



The Trust for Developing Communities

TDC Student Policies

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1. Internal Quality Assurance Policy

Context

TDC delivers courses related to Community – Organising, Development and Engagement in the Brighton area. The courses are accredited and tutors are supported through the assessment and internal verification process. An effective Internal Verification (IV) system ensures assessment practices and decisions are regularly reviewed and evaluated to ensure the validity of the award of credit.

Role of Internal Verifier

There are three aspects of the Internal Verification role:

1. **Verifying assessment** which consists of:
 - 1a - sampling assessments**
 - 1b - monitoring assessment practice**

1c - standardising assessment judgements

- 2. Developing and supporting assessors**
- 3. Managing the quality of accreditation delivery**

1. Verifying Assessment

1a. Sampling Assessments

At the beginning of a TDC course the Central Services Manager registers the learners to the relevant awarding body. Following the registration of learners at the beginning of a course, the Internal Verifier arranges a mid-way visit to the course with the tutor/assessor. The mid-way visit consists of introducing the learners to the Internal Verification process and sampling assessments, which will include reviewing the quality of Assessors' judgements at the interim stage. The tutor/assessors will assess work over the first six months of the course and will submit portfolios for internal verification by the end of month seven. Following assessment sampling written feedback will be given to the tutor/assessor through the Internal Verifier's report within two weeks of portfolios being submitted by the tutor.

Interim Sampling:

The Internal Verifier will:

- [review assignments to ensure that learners do have the opportunity to meet all the assessment criteria
- [review the assessment schedule
- [review some candidate work before decisions have been made on any unit
- [review the feedback given to candidates by Assessors
- [review the assessment of activities (which may not be repeated), such as a performance, a group discussion, a practical task, an exhibition, role play, question and answer
- [review portfolios
- [review the effectiveness of assessment planning
- [identify any training needs of Assessors
- [identify good practice.

Summative Sampling:

Involves reviewing the quality of the assessment decision by evaluating **how** the Assessor has reached that decision.

The Internal Verifier must be able to follow an audit trail that clearly demonstrates that the Assessor has checked that the evidence presented meets the "rules of evidence".

Evidence must have been confirmed by the Assessor as:

- [valid – relevant to the standards for which competence is claimed
- [authentic – produced by the candidate or witness
- [reliable – accurately reflects the level of performance which has been consistently demonstrated by the candidate

- [current – sufficiently recent to be confident the same level of skill / understanding / knowledge exists at the time of the claim
- [sufficient – meets in full **all** the requirements of the standards

Internal Verifiers must not make assumptions about any aspect of the “rules of evidence”. Recording of questioning of the candidate by the Assessor and checking the authenticity of witness testimonies by the Assessor should be expected.

Sampling Strategy

The sample includes **all courses and units** being delivered by TDC.

The full range of **assessment methods** used for any one unit must be sampled.

TDC will sample the assessment decisions of all **tutor/assessors** and offer additional support to inexperienced tutor/assessors.

The Internal Verifier will also take into account the relative assessment workload of individual Assessors and sample proportionately.

The sampling strategy will take into account the following:

- [The size of sample needed to ensure reliability. The size of the sample will always be a minimum of 10%.
- [The various assessment methods used.
- [The number, experience and workload of assessors.
- [The candidate cohorts (different start dates)
- [Unit levels and credit values
- [New or revised units
- [All units – and particularly any problematic units
- [Reasonable adjustments
- [Issues arising from previous verification

Problem units, which include competences difficult to assess e.g. for confidentiality reasons, safety considerations, materials used, infrequent occurrence, should be sampled. The Internal Verifiers will ensure that issues such as these are discussed fully with the assessment team and difficulties resolved at an early stage.

1b. Monitoring Assessment Practice

TDC have a quality monitoring system in place to visit tutors to monitor their teaching and learning each academic year. Tutors have either a class visit or a direct observation on an annual basis. Any quality issues arising from these visits are discussed with the tutor and systems put in place to make improvements. Where a tutor is offering accreditation through their course, where possible, observation and class visits are combined with IV visits.

1c. Standardising Assessment Judgements

The Internal Verifier will conduct a standardisation review involving all Assessors in the team. Notes of standardisation meetings, documenting the methodology and outcomes of the process, will be placed in the TDC internal verification file for each academic year.

2. Developing and Supporting Assessors

TDC hold two meetings for tutor/assessor per year: one as courses are starting and one to look at standardisation of portfolios and discuss good practice in assessment. All tutors offering accreditation through TDC are expected to attend these meetings. The Internal Verifier will ensure that all the Assessors have copies of TDC's recording documentation, are up to date with any changes in policy, are aware of the Internal Verification process and understand their role in it. The Internal Verifier will also provide assistance and advice to tutor/assessors on an individual basis and further support regarding candidates with special assessment needs. Tutor/assessors are also sent information regarding accreditation and other training events which may support their work and be of interest to them.

3. Managing the Quality of Accreditation Delivery

The Internal Verifier provides a quality assurance role within the organisation by ensuring that assessment and internal verification documents are completed correctly, according to the procedures. Accreditation policies, procedures and paperwork are all available by request by contacting the Central Services Manager by emailing training@trustdevcom.org.uk.

