

## Assessment and Internal Quality Assurance Policy

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This policy and procedure is subject to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation, Disability.

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# Introduction

1.1 Providing consistent, high-quality assessment and internal quality assurance underpins learner progress and achievement. The standardisation of all aspects of assessment practice informs quality assurance and helps all involved to reflect upon and develop their own practice.

1.2 The policy requires active commitment from all staff delivering on all programmes. Training linked to this policy and related procedures supports all teaching staff to have the expertise to create fit-for-purpose assessments and make fair and consistent grading decisions for all learners that meet national standards. The purpose of internal quality assurance, including the Cross-College Verification Group (CCVG), is to provide a clear framework for monitoring assessment practice so that best practice can be shared and areas for improvement can be addressed in a timely way.

## 2. Rationale (Policy Statement)

2.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure consistency, quality and fairness of marking, grading and the overall assessment of learner work. The assessment and internal quality assurance policy is in place to guide assessment practice in order to ensure that, where applicable, all assessment decisions meet national standards and contribute to learner achievement. This policy aims to:

- Provide high quality and consistent assessment and internal quality assurance (IQA) practice across all Milton Keynes College Group courses (including study programmes, HE programmes, apprenticeships, IoT and Prison Services) for all learners within an auditable framework of assessment and moderation/internal quality assurance, as appropriate
- Meet the requirements placed upon the accreditation centres of Milton Keynes College by all awarding organisations and institutions, including JCO, and the expectations linked to relevant quality frameworks such as the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework and the QAA UK Quality Code
- Promote a framework for fair, accurate and timely assessment that enables MK College learners, including those with learning needs and/or disabilities,

to complete and submit work for assessment in ways that reflect good academic practice and the College's Equal Opportunities Policy.

- Promote standards of feedback that aid learner progress and achievement.

## 3. Content

3.1. This policy applies to all staff involved in assessment and internal quality assurance activity including writing assessments, marking, giving feedback to learners on their work and verifying colleague's assessment design.

3.2 Assessed work constitutes any task, activity, essay or project that contributes to the learner achievement in a subject area, including English and maths.

3.3 All assessments must be appropriate, valid and reliable, and based on current awarding body criteria as specified in the current syllabus (or course specification) and guidance document for the programme, if applicable. It is the responsibility of each member of staff involved in assessment and internal quality assurance to be aware of the syllabus (or course specification) and any associate guidance.

3.4 Assessment and internal quality assurance processes must be communicated clearly to learners through induction, progress mentors, tutorials and relevant sessions. This includes handbooks on the College Virtual Learning Environment and either paper based or Virtual Campus within the Prison Environment.

3.5 Internal quality assurance is a process of monitoring assessment practice in order to ensure that assessments are appropriately aligned to relevant assessment criteria and that assessment decisions meet national standards. It provides a continuous check on the consistency, quality and fairness of assessment design, marking, grading, and the overall assessment of learner work. This ensures that College and national standards are appropriately reflected within college assessment practice.

3.6 For the purpose of this policy, the term internal quality assurance (IQA) encompasses all forms of activity that check and validate assessment. This will incorporate the systems of quality assurance as required by examining or awarding bodies, which include:

- Standardisation: The agreement amongst assessors of the marking standard of learners' work.
- Moderation: The process by which the consistency of grading/marking by assessors is ensured and confirmed.
- Verification: The process by which assessments and evidence meet the requirements of awarding body specifications and ratify standardisation processes.

(Each process can lead to mark/grade changes)

3.7 All learners, teachers, assessors, trainers and internal quality assurers (IQAs) will be made aware of their responsibilities within the College Academic Appeals Procedure (see **Appendix 1**). Responsibilities for each key role are outlined in **Appendix 2**.

## 4. Requirements

4.1 All learners on full time study programmes, apprenticeships, HE will be able to view an assignment/task schedule via ProMonitor, OneFile or their learner tracker. Prison Services learners will continue to use the Learner Tracker/ILP and move over to the digital PLP (when available) from the start of their programme. The schedule will include issue dates, hand-in dates, and feedback dates for all assignments/tasks for the duration of the course. The schedule will ensure that assessment is planned coherently across the whole programme so as not to overburden learners or staff at particular times.

Learners should also be made aware of the **JCQ Information for candidates – coursework assessments** which informs candidates about some things that they must and must not do when they are completing and submitting coursework, including plagiarism, and penalties for breaking regulations. This document can be downloaded and printed from JCQ:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents>

4.2. Assessment will, where appropriate, be carried out continuously throughout the course in order that learners can benefit from both formative and summative feedback.



