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**Student Handbook**

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**Introduction to BTEC qualifications:**

**What are Vocational Qualifications?**

Vocational qualifications are nationally recognised qualifications. They are different from traditional GCSE and A Levels because they are linked to a particular area of work.

**What makes vocational Qualifications different?**

* Students develop skills, knowledge and understanding in the vocational area they are studying.
* Each vocational course is made up of a number of units, allowing students to build up their qualification in stages.
* Students are assessed mainly through coursework.
* Students produce evidence for their key skills qualification through their vocational course.
* Students take responsibility for their own learning by planning their work, doing research and regularly reviewing their progress.

**Why do we offer BTEC courses?**

* They prepare students for the world of work and provide a good starting point for other qualifications.
* Employers value the qualities that vocational students bring to the workplace e.g. organisation, time management, communication and research skills.
* Universities value the independent study skills that vocational students bring to their courses.
* The courses are flexible so that they meet the needs of a wide range of students. They are available at different levels in a variety of formats. They can be taken alongside other qualifications such as traditional GCSEs and A levels.
* They give students the opportunity to try a range of activities such as designing products, organising events, investigating how professionals work and working in teams.

**BTEC delivery – what to expect during your BTEC course**

**Assignments -** Each BTEC qualification is broken down into distinct units/assignments. Whilst most assignments are set internally many BTEC qualifications now include an external assessment or exam.

Your teacher should make you aware of the course delivery plan, which describes when you will complete each assignment. At the outset of each assignment your teacher will inform you of the ‘hand-out’ date and ‘submission’ date. It is essential that you meet submission deadlines; and as a result your teach should be providing you with regular reminders of imminent deadlines.

**Assessment Criteria -** Each assignment is assessed using clearly defined assessment criteria, which your work will be judged against. The assignment briefs provided by your teachers should contain all assessment criteria relevant to the assignment.

Your assignment brief is your point of reference and should always be at hand, especially when writing your assignments. Each assignment brief is internally verified before distribution and will give you all the information you need to complete your assessments. Each assignment brief will include a list of useful websites and resources to support your work.

The feedback you receive from teachers should focus on specific assessment criteria enabling you to improve your work.

**How will I learn during a BTEC qualification?**

**Teacher input**

At the start of a unit there will be a lot of teacher input; question and answer sessions, discussions, note taking and handouts. This may all happen at the beginning of a unit or at different points throughout the unit. It is important to note any information you are given, as it may be required at a later stage in the unit.

**Learner investigation**

Once the assignment has been explained and the tasks have been set, you will have to work on your own to find the information you need and then you will have to produce the information in a particular format to meet the requirements of the task. The work you produce must be your own; word for word copying from a textbook, or copying and pasting from the Internet **will not** be accepted nor will you be allowed to copy the work of other learners. You will have to check regularly with your teacher to make sure that your work is correct and to discuss any ideas that you want to develop.

**Group work**

For some tasks you may have to work in a group, either to find information or to produce evidence. This is quite acceptable providing that all learners take an equal share of the work and that individual contributions are identified.

**Practical Work.**

Practical activities which may include; Learning by experience.

Learning by experience and is usually done in the work place (e.g. work experience or work placement) or by setting up work situations in the classroom (e.g. a role play of a business interview or a health care worker communicating with a client). Whether real or pretend, a lot can be learned from this type of situation and it is important to make the most of it by preparing thoroughly beforehand and recording any information you find. Inviting visitors into school from the vocational area is another good way of linking your work with what really happens in the workplace.

**What skills will I develop during a BTEC qualification?**

* Communication skills
* Research skills using a variety of methods
* I.C.T. skills using a variety of programs
* Practical skills using different techniques and equipment
* Presentation skills using a variety of formats
* Organisational skills

**How important is independent study on a BTEC qualification?**

* You will be expected to do all of the following as part of your day-to-day work
* Read and research
* Keep a record of the information you find and the sources
* Plan your work in a logical order and keep a record of your progress
* Talk to your teachers about your ideas and how to achieve the best results
* Produce drafts and final copies of your work
* Produce good quality work with high standards of grammar and spelling
* Present you work in a suitable format according to the purpose and the audience
* Evaluate your work and make suggestions for improvement
* Meet deadlines
* Keep a record of the work you have completed, including the grades and points you have been awarded, ensuring this matches the assessment wall.

