Officer** is responsible for maintaining accurate records of all accreditation through portfolio and examinations results.

2.3   Procedure

The service lead internal quality assurer will:

1. Create a termly IQA sampling plan
2. Benchmark internal quality assurance sample based on Risk and "Camera" each term.
3. Ensure that identified staff will maintain secure documentation of all internal verification activity.
4. Ensure that new tutors delivering accreditation have been inducted to the respective awarding body quality assurance requirements.
5. Brief and train tutors of the requirements for current internal IQA procedures.
6. Promote IQA standards as a developmental process between tutors.
7. Produce standardised IQA report which will be presented at moderation meetings.
8. Use the outcome of internal/external verification to enhance future assessment practice.
9. Ensure all assessors are observed conducting assessment at least once per year.

2.4   Awarding Body Procedure

Specifically, for awarding body exams, the procedures below will apply,

As a minimum, the Centre Manager must ensure:

1. All new Invigilators complete the awarding body training,
2. All new Invigilators are observed at their first live test session,
3. All Invigilators are observed annually.

To document the quality assurance of invigilation, Centre Managers must:

1. Ensure the observations are completed by a Centre representative who is registered with the awarding body,
2. Ensure the observer observes the whole test session,
3. Ensure the Invigilator Observation Reports are completed and signed at the time of the observation,
4. Retain the reports as these may be required for audit or on request by the awarding body and as part of the external quality assurance procedure.

If issues are identified with any of the observations, there is a requirement that feedback is provided to the Invigilator and corrective action taken. This may include further training on areas of weakness. It may also be appropriate to conduct a further observation to check that improvements have been made.

2.5 Policy on internal quality assurer

A nominated Service Lead Internal Quality Assurer– appointed by the Head of Service - is responsible for maintaining a pool of internal quality assurers and their programme areas. The person will maintain a record of internal quality assurance on the service's staff record. The internal quality assurer will:

- Be qualified
- Be inducted
- Use standardised documentation
- Attend annual standardisation (internal moderation) with samples.

3. Appeals policy and procedure

3.1   Introduction

The aim of this policy is to enable the learner to enquire, question or appeal against an assessment decision or circumstances under which the assessment or exam took place. The objectives are:

1. To attempt to reach agreement between the learner and the assessor at the earliest opportunity.
2. To standardise and record any appeal to ensure openness and fairness.
3. To facilitate a learner's ultimate right of appeal to the awarding body, where appropriate.
4. To protect the interests of all learners and the integrity of the qualification.

3.2   Responsible officers

- The **curriculum lead** (Curriculum Manager) is responsible for the investigating appeals.
- **The Funding and Compliance Manager** is responsible for coordinating appeals and complaints across the service.
- An **assessor** is any tutor authorised to perform the role by their line manager;

3.3   Right of Appeal

The learner who can appeal will be either taking an examination or through portfolio assessment for an accredited course.

A portfolio or examination can be appealed against within four weeks of official receipt of their examination result or portfolio award credit level.

In the case of BCS examinations, learners have a right to appeal directly to the awarding within 20 days of the published results if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal raised with the centre.

3.4   Procedure

1. Tutors will inform the learner at induction, of the Appeals Policy and procedure. Cases will be investigated with the learner informed of the decision within 10 working days from receipt of the appeal at each stage.

2. Should a learner make an appeal:

   <u>Stage one</u>: the learner informally and verbally enquires to the assessor; the assessor gives a verbal explanation of the decision and seeks to reach an agreement with the learner. The assessor will brief his or her curriculum lead about any enquiries made.

   <u>Stage two</u>: if the learner still wishes to appeal against the decision the assessor makes the learner aware of the next stage (provision of the published appeals policy for learners).

3. The learner contacts the Funding and Compliance Manager who takes a written statement of the appeal from the learner.

4. The Funding and Compliance Manager will arrange for the Curriculum Lead to conduct an investigation using the procedure given to learners.

5. The Funding and Compliance Manager will inform the learner making the appeal that it is not a review of work but an investigation compliance of procedures followed.

6. The Funding and Compliance Manager will record, track and validate any appeal.

7. Should a learner consider that a decision continues to disadvantage her/him after the internal appeals process has been exhausted then they have opportunity to appeal further should they wish to continue to do so.

   <u>Stage three</u>: the curriculum lead informs the Head of Service and arrange for the appeal to be forwarded to the awarding body.

8. The Funding and Compliance Manager will keep appeals records for inspection by the awarding body for a minimum of 18 months.