4.3. The appropriate approved College or Awarding Body assessment proforma must be used for all assessment activity. For apprenticeships, the use of the OneFile assessment plan template will be the appropriate resource to be used.

4.4. All assignment briefs and assessment tasks will be internally quality assured prior to being given to learners. The IQA is required to ensure that each brief/assessment task is fit-for-purpose. Learners will be issued with assignment briefs and assessment tasks only after approval by the IQA. The only exception to this will be within our Apprenticeship provision, where assessment planning has been carried out following discussion with the apprentice/candidate. In this instance, there will be no requirement for IQA activity to have taken place prior to the assessment plan to be authorised. However, this assessment plan may be subjected to IQA activity retrospectively as part of the specific IQA sampling strategy.

4.5 Assessments clearly signpost the assessment criteria to be achieved and the content of tasks should clearly match the criteria with relevant scenario-based tasks. Where appropriate, assessments can be modified to meet the needs of individual learners to enable them to be successful; such modifications must still meet the relevant awarding organisation's expectations.

4.6. The management of submission and any subsequent resubmissions must comply with the expectations of the relevant awarding organisation or institution.

As an example, the following stages would be expected (these will vary between awarding organisations and so specific expectations will need to be checked by the relevant IQA and assessors):

- A clear submission deadline.
- Within 15 days the submitted work is assessed and subject to IQA, if sampled. The assessment feedback will detail which criteria have been met and which have not. Feedback will highlight areas of strength ('what went well' - WWW) and detail areas for improvement ('even better if' - EBI), though these will not relate to specific assessment criteria.
- There will then be one opportunity for the learner to request a resubmission to attempt to improve their grade based only on criteria attempted in the first submission. Any resubmissions must be authorised by the relevant IQA. In order to be authorised a resubmission the work

must be authentic and submitted on time and the IQA must believe the learner is capable of improving the work without further teaching.

- A second round of feedback will be provided, again confirming which criteria have and have not been fully met. Updated feedback will be provided at this point regarding WWW and EBI statements.
- For some programmes a final retake opportunity for Pass criteria only can be provided based on a new assessment task - the only criteria to be included in the retake are any pass criteria not yet achieved.
- Retake assessments do NOT need to be taken within a set time frame, these can be completed at any time it is felt appropriate - however a unit is not complete until all resubmissions and retakes are finalised so leaving these too late could impact Standards Verification.

4.7 Feedback given to learners will be written for the assessment and resubmission assessment decision. Feedback will relate to the assessment and criteria that have been achieved so far and the criteria that has not been achieved.

4.8. Feedback will be detailed, legible and constructive to enable the learner to achieve their full potential. Where appropriate, feedback should incorporate the WWW/EBI- model to acknowledge 'What Went Well' within the assignment along with 'Even Better If' themes that outline relevant skills, knowledge or understanding that the learner in question needs to target for development to support their future progress.

4.9 It is good practice to provide feedback on spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG). Where appropriate this should be done using a SPAG mark scheme, so that learners can 'self-correct' their work.

4.10. All feedback will be recorded on the learner work and accompanying assignment brief or assessment task sheet. This process can be completed electronically within systems such as OneFile and Turnitin or through Prison Services ILP.

4.11. Where a learner needs to do additional work to achieve all the criteria or opts to do additional work to achieve a higher grade, this work should be added to the original work as a supplement and then assessed in the normal way where awarding organisation requirements allow for this.

4.12. Similarly, a learner can only request a re-submission opportunity for criteria attempted within their original submission. For example, if a learner submits work attempting pass and merit criteria but does not achieve all the merit criteria the resubmission cannot then include distinction criteria.

4.13. All learner work handed in by the deadline will normally be marked, internally quality assured and returned to the learner within 15 working days. For Prison Services short courses (3 weeks plus) and/or roll on/off, it should be returned to the learner for understanding where they need to make improvements within 5 – 10 working days. In all cases, however, awarding organisation requirements for the above should always be met.

4.14. Internal quality assurance must be carried out continuously throughout the year. A Lead Internal Quality Assurer will have the responsibility of planning the internal quality assurance strategy for each programme. This strategy will cover observation of all assessors/tutors/trainers and the sampling of work. The strategy will be programme-specific and reflect any circumstances to meet the particular needs of the team/programme and those outlined by the awarding body.