**Understanding the assessment criteria**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Analyse | Identify several factors, show how they are linked, and explain the importance of each |
| Compare/Contrast | Identify the main factors in two or more situations, then explain the similarities and differences, and in some cases adapt your original ideas |
| Competently use | Take full account of information and feedback you have obtained to review or improve an activity |
| Demonstrate | Prove that you can carry out a complex activity taking into account information you have obtained or received to adapt your original ideas |
| Describe | Give a comprehensive description which tells a story to the reader and shows that you can apply your knowledge and information correctly |
| Evaluate | Bring together all your information and make a judgement on the importance or success of something |
| Explain | Provide full details and reasons to support the arguments you are making |
| Identify | Give all the basic facts which relate to a certain topic |
| Justify | Give full reasons or evidence to support your opinion |
| List | Write a list of the main items (not sentences) |
| Name | State the proper terms related to a drawing or diagram |
| Outline | Give all the main points, but without going into too much detail |
| Recommend | Weigh up all the evidence to come to a conclusion, with reasons, about what would be best |
| State | Point out or list the main features |
| Suggest | Give your own ideas or thoughts |

**Submission guidance and meeting deadlines**

**What will be expected of you?**

High levels of attendance and engagement in lessons

Read and research

Keep a record of the information you find and the sources

Plan your work in a logical order and keep a record of your progress

Talk to your teachers about your ideas and how to achieve the best results

Produce drafts and final copies of your work

Produce good quality work with high standards of grammar and spelling

Present your work in a suitable format according to the purpose and the audience

Evaluate your work and make suggestions for improvement

Meet deadlines

Keep a record of the work you have completed, including the grades and points you have been awarded

**The importance of meeting submission deadlines:**

You must make every effort to meet original submission deadlines (these will be clearly shared on assignment briefs and through constant reminders within lessons):

If you **DO MEET** these deadlines you may be offered an extension (2 weeks) by your teachers, but you will need to complete this work without any guidance from them.

If you **DO NOT MEET** these deadlines you cannot obtain a pass on this assignment and staff cannot simply offer you an extension.

* You will need to apply for *‘special circumstances’* which you will have to support with doctors notes, letters from home or other sources of evidence

If you are absent on the day of a submission deadline – email work to your teacher

Talk to teachers – particularly if you know that you will struggle to meet a deadline

**Resubmission of Evidence**

**Opportunities for resubmission of evidence**

Every assignment contributes to the final qualification grade, it may be appropriate for the Lead Internal Verifier of your course to authorise one opportunity for a learner to resubmit evidence to meet assessment criteria targeted by an assignment.

The Lead Internal Verifier can only authorise a resubmission if all of the following conditions are met:

the learner has met initial deadlines set in the assignment, or has met an agreed deadline extension

the tutor judges that the learner will be able to provide improved evidence without further guidance

the assessor has authenticated the evidence submitted for assessment and the evidence is accompanied by a signed-and-dated declaration of authenticity by the learner.

If you are provided with the opportunity to resubmit your work it must be submit by the date agreed by the lead IV for the qualification which will be a maximum of 15 days after you receive your feedback from your first submission. Any work submitted after this deadline will not be assessed.

**Referencing/acknowledging sources of information**

In order to achieve a BTEC qualification, you must produce your own work. You will not be allowed to:

Copy word for word from textbooks

Copy and paste from the Internet

Copy from other learners (past or present)

The examination board has a clear policy on how to deal with learners who cheat. If you copy the work of another learner you will risk having your work cancelled and may achieve nothing. If you lend your work to others, you will also risk having your work cancelled. If you steal another learner’s work and copy it, the exam board may cancel all of your courses. Do not cheat, remember your teachers are very good at detecting work that has been copied!