9. The curriculum lead will ensure, when the outcome of an appeal questions the validity of other results, that the interests of other learners and the integrity of the qualification is protected.

10. The curriculum lead will monitor appeals to inform quality improvement through the SAR and Quality Improvement Plan.

4. Assessment malpractice policy and procedure

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this policy is to identify and minimise the risk of malpractice by staff or learners. The objectives are to:

1. Make all learners and staff aware of their responsibilities under this policy.
2. Respond to any incident of alleged malpractice promptly and objectively.
3. Standardise and record any investigation of malpractice to ensure openness and fairness.
4. Impose appropriate penalties and/or sanctions on learners or staff where incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice are proven.
5. Protect the integrity of this centre and awarding body.

This policy applies to all staff and all learners. The learner will be either taking an examination or a formal assessment through a portfolio for an accredited course.

Malpractice by staff is improper assistance to candidates, changing marks, failure to keep candidate portfolios of evidence secure, fraudulent claims, inappropriate retention of certificates, improper assistance of learners, falsification of witness statements, improper use of evidence, facilitating impersonation, misusing the conditions for special learners, falsifying records, and fraudulent certificate claims. A fuller statement is given at the end of this policy.

Malpractice by learners is plagiarism, collusion, copying, deliberate destruction of another's work, fabrication, false declaration, and impersonation. A fuller statement is given at the end of this policy.

4.2 Responsible Officers

- The curriculum lead is responsible for investigating malpractice by learners. The Head of Service is responsible for investigating malpractice by staff.
- The Funding and Compliance Manager is responsible for the coordination of appeals across the service.

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4.3   Procedure

1. Learners
   a. The service will inform all new learners of the service's policy on malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice.
   b. Tutors will use vigilance to ensure that learners declare that their work is their own and report any concerns to their line manager or Head of Service.
   c. Where there is initial evidence or allegation of malpractice an investigation will be conducted.
   d. Where malpractice is proven, this centre will apply the penalties/sanctions which are linked to council policies for learners.

2. Staff
   a. The Head of Service is responsible for leading an investigation of a member of staff in a form commensurate with the nature of the malpractice allegation. The Head of Service will nominate officer(s) to investigate the case.
   b. The Head of Service will 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.
   c. The investigating officers will interview all relevant persons involved giving individuals the opportunity to respond to the allegations made, and interrogate files and compile evidence for assessment.
   d. A report will be submitted to the Head of Service with recommendations which the Head of Service will consider and authorise any decisions in conjunction with relevant officers e.g. human resources.
   e. Where malpractice is proven, this centre will apply the penalties/sanctions which are linked to the council's contract of employment for staff.

3. General procedure (learners and staff)
   a. Individuals will be informed of the avenues for appealing against any judgment made.
   b. Documentation will be maintained for all stages of any investigation.

4. Specific Procedure for awarding body exams
   All cases of malpractice (suspected or otherwise) shall be reported to the awarding body immediately using the appropriate form(s).

4.4 Definitions

Definition of malpractice by learners

This list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by this service 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/maladministration by staff

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

- Improper assistance to candidates.
- Inventing or changing marks for internally assessed work (coursework or portfolio evidence) where there is insufficient evidence of the candidates' achievement to justify the marks given or assessment decisions made.
- Failure to keep candidate 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. If this is the case then the Service will:

    o   Recover the certificate immediately
    o   Notify the awarding body
    o   Conduct internal investigation
    o   Put in place a system to prevent this happening again.

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5. Unique learner number policy

5.1 Introduction

The learner users the Unique Learner Number to access their personal learning record which also allows body the learner selects to see their personal information.
Learners can request their ULN through the customer service.

5.2 MIS and Examinations Officer responsibilities

- They will ensure errors are removed where possible and resubmit the learner record to LRS to get a valid ULN.
- They are responsible for the coordination of activities by the service leading to the collection of appropriate information from the learners at the time of enrolment and update the learner record on the "Learnertrack" MIS database.
- They are responsible for registering the service with LRS.
- They are responsible for applying to the LRS for unique learner numbers (ULN).
- They will liaise with curriculum lead to ensure that learners' records are kept up to date at all times for the LRS.

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6. Reasonable Adjustment Policy

1. Introduction

Curriculum leads are responsible for the operation of this policy. Assessors and internal verifiers are responsible for the delivery of this policy. CLASS is part of Slough Borough Council and upholds the Council's equalities policies.