The strategy will be informed by the college assessment decision sampling matrix (see below) to 'risk rate' each assessor and determine the required IQA sample size. Standardisation meetings and activities will be incorporated within this strategy to support the development of assessment practice in the area. Where specific Awarding Organisation stipulate IQA sampling size/method then this must be adhered to.

4.15. All internal quality assurers must meet any requirements for occupational expertise as specified by the relevant standards-setting body before commencing their role. In addition, they must hold at least a Level 4 teaching qualification and relevant internal quality assurance qualification (TAQA), where awarding bodies have mandated this. Wider IQA (non TAQA qualification) training will be provided for staff who don't actually require TAQA.

4.16. As a minimum requirement, internal quality assurance documentation will consist of the IQA strategy, (which will include a sampling strategy), roles and responsibilities, completed IQA recording forms (**See Point 6**), standardisation meeting plan and associated minutes.

4.17. Any other documentary evidence of IQA processes must meet the requirements of the Awarding Organisation and the relevant Code of Practice.

4.18. Internal quality assurance must take place before assessment decisions are finalised and notified to learners. Learners should normally receive assessment decisions no later than 15 working days after submission. Within this period relevant IQA sampling must have taken place as well.

4.19. Where assessment decisions are not agreed during the IQA process, the decision of the IQA will in most instances be final. The IQA should in such instances ensure that feedback to the assessor is thorough and explicitly details actions required to ensure learners are supported to achieve. Should such a decision be disputed by the assessor involved an appeal process will be overseen by a member of the Campus Quality Team, or for Prison Services provision by the Prison Services Quality Manager.

4.20. Records of assessment and internal quality assurance must be auditable and kept in a secure, accessible location for three years following learner achievement. Learner work must be kept for three months post certification.

4.21. It is the responsibility of the programme-specific area to hold an IQA File for assessors/tutors and verifiers/moderators to follow. The file should include the following documents (refer to awarding body guidance and templates as appropriate):

- Current Qualification Specification
- Centre Policies
- Assessment and Internal Quality Assurance Process
- Previous Visit Reports and updated Action Plan
- Appeals Documentation
- Staff CPD logs, CVs and certificates relating to their practice
- Standardisation meetings and meetings schedule
- IQA strategy and sampling plan
- IQA recording sheet and guidance notes

4.22. It is the responsibility of the programme specific area to liaise with the Awarding Organisation, in conjunction with the Quality Team and for Prison Services, the Quality Manager/Regional Quality Lead, to resolve any issues surrounding assessment or internal quality assurance which may result in an imposed sanction preventing certification.

4.22. In accordance with JCQ and its awarding body members (AQA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC) the 'Review of centre marks GCE coursework, GCE and GCSE non-examination assessments' guidance, states candidates must now be informed of their centre assessed marks so that they may request a review of the centre's marking before marks are submitted to the awarding body. Full guidance for JCQ compliance can be accessed at:  
<https://www.jcq.org.uk/?s=GCE+and+GCSE+non-examination+assessments>

## 5. IQA Matrix for Sampling Assessment Decisions/Record of Risk Assessment and Sampling Strategy adopted by IQA

Outline the risk factors that you have identified, and which have informed your sampling strategy

### Risk Assessment

The number of samples required from each assessor is highly dependent on the following considerations

- experience of the individual assessor
- teaching experience and qualification,
- familiarity with the awarding body processes
- subject specialism
- experience with the unit being assessed

### Sample Guidance

IQA sampling plans must cover **ALL** Assessors, units, methods of assessment, a range of grades including all attempted criteria and should be distributed evenly across the duration of course. All learners are not required to be sampled unless stipulated as a requirement by the awarding body.

Once a sample amount for an assessor has been confirmed, the full range of grades should be seen (i.e. a sample of 10% of assessment decisions should include a R/NYA, PASS, MERIT and DISTINCTION if available).

### **High Risk – Assessors meeting all or some of the following consideration:**

- Assessors that are **new** to teaching/assessing at Milton Keynes College (1 – 2 years)
- Assessors without L3 teacher training qualification
- Assessors working outside their subject specialism or new to the programme

### Sample size required:

1st marking sample – 100% marked assessments sampled by IQA

Subsequent samples - 40% or a minimum of 5.

### Medium Risk

- Assessors that are relatively new to teaching/assessing at Milton Keynes College (2 – 3 years)
- Assessors who are familiar with the programme and within their subject specialism, but inexperienced with the unit being assessed
- Assessors without L4 teacher training qualification

#### Sample size required:

1st marking sample – 50% marked assessments sampled by IQA

Subsequent samples - 20% or a minimum of 4.