**The academy BTEC malpractice/plagiarism policy can be found at the end of this handbook**

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**Good practice – referencing your sources**

It is important that you understand referencing and how to identify when you have used ideas and words from books or other sources in a way that clearly highlights they are not your own work.

**General Quotations:**

Using a quotation reproduces in your work the actual words a writer uses. You should therefore take care to copy accurately . If you copy the actual words a writer uses you should put the words in quotation marks “ “ and give a reference. For example:

Jack Frost wrote “Summer is not coming in” (Frost, A. 2005 p.14)

You would then at the end of your assignment include a bibliography detailing the full reference of all sources you have used to complete your assignment.

For example:

Frost, A. (2005) *A Diary of Seasonal Meltdown* Seasonal Publishers

**Electronic information:**

The in-text reference should follow the same format as for printed sources; however, the bibliographic information on your references page will be different and generally requires you to include the type of resource plus when it was accessed, as well as the URL for on-line sources.

For example (relating to a Business reference):

Cadbury World – What do they offer (Products sold on their website)

http://www.cadburyworld.co.uk/products.htm (downloaded 6 July 2012)

When you submit your work you will be required to sign a Learner declaration to confirm the work submitted is your own. Your teacher will also have to sign to confirm that they believe the work you have submitted is your own.

**How will your work be marked?**

Students’ work is assessed during the course, with each individual unit graded as a Pass, Merit or Distinction. This on-going assessment means students can analyse and improve their own performance on a continuing basis, just as they would in the workplace.

Each grade at unit level is assigned a mark these marks are then added together to create the final grade for the qualification. Each individual specification contains details of how to grade each unit and calculate the overall qualification grade which will be provided to you by your BTEC Programme Leader.

**1. During teaching and learning stage of a unit feedback could include, for example:**

* Teachers identifying areas for learner progression including further challenge
* Teachers explain how BTEC assessment works and what learners need to do in order to achieve a Pass, Merit or Distinction
* Teachers could complete a mock assessment to learn the procedures and help prepare for the final assessment

**2. During assessment completion stage the feedback could include for example:**

* Guidance on how to approach the knowledge and skills requirements
* Guidance on appropriate behaviour and approach including confirmation of deadlines etc.
* Confirmation of which criteria the assessor is targeting and clarification of what the assignment brief requires

**3. Following assessment feedback on the assessment record should include**:

* The criteria the learner achieved (with explanation of the assessor’s decisions)
* The criteria not achieved and why (although not a list of instructions on how to get a higher grade)
* General comment on approach, conduct and grammar etc.

**Appeals (when you don’t agree with a grade or mark)**

Learners must initiate an appeal. This would begin by contacting the assessor that marked the piece of work in questions.

Each stage on the appeals process described below should be followed by the completion of an appeals recognition form (these can be collected from the centre quality nominee – Mr Twomey)

**Stage 1 – Informal:**

Learner consults with Assessor within 5 working days 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 Quality Nominee 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 Leadership Team BTEC Line Manager 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

**The academy BTEC appeals policy can be found at the end of this handbook**

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**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 and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (BTEC Level 4-Level 7), 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 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
* 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.

**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

**Enquiries and appeals about Pearson vocational qualifications policy:** This is Pearson’s policy on learner appeals. Please note, this does not apply until internal centre processes have been exhausted

This policy will be reviewed every year by Mr James Twomey – Quality Nominee

Last Checked/Updated: November 2017

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**BTEC Malpractice/Plagarism 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:
	+ See school malpractice policy
	+ 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:

*See school malpractice policy*

**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 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.

**Links:**

**Pearson BTEC Assessment Malpractice Policy:** This is Pearson’s policy on assessment malpractice relating to BTEC programmes

This policy will be reviewed every year by Mr James Twomey – Quality Nominee

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