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# Utopia BTEC Handbook 2023-2024

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Adopted by Utopia - for review by the Board of Directors
Updated September 2023
For review - Annually

## UTOPIA

### BTEC 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 the awarding body, where appropriate.

To protect the interests of all learners and the integrity of the qualification.

**In order to do this, Utopia will:**

- Inform the learner at induction, of the Appeals Policy and procedure.
- Record, track and validate any appeal.
- Forward the appeal to the awarding body 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 the awarding body for a minimum of 18 months.
- Have a staged appeals procedure.
  - Stage 1 - Appeal raised** - Learner informs assessor that they are unhappy with the grade/outcome of assessed work.
  - Stage 2 - 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 3.
  - Stage 3 - 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 4.
  - Stage 4 - Appeal hearing:** Senior management hear the appeal: last stage by the centre. If unresolved, move to Stage 5.
  - Stage 5 - External appeal:** The grounds for appeal and any supporting documentation must be submitted by the centre to Edexcel within 14 days of the completion of Stage 5; a fee is levied.
- Will take appropriate action to protect the interest 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 annually.

## UTOPIA

### BTEC Appeals Process

#### What learners can do if they are unhappy about an assessment decision?

At Utopia we will follow Edexcel's policy regarding learners right to appeal. Edexcel will also not intervene until we have carried out an extensive internal enquiry, which involves these five stages:

#### **Stage 1**

Learner is unhappy with the grade/outcome of assessed work.

#### **Stage 2**

Learner should discuss the outcome with the tutor that marked that work. If they are still unhappy with the outcome then go to stage three.

#### **Stage 3**

Learner work will be re-assessed by the Internal Verifier. If learner is still unhappy with the outcome move to stage four.

#### **Stage 4**

The Quality Nominee will review learner work and make a judgement in favour of the learner or the assessor. If learner is still unhappy with the outcome of the appeal then they move to stage five.

#### **Stage 5**

We will refer the appeal to Edexcel. The appropriate documentation will be completed by the exams officer.

**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 national standards.

To ensure that there is accurate and detailed recording of assessment decisions.

**In order to do this, Utopia will:**

- Ensure that learners are provided with assignments that are fit for purpose, to enable them to produce appropriate evidence for assessment.
- Assess learners' 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 the awarding body.
- 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 annually.

## UTOPIA

### BTEC 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, Utopia will:

- Seek to avoid potential malpractice by using the induction period and the student 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 and all personnel linked to the allegation. It will proceed through the following stages:

Interview relevant individuals and collect evidence  
Present a report to the Head of Centre  
Head of Centre decides on subsequent action

- 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 judgement made.
- Document all stages of any investigation.
- Were malpractice is proven, the centre will apply carefully considered penalties/sanctions.

#### Definition of Malpractice by Learners

This list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by Utopia Project 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 Utopia**

This list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by this school 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 Utopia Project 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 annually.

## UTOPIA

### BTEC Internal Verification Policy

**Aim:** To ensure there is an accredited lead internal verifier in each principal subject area.

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, Utopia will:**

- A lead internal verifier for each principal subject area is accredited by Edexcel via the successful completion of an online standardisation exercise.
- Each lead internal verifier oversees effective internal verification systems within each principal 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 school assessment instruments 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 and teams internally verified, to ensure school programmes conform to national standards and standards verification requirements.
- 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 annually.

## UTOPIA

### BTEC Internal Verification Process

#### Internal Verification

Internal verification is an important part of BTEC delivery and assessment. It makes sure that internally assessed units that learners complete:

- have appropriate assessment opportunities
- are assessed accurately to national standards.

Internal verification is a process undertaken to check that:

- assessment and grading is consistent across the programme
- assessment instruments (assignments) are fit for purpose - i.e. they enable learners to produce evidence which meets the targeted assessment criteria
- assessment decisions accurately judge learner evidence against the assessment criteria.

#### Internal Verification Process

Assignment briefs that learners receive should be internally verified before they receive them to ensure that it:

- has accurate unit details
- has accurate programme details
- has clear deadlines for assessment
- shows all relevant assessment criteria for the unit(s) covered in the assignment
- indicates relevant assessment criteria targeted against each task
- clearly states what evidence you need to provide
- is likely to generate evidence which is appropriate and sufficient
- is set at the appropriate level
- has a time period of appropriate duration
- uses suitable vocational language
- has a clear presentation format.

#### Timing

Internal verification will be carried out in a timely way throughout the year. It will usually take place at the end of each Unit of work that learners complete (this is usually termly). Internal verification is important as it helps support Assessors, to ensure that they mark work correctly and give constructive feedback.

Internal verification takes place once tutor assesses the work that has been submitted. The Internal Verifier then checks the tutor's assessment decisions, to make sure that they are correct in relation to the assessment criteria of each unit.



### Internally verifying assessment decisions

The Internal Verifier reviews the Assessor's judgments against the learning aim, unit content, assessment criteria and assessment guidance as published in the qualification specification. They will check:

- learner work against the assessment criteria and judge whether it has been assessed accurately.
- coverage of the unit content and assessment guidance to see if the Assessor has taken this into account - does the assessment reflect the breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding identified in the content?
- the feedback from Assessor to the learner is accurate and linked to the assessment criteria. Remember, the Internal Verifier is judging the Assessor, not the learner.

If the Internal Verifier judges that learner work has been inaccurately assessed, appropriate action will be identified on the internal verification form. If inaccuracies are identified, the Assessor will re-assess the work in the light of the Internal Verifier's comments and it will then be checked again by the Internal Verifier, signed and dated.

## UTOPIA

### BTEC 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, Utopia will:**

- Register each learner within the awarding body requirements.
- Provide a mechanism for programme teams to check the accuracy of learner registrations.
- Make each learner aware of their registration status.
- Inform the awarding body of withdrawals, transfers or changes to learner details.
- Ensure that certificate claims are timely and based solely on internally verified assessment records.
- Audit certificate claims made to the awarding body.
- Audit the certificates received from the awarding body to ensure accuracy and completeness.
- Keep all records safely and securely for three years post certification.

This policy will be reviewed annually.