### Low Risk

- Qualified (minimum L4 teacher training)/ experienced lecturer (3 years+)
- Teaching within their subject specialism and experience with the specific units they are assessing

#### Sample size required:

Marking sample – 10% or a minimum of 4.

## 6.1 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (IQA) FORM FOR ASSIGNMENT BRIEF

<b>Programme title and level</b>		<b>Provision type</b>	<i>Campus Based</i>	<i>PEF</i>	<i>WBL</i>
<b>Unit name/number(s)</b>		<b>School/Site</b>			
<b>Assignment title</b>		<b>Awarding body</b>			
<b>Assignment type:</b> <i>(highlight as appropriate)</i> Formative / Summative / Retake		<b>Assessor</b>			
<b>Assessment Criteria targeted by this assignment</b>		<b>Internal Quality Assurer</b>			
<b>Format of work</b> <i>(e.g. written assignment brief, presentation, portfolio, practical assessment)</i>		<b>Lead Internal Quality Assurer</b> <i>(if applicable)</i>			

<b>IQA checklist</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Is the Assessment brief accurately and fully completed?		
Do the set, hand in and summative feedback dates match the assessment schedule and are suitable for the assessment?		
Are accurate programme & unit details shown?		
Are the Assessment and Grading Criteria to be addressed listed accurately?		
Does each task show which criteria are being addressed?		



<b>Has the unit specification been checked against unit requirements, ensuring appropriateness for assessment?</b>		
<b>Are these criteria actually addressed by the tasks?</b>		
<b>Are the tasks at the appropriate level?</b>		
<b>Is it clear what evidence the learner needs to generate &amp; is the generated evidence likely to be valid &amp; sufficient?</b>		
<b>Are the activities appropriate and vocationally relevant?</b>		
<b>Is there an appropriate scenario or vocational context?</b>		
<b>Is the language and presentation appropriate?</b>		
<b>Is the timescale for the assignment appropriate?</b>		
<b>Has due attention to English and maths been paid as part of our on-going college strategy?</b>		
<b>Has due attention to Equality and Diversity been paid as part of our on-going college strategy?</b>		
<b>Has due attention to Employability Skills been paid as part of our on-going college strategy and to allow the development of a skills for Success?</b>		
<b>Overall, is this assignment fit for purpose?</b>		

<b>IQA comments</b> ( <i>Feedback to assessor</i> )	<b>Feedback given</b>
	<b>IQA:</b> Name Signature Date
	<b>Assessor</b> Name Signature Date
<b>SMART actions for the assessor</b>	<b>All actions complete</b>
	<b>Assessor</b> Name Signature Date
	<b>IQA:</b> Name Signature Date

## 6.2 Lead IQA Sampling of Internal Verifier Practice in relation to Assessment Briefs

Lead IQA /Lead Internal Quality Assurance Co-ordinator – LIQAC checklist	Yes / No	Comments
Has the IQA process been completed thoroughly and timely?		
Have appropriate comments and feedback been provided to the assessor?		
Have all the required aspects been considered?		
Have clear assessor actions been identified?		
Has an assessor action plan been developed and monitored?		
Have the required actions been completed in a timely fashion?		

Lead IQA /Lead Internal Quality Assurance Co-ordinator – LIQAC comments ( <i>Feedback to IQA</i> )	Feedback given
	<b>Lead IQA:</b> Name Signature Date
	<b>IQA</b> Name Signature Date

<b>SMART actions for the IQA</b>	<b>All actions complete</b>
	<b>Lead IQA</b> Name Signature Date
	<b>IQA</b> Name Signature Date

## 6.3 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (IQA) FORM FOR ASSESSMENT SUBMISSIONS

Programme title and level		Provision type		Campus Based	PEF	WBL
Unit name/number(s)		School/Site				
Assignment title		Awarding body				
Assessor		Internal Quality Assurer		Date of sampling		
Lead Internal Quality Assurer (if applicable)		Date of sampling				

Identify the assessment/ grading criteria on offer	PASS	MERIT	DISTINCTION
For graded qualifications			
For non-graded qualifications			

Identify the assessment/ grading criteria the assessor has awarded	REFER	PASS	MERIT	DISTINCTION
Name of Candidate:				
IQA checklist	Yes / No	Comments		
Do the criteria awarded match those identified in the assessment brief?				
Has the work been accurately assessed?				