2. Objectives

Assessment practice will be open and consistent within the codes of practice and regulations laid down by the relevant awarding bodies.

Assessment evidence will be judged according to the principle of:

- **Sufficiency** – consistent performance to the required level over a period of time.
- **Currency** – evidence should prove that the learner is competent now.
- **Validity** – evidence should be appropriate and relevant to the syllabus/standards it is addressing.
- **Authenticity** – evidence must reflect to the knowledge/skills understanding of the candidate. The work of another person must not be submitted as that of the candidate.

The chosen format and method of assessment will be appropriate to the qualification and any condition specified by the awarding body.

Assessment material will be presented in clear and unambiguous language and will differentiate only on the learner's knowledge, skills and understanding. Such material will free from any overt or covert discrimination against an individual either in wording or content.

The service will appoint assessment staff whose knowledge, skills and understanding is appropriate for the programme(s), they access.

Staff will maintain their competence through regular staff development organised internally or externally.

Arrangements for candidates with special assessment requirement

Assessment will be available to those who have the potential to achieve the standard required for a particular qualification. However, some candidates may need access to alternative means of providing evidence and /or additional support.

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Access arrangements, including reasonable adjustments will be provided to enable a valid, reliable and consistent judgement to be made about achievement of all learning outcomes against the stated assessment criteria and to achieve the national standard

Special consideration will be given to learners in accordance to awarding body's published criteria and standard.

Candidates may be identified as having a particular assessment requirement in relation to, for example learning difficulties, a visual or hearing impairment, a mental illness. This means that they will be given appropriate support in their development to meet the required standard such as:

- Help with communication and number skills;
- Adapted equipment and physical environment;
- Special information technology;
- Confidence building

The curriculum lead, within reason, will provide the necessary resources to enable a learner with access-related needs for his/her examination or to produce evidence of developing the portfolio.

All candidates will be informed of the Service Assessment Appeal Procedure at the start of the programme.

7. Recognition of prior learning

Recognition of Prior learning (RPL) is a form of assessment which makes use of evidence of a learner's **previous non-certificated achievements** to demonstrate competence or achievement within a unit or qualification.

Through the RPL process, evidence of a candidate's previous achievement (learning) is assessed against the learning outcome of the unit.

Evidence can be draw on any aspect of a candidate's prior experience including:

- Domestic/family life
- Education and training
- Work activities
- Community or voluntary activities.

The assessor must ensure that all learning outcomes and assessment criteria being claimed are covered and that record of assessment is maintained in the usual way. The process must be subject to the same internal quality assurance requirements as any other assessment method is line of City and Guilds quality assurance policy.

8. Equality and Diversity

Slough Borough Council is committed to being an employer of choice. Our aim is to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, maternity and pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. These are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. In addition, the Council also recognises trade union membership and activity or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified which will also result in grounds for unfair discrimination.

Recruitment and selection criteria, procedures and practices will be kept under regular review to ensure that individuals are selected or promoted on merit. All employees will be given equal opportunity and, where appropriate, training to progress within the Council.

Local authorities have a legal responsibility to promote Equality of Opportunity. The Council is committed to the use of those statutory provisions which permit Positive Action to improve recruitment and access to training where disadvantaged groups are under-represented. In particular the Council aims for its workforce to be representative of the local population of whom over a third are of ethnic minority origin.

The Council continually monitors this policy to assess its effectiveness.

9. Examination Contingency Plan

This plan will be periodically review the contingency plans well in advance of each exam or assessment series. **In the event of disruption we will c**ontact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.

Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process

The service is structured with an Exams Officer and overseen by the Employment and Skills Manager and the Community Learning and Skills Manager.

In a period of extended absence the Employment and Skills Manager would take responsibility for carrying out the duties of the Exams Officer. Appropriate back-filling of responsibilities would then be decided upon by the Employment and Skills Manager. All staff involved in invigilating receive training and the Exams Officer involved in the administration of key processes is trained on how to carry out processes and who to contact in extremis.

Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

If staff are unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning or the main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time then the Exams Officer will contact venues from a short list of contingency sites held.

Critical situation with candidates

If candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal then alternative venues or dates will be arranged by the Exams Officer, in line with the awarding body policies.

Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations

We will communicate with awarding body to organise alternative delivery of paper and seek the advice of the examination board. If there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts we will communicate with relevant awarding body at the outset to resolve the issue and arrange a timescale for transportation of the examination scripts.

Community Learning *and* **Skills Service**

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