All candidate assessment records, records of internal verification activity (including records of meetings) and records of certificates claimed are retained for three years and are available to the regulatory authorities upon request.

Samples (copies) of learners' work are retained for each academic year.

The Internal Verifier provides a link between the team of Assessors, the External Verifier, and the Awarding body.

2. Access to Fair Assessment Policy

TDC strives to ensure that all learners have fair and equal access to accreditation.

Steps we make to ensure that this happens are:

- [The level of the unit is appropriate for the learner
- [Learners receive a copy of the unit
- [Learners understand (are aware of) the evidence required to meet the assessment criteria
- [Learners are aware of the timescale available to complete the unit
- [Reasonable adjustments are used appropriately with learners
- [Assessors adhere to the assessment criteria stated in the unit descriptors
- [Assessors adhere to the Awarding Body's procedures for those qualifications which include external assessments
- [Formative assessment provides learners with constructive feedback on their progress and indicates how improvements can be made
- [Feedback to learners is appropriate to their learning needs (for example, verbal or written feedback) and is documented
- [Learners are given the opportunity to act on the feedback from formative assessment and to make changes or additions to their work
- [Summative assessment is the process of making judgements about the evidence presented to meet the assessment criteria and a judgement about the learner's achievement

- [Internal quality assurance and standardisation are carried out according to TDC and the Awarding Body's procedures

3. Assessment Malpractice Policy

The staff and trustees of TDC have a statutory and moral responsibility for ensuring that there is no malpractice in any of the assessments or verifications that occur as a result of a student participating in a course with the organisation. This policy defines malpractice and lays out the steps that will be taken if malpractice is suspected. This policy applies to both staff and learners and will be applied in all cases warranted serious enough to undermine the credibility and reputation of the organisation.

Definitions

Malpractice constitutes any action that deliberately disrupts fair and equal opportunity for assessment

Examples of malpractice include:

- [claiming certification for non active candidates;
- [claiming a certificate for candidates who have not undergone appropriate assessment or verification;
- [claiming for incorrect units or qualifications;
- [claiming for fictitious candidates.

More specifically:

Learner Malpractice

The following are examples of malpractice by learners; this list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by TDC at its discretion.

- **Plagiarism** constitutes submitting work that is not one's own, without indicating or recognising this to the marker (acknowledging your sources). This might occur by:

- [Using a choice phrase or sentence come across elsewhere
- [Copying word-for-word directly from a text
- [Paraphrasing the words from a text very closely
- [Using text downloaded from the internet
- [Borrowing statistics or assembled facts from another person or source
- [Copying or downloading figures, photographs, pictures or diagrams without acknowledging their sources or gaining permission when needed
- [Copying from the notes or essays of a fellow student
- [Copying from your own notes on a text, tutorial, video or lecture that contain direct quotations

Plagiarism, unlike cheating or malpractice, may be intentional or unintentional. There is a difference between unintentional plagiarism, and deliberate, malicious or sustained plagiarism.

Vulnerable and inexperienced learners and those new to the UK may be unaware of

referencing and other rules.

Where possible, some tasks/ assignments should be planned for completion early in the course to provide an opportunity to identify and correct unintentional poor practice without disciplinary action being taken.

It should be made clear to learners that they must address the issue within a specified timescale, and that they must agree to receive appropriate support to put things right.

They should be informed that disciplinary action will be taken in future if plagiarism is sustained. Sustained plagiarism will be treated as deliberate.

- **Collusion** by working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as individual learner work. Learners should not be discouraged from teamwork, as this is an essential key skill for many sectors and subject areas, and the use of minutes, allocating tasks, agreeing outcomes, etc are an essential part of team work and this must be made clear to the learners

- **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

- **Fabrication** of results and/or evidence

- Failing to abide by the instructions or advice of a trainer/tutor, an assessor or a supervisor, in relation to the assessment rules, regulations and security

- Misuse of assessment material

- Behaving in such a way as to undermine the integrity of the assessment

- The alteration of any results document, including certificates

TDC recognises that the temptation for cheating, malpractice or plagiarism can arise from lack of self-confidence or misunderstanding of the aims and conditions of the assessment, or from stress/pressure.

All policies and procedures will aim to maximise support to the person accused, taking into account their particular circumstances.

It may be more appropriate in some cases to address the circumstances as a priority rather than individual behaviour. Undue stress, for example, might be reduced through appropriate support to prevent any recurrence.

In all cases of malpractice the Chief Executive must be involved. He or she will, at their discretion, and after taking advice where necessary, decide on an alternative or non-disciplinary course of action.

A written record of the circumstances, the decision and the reason for alternative or non-disciplinary action will be kept by the Central Services Manager. (This could include being in

the form of an e-mail)

TDC Employees

The following are examples of potential malpractice by TDC staff. The list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by TDC at its discretion.

- [Failing to keep any marking schemes secure
- [Alteration of any marking schemes
- [Alteration of assessment and grading criteria
- [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 TDC 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
- [Failing to keep learner computer files secure
- [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
- [Failing to keep assessment secure prior to the assessment

Procedures

Stage 1

Prevention

- [All relevant learners should receive appropriate guidance through their tutor concerning the preparation of work and the correct use and referencing of sources
- [All relevant tutors, learners and staff should receive appropriate guidance on assessment/test/examination conditions
- [All relevant tutors and learners should be informed about TDC's Policy on Malpractice and the consequences of such behaviour.

Stage 2

Formal proceedings

- [Cheating, malpractice and deliberate plagiarism should be reported immediately to TDC's Chief Executive.
- [Any person suspected of cheating, malpractice or deliberate plagiarism shall be made fully aware by TDC's Chief Executive, in writing, at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the allegation. Care must be taken to ensure that the format and language is fully accessible to the recipient. If necessary, an agreed advocate can be involved to ensure understanding.
- [Any person suspected of cheating, malpractice or deliberate plagiarism shall be presented with all evidence against them.

- [Any person suspected of malpractice or deliberate plagiarism must have an opportunity to respond – personally, and/or in writing within an agreed timescale.
- [Any person suspected of malpractice or deliberate plagiarism will be invited to a meeting with TDC’s Chief Executive or a responsible third party where he or she will be able to explain and defend his or her actions. He or she may be accompanied by an agreed advocate.
- [Vulnerable learners must be accompanied by an advocate. Advocates can include parents, friends or others.
- [Learners with impairments must be given appropriate support for any meeting, e.g. electronic note takers or BSL interpreters.
- [Alternatively, the disciplinary process may be conducted by email or in writing. NB: Care must be taken when dealing with vulnerable and inexperienced learners.
- [Where behaviour is not clearly deliberate, the learner will receive support and have an opportunity to re-submit work. If improvements are not then made, the learner should be advised that formal disciplinary proceedings will commence.

Stage 3 Outcomes

- [Allegations of cheating, malpractice and/or deliberate plagiarism will be reported to the Awarding Body, Certa, (where appropriate) in writing.
- [Where Certa’s Regulations have been contravened, then a representative of the Awarding Body may wish to be involved in the investigation
- [A written report of the investigation and recommended actions and sanctions will be sent to all parties.
- [The person at the centre of the investigation will be informed of the Appeals Procedure should the judgement be found against him/her.
- [Where Awarding Body Regulations have been contravened, then the Awarding Body may wish to impose sanctions on the future involvement of that person in assessments/test/examinations.

Sanctions in the event of cheating, malpractice or deliberate plagiarism

Learner Sanctions will be applied proportionate to the seriousness of the behaviour

- [A learner may lose credit for the individual unit or for all units in the qualification
- [A learner may be disqualified from completing the qualification
- [A learner may be barred from submitting work or taking an examination towards the qualification for a period of time.

Tutor/Assessor Sanctions will be applied proportionate to the seriousness of the behaviour

- [A tutor may be withdrawn from teaching/assessing the individual course
- [A tutor may be barred from teaching/assessing that qualification in the future
- [A tutor may be served with warning of disciplinary action by the region and those procedures will begin.

CEO/Central Services Manager Sanctions will be applied proportionate to the seriousness of the behaviour

- [The **Chief Executive/Central Services Manager** may be barred from dealing with the qualification in the future
- [The **Chief Executive/Central Services Manager** may be barred from dealing with all qualifications in the future
- [The **Chief Executive/Central Services Manager** may be served with warning of disciplinary action by the region and those procedures will begin

In very serious circumstances, and at the request of the Awarding Body, the Police may become involved.

4. Assessment Complaints and Appeals

If the student feels they have been treated unfairly they should follow TDC's Assessment Complaints and Appeals procedure.

TDC's Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedure

TDC's Assessment Appeals procedure is intended to help the learner who feels an assessment decision awarded to them is unfair. This procedure applies only to assessment carried out by or for TDC. In the case of external assessment the awarding bodies have their own appeals procedure.

Policy

- [All learners have the right to appeal any assessment decision made.
- [The appropriate procedure will be explained to learners.
- [A copy of the procedure will be provided to learners on request.

Procedure

- [If the learner disagrees with the assessment awarded he or she should discuss the issue with the trainer/assessor within seven days of receiving the assessment decision
- [If the matter is not resolved the learner should complete an assessment appeal form and return it to the Chief Executive
- [The Chief Executive will discuss the issue with the learner and the trainer/assessor and arrange for the work to be reassessed by another trainer/assessor if necessary.
- [The Chief Executive will make notes at this meeting, summarising what is discussed and action to be taken. A copy of these notes will be sent to each party in the discussion who will sign them to agree they are an accurate record. Each party will retain a copy.
- [Following an action taken the Chief Executive will refer the appeal to the Trustees who will agree the assessment decision to be awarded to the learner and communicate this to the learner in writing. This decision is final.
- [Details of any internal appeals will be made available to the Certa moderator and/or the Certa approved internal quality assurer/verifier.
- [If the learner is still dissatisfied after exhausting TDC's assessment appeals procedure he or she may appeal in writing to Certa.