<b>Has both the learner and assessor confirmed the authenticity of the evidence?</b>		
<b>Is there evidence of collusion or plagiarism?</b>		
<b>Is the feedback linked to the assessment outcomes?</b>		
<b>Does the summative feedback follow the WWW/EBI and Awarding body guidelines</b>		
<b>Does the feedback clearly identify opportunities for improved performance?</b>		
<b>Is the evidence presented current, sufficient and authentic?</b>		
<b>Is the final assessment decision valid and accurate?</b>		
<b>Are the assessor's records legible and accurate?</b>		
<b>Is the timescale for the assignment return within the College's 15 working days policy?</b>		
<b>Has feedback been linked to English and maths development as part of our on-going college strategy?</b>		
<b>Has feedback been linked to developing Employability Skills and wider skills for success?</b>		

<b>IQA comments</b> ( <i>Feedback to assessor</i> )	<b>Feedback given</b>
	<b>IQA:</b> Name Signature Date
	<b>Assessor</b> Name Signature Date
<b>SMART actions for the assessor</b>	<b>All actions complete</b>
	<b>Assessor</b> Name Signature Date
	<b>IQA:</b> Name Signature Date

## 6.4 Lead IQA Sampling of Internal Quality Assurer Practice in relation to Assessment Decisions

Lead IQA/Lead Internal Quality Assurance Co-ordinator - LIQAC checklist	Yes / No	Comments
Has the IQA accurately assessed risk in devising a sampling strategy for learners and for this specific unit / assignment?		
Has the IQA adopted a sampling strategy that is sufficiently robust to effectively manage the risk?		
Did the IQA ensure that the assessment had been carried out accurately and in line with the qualification requirements?		
Did the IQA provide appropriate feedback to the assessor, including feedback on the quality of summative learner feedback?		
Did the IQA develop an assessor action plan that has been monitored and completed?		
Has the IQA maintained accurate and legible records?		
Was the IQA conducted timely for the assignment return within the: - Campus Based 15 working days policy? - Prison Education 5-10 working days policy?		



## 7. This policy cross references with the following documents:

- Academic Appeals Policy (Appendix 1)
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy (Appendix 3)
- Plagiarism, Collusion and Cheating Policy (Appendix 4)
- HE Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Late Submission Policy (Appendix 5)
- Recognising Prior Learning Policy (Appendix 6)
- Blended Learning Policy (Appendix 7)

This policy also cross references with the following wider college documents

- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Professional Standards for Staff
- Examinations Policy (which incorporates Conflict of Interest guidance)
- Speak Out – Complaints Guidelines (includes additional information for Higher Education Learners)

Copies of all documents can be obtained by accessing the Assessment and IQA site in SharePoint, Policies are also located on the staff intranet. In the case of awarding organisation rules and regulations, the relevant IQA should be contacted in the first instance.

# APPENDIX 1 - Academic Appeals Policy

## 1 Policy Statement

1.1 It is the policy of Milton Keynes College to develop and maintain assessment procedures that are fair, reliable, and open to scrutiny.

1.2 The College operates a rigorous system of internal quality assurance to guarantee fair assessment that complies with awarding organisation requirements. It is recognised, however, that there could be exceptional circumstances when individual candidates or groups may wish to appeal against recommendations or decisions relating to assessment. The academic appeals procedure outlines the action that may be taken in such circumstances.

*Note: Throughout this document a piece of work shall refer to a set task which has been submitted by the candidate to act as evidence in order to demonstrate their ability to meet the assessment criteria of a qualification.*

1.3 In all cases the College's academic appeal process supports and supplements the appeal process for all awarding organisations, End Point Assessment Organisations (EPAO's) and Higher Education Institutions. While learners are encouraged to follow the College's internal policy, learners have the right to appeal directly to the relevant awarding body, EPAO or Higher Education Institution at any time.

## 2 Scope

2.1 Any candidate who believes that a piece of work submitted for assessment has been assessed unfairly, inconsistently, or not in accordance with the standards and level required by the awarding body, shall have the right to appeal against the assessment mark, grade or final outcome.

2.2 In the first instance any concerns should be discussed with the learner's Course Team Leader/HE Programme Lead/Trainer or a member of the teaching team. While it is recognised that in most circumstances learner queries relating to assessment can and will be resolved informally, the formal appeals procedure is available to support candidates in their appeal.

2.3 If a candidate needs help in making an appeal, this can be obtained by contacting a member of Learner Services or for the Prison Services the Quality Lead.

2.4 It is the responsibility of candidates to inform the College if they are not satisfied with the grading of any piece of work. The College Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure enables candidates to make a formal appeal against a recommendation or decision relating to:

- (i) The mark or grade for an individual item of coursework.
- (ii) The result of an individual course.

- (iii) Entitlement to an award.
- (iv) The class or grade of an award.

### **3 Grounds for Appeal**

3.1 A candidate may appeal against an assessment decision if they believe that the decision is unfair or unreasonable. Normally an appeal can be made on any one of the following grounds:

- (i) Relevant assessment criteria have been met but not acknowledged.
- (ii) The assessments were not conducted in accordance with the awarding body's regulations.
- (iii) Assessment procedures, including examinations, were not conducted fairly.
- (iv) The internal quality assurer was presented with incorrect or inaccurate assessment information.
- (v) There were medical or other extenuating circumstances of which the relevant Course Team Leader/HE Programme Lead /Trainer/Lecturer was unaware when assessment decisions were being made.
- (vi) There was unfairness or impropriety on the part of one or more of the assessors/examiners.
- (vii) The candidate was unjustifiably excluded from an examination or an assessment opportunity.
- (viii) The candidate disagrees with the grade awarded following a centre adjustment procedure or any other unexpected events not planned for.

3.2 For appeals related to externally assessed work, End Point Assessments or examinations, the candidate must appeal directly to the relevant awarding organisation/EPAO.

3.3 It is the responsibility of the candidate to notify the Course Team Leader/HE Programme Lead/Trainer/Lecturer in writing of any extenuating circumstances, which may be adversely affecting the candidate's performance. Normally, this should be done before the assessment process takes place.

### **4 Appeals Procedure**

4.1 The procedure for appeals is detailed on page 4 of this document.

### **5 Awarding Body/EPAO Rules and Regulations**

5.1 The relevant awarding organisation's/EPAO's appeals procedure will be invoked where:

- (i) The issue cannot be resolved internally.
- (ii) The appeal is in relation to an examination/EPA.

## Milton Keynes College Procedure for Academic Appeals

Stage		Learner Action	To Whom	College Action	Timeframe
1. Informal	Appeal referred to and resolved by the teacher/trainer/lecturer responsible for the assessment	Candidate to discuss with the teacher/trainer/lecturer responsible for the assessment within 5 working days of receipt of assessment decision.	Teacher/Trainer/Lecturer responsible for the assessment <sup>1</sup>	Teacher/Trainer/Lecturer to discuss and seek to resolve	2 working days
2. Informal	Appeal referred to and resolved by the Head/Deputy Head of School/Apprenticeship Manager/Prison Education Manager	Learner appeal to the Head/Deputy Head of School/Apprenticeship Manager /Prison Education Manager within 5 working days.	Head/Deputy Head of School/Apprenticeship Manager/Prison Education Manager	Head/Deputy Head of School/Apprenticeship Manager/Prison Education Manager to have piece of work reviewed.	5 working days
3. Formal	Appeal referred to and resolved by the Quality Compliance Co-ordinator/Prison Services Quality Manager	Learner to appeal to the Quality Compliance Co-ordinator /Prison Services Quality Manager within 5 working days. To invoke stage 3 the Learner must complete the appropriate form (p.6 of this policy).	Quality Compliance Co-ordinator/ Prison Services Quality Manager	Quality Compliance Co-ordinator/ Prison Services Quality Manager to investigate assessment decision and review with curriculum area internal quality assurer. IQA will check that assessment fully	5 working days in writing <sup>2</sup>

Stage		Learner Action	To Whom	College Action	Timeframe
				meets awarding body requirements.	
4. Formal	Appeal referred to Head of Quality / Group Quality Director	Candidate appeals in writing to Head of Quality / Group Quality Director if they feel the decision is unfair at Stage 3 and there is likelihood of a major impact on the candidate's future e.g. main qualification not awarded on completion of full-time course.	Senior Leadership Team (SLT)	Assessment decision investigated by Head of Quality / Group Quality Director (information obtained from appropriate IQA and Head of School) and brief report written. The final decision will be made by a panel of 3 members of the College's leadership team convened for the appeal.	5 working days
5. Formal for HE Learners only	Complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator	HE Learners can appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Appeals process	OIA <a href="https://www.oiahe.org.uk/">https://www.oiahe.org.uk/</a>	OIA will liaise with the College as necessary in order to resolve the Learner complaint.	

<sup>1</sup> If the candidate feels that they cannot approach the Teacher/Trainer/Lecturer they may choose to discuss the matter with another member of the delivery team before any approach to a school manager.

<sup>2</sup> The time frames are given as guidance. It may be necessary to seek the advice of the relevant awarding body/EPAO and a response to resolve the appeal may take longer

This policy cross-references with the following documents:

- The Complaints Policy

- Complaints Guidelines – Speak Out
- Assessment and IQA Policy
- Awarding organisation/EPAO rules and regulations
- HE002 – Extenuating Circumstances and Late Submissions Policy

**Copies of all College documents can be obtained at [www.mkcollege.ac.uk](http://www.mkcollege.ac.uk) - MyMKC site**

**In the case of awarding body/EPAO rules and regulations the examinations department should be contacted.**

**Milton Keynes College**  
**Academic Appeal Against Internal**  
**Grading / Assessment Decision**

Name	
Address	
Course	
Nature of Appeal	
a) Please state which category from 3.1 of the policy you are bringing this appeal	
b) In your own words please explain the reason of the appeal	

Signature

Date

Please give this form to the Quality Compliance Co-ordinator/Prison Services Quality Manager, Milton Keynes College, Chaffron Way Campus, Leadenhall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5LP.

Please keep a copy of this form for your own records



## Appendix 2

### A) Learners/Apprentices (candidates)

**Learners/Apprentices (candidates)** must ensure that work they submit for assessment:

- complies with the guidelines given to them by assessors, which in turn must comply with examination board/awarding organisation/apprenticeship standards requirements
- is submitted within the timeframes given, including timeframes which apply to 'resubmissions', and is submitted in the format required, i.e. paper-based, electronically (e.g. 'Turnitin');
- is their own work. *N.B. If learners use any material which is not their own, then this must be clearly referenced, according to guidelines given to them by assessors and must comply with examination board/awarding body requirements.*

### B) Campus and Apprenticeships Staff Key Roles and Responsibilities

**Trainers/Assessors** must comply with examination board/awarding body/Apprenticeship standards requirements, and:

- inform learners that all work submitted for assessment must be the learner's own
- inform learners about the College's Assessment Appeals Procedure
- produce and share the Assessment Year Plan with the course team/HOS/Apprenticeship Manager/Lead IV, and make this available for internal/external verification/internal quality assurance when required
- produces assignments which must be internally moderated/approved before they are given to learners
- ensure that learners are informed of the assessment criteria for assignments
- ensure that learners are informed of the format to be used to submit work e.g. paper-based, electronically ('Turnitin') etc.;
- ensure that assignment submission deadlines are communicated to the learners and that these are complied with, including those which apply to referred/resubmitted work

- assess/mark learners' work in line with college/awarding body/examination board/apprenticeship standard requirements/regulations, giving constructive feedback to learners, including SPAG;
- provide the sample of assessed work required for internal/external scrutiny by deadlines set and agreed annually
- ensure that there is up-to-date learner tracking on pro-monitor/OneFile, showing which units/assignments have been completed and graded, which is available for scrutiny on, for example, College systems/on the College Portal.

**Internal Verifiers (IV)/Internal Quality Assurers (IQA)** through thorough internal verification, must:

- ensure that assignment briefs, prior to distribution to learners, are fit-for-purpose and comply with examination board/awarding body requirements.
- sample marked work to ensure that assessment has been accurately carried out.

**Heads of School / Apprenticeship Managers/ Lead IQAs/Quality Leads** are responsible for:

- the co-ordination and management of the internal standardisation/moderation/verification of: Assessment Year Plans (AYPs); assignment briefs; and assessed learner work, submitted for internal/external moderation/verification
- ensuring internal/external regulations are adhered to
- ensuring that the quality of work, submitted for external moderation/verification/quality assurance, has undergone internal quality checks/verification/moderation **before** it is submitted for external scrutiny.

**Cross-College Verification Group (CCVG)** will comprise of cross-College representatives and the College's Quality Compliance Coordinator, together with other College staff as required and is responsible for:

- sampling Assessment Year Plans (AYPs); assignment briefs; and assessed learner work, CCVG will ensure, as far as possible, that internal assessment,

standardisation, moderation and verification is in line with examination board/awarding body specifications;

- providing feedback to schools, following the verification of work to be submitted for external scrutiny in order to validate and improve standards.

### **C) Prison Services Key Roles & Responsibilities**

#### **Group Quality Director/Head of Quality**

To have overall responsibility for the consistent implementation of effective internal quality assurance across the prisons, via the co-ordination of regional quality leads.

To be the appointed Head of Centre for Awarding Organisations (AOs) and the key point of contact for disseminating new guidelines, updates and notices.

To act as the nominated quality assurance investigator where allegations of malpractice or maladministration occur.

#### **Quality Manager/Regional Quality Leads**

Responsibility for the consistent implementation of internal quality assurance across prison services provision, liaising closely with the Head of Quality/ Group Quality Director for improved practices, awarding organisation changes, staff development, standardisation and training.

To be the main point of contact for awarding organisations (AOs), i.e. 'Centre Contact' for City and Guilds, 'Quality Nominee' for Pearson. EQAs should forward activity reports to the RQLs in all instances (in electronic format wherever possible) for monitoring of action plans with the centres.

To ensure clear lines of communication between AOs and key contacts within the prisons.

To be responsible for the consistent and effective implementation of effective internal quality assurance (IQA), via the co-ordination of IQA Leads / Co-ordinators.

To identify ineffective IQA and monitor remedial action within the organisation.

## **Education Managers/Heads of Education**

To take full responsibility in the role of Centre Manager for:

- Maintaining the effectiveness of internal quality assurance and internal standards moderation within the Education Department
- The allocation of assessors and internal quality assurance co-ordinator (IQAC) and internal quality assurers (IQA) to each course
- The performance management of internal quality assurers and the appraisal, training and development of assessors and IQAs

Dependent on the size of the department, the Education Manager may undertake the role of Lead Internal Quality Assurance Co-ordinator (see below).

## **Departmental Quality Lead (Lead Internal Quality Assurance Co-ordinator-LIQAC)**

Responsibilities will include:

- Co-ordination of internal quality assurance
- Assuring all aspects of internal quality assurance are carried out, i.e. standardisation, planned IQA activity
- Ensure timely registration and certification of all learners
- Communicating with the awarding organisation and their representatives, including awarding organisation and staff centre updates
- Practising as an IQA to include all responsibilities listed under 5.6.
- Providing induction, support and training for assessors and IQAs.
- Providing sound advice to learners, tutors and assessors.
- Liaison with Regional Quality Improvement Lead/Quality Manager, Education Manager and fellow Programme Managers / Programme co-ordinators regarding assessment and quality assurance issues.
- Disseminating all EQA visit reports and action plans to staff and following up on actions.
- Ensuring they and other programme managers are aware of this policy as well as relevant awarding organisation policies and

documentation (for example, City & Guilds' 'Our Quality Assurance Requirements' handbook).

The LIQAC will normally be the Programme Manager / Education Manager with some exceptions. Some of the above responsibilities could be delegated to another named person(s).

### **Programme Manager**

The programme manager will have overarching responsibility for ensuring that assessment and internal quality assurance are completed and delegated appropriately within the areas they manage.

### **Internal Quality Assurer (IQA)**

Responsibilities will include:

- Ensuring learners are registered with AO prior to IQA
- Carrying out full IQA of the assessment process
- Identifying and ensuring that agreed criteria for choosing and supporting assessors are applied
- Planning of and participation in standardisation activities
- Ensuring effective use of procedures for appeals and complaints
- Using internal and external quality assurance measures to enhance provision
- Ensuring that assessors have appropriate vocational expertise
- Identifying and facilitating the development of assessors
- Monitoring of assessor practice and providing feedback
- Checking consistency of assessment and feedback
- Ensuring good assessment practice with regard to relationships with candidates
- Ensuring good assessment practice in relation to health and safety, environmental protection, equality and access criteria
- Planning, collating and analysing information on assessment decisions
- Agreeing timing and nature of external quality assurance visits

- Liaising with external quality assurers and providing feedback to assessors
- Ensuring external quality assurance decisions are included in internal reviews of procedures

### **Assessor/tutor**

Responsibilities will include:

- Planning and delivering programmes and workshops
- Observing and assessing candidates on their programmes
- Assessing candidates' portfolios of evidence
- Providing developmental and constructive feedback to the candidate, offering advice if standards are not met
- Signing off the programme when all the requirements have been met
- Keeping detailed records of learning progress and maintaining reviews and tutorials
- Attending meetings with other assessors/tutor

# APPENDIX 3 - Malpractice & Maladministration Procedure

## Malpractice and Maladministration Procedure

### 1. Purpose / Scope

- To provide clarity to staff and learners with respect to:
  - What the college recognises as malpractice and maladministration.
  - The methods by which allegations of malpractice or maladministration will be managed by the college and the awarding organisations it works with.
  - The potential consequences and/ or sanctions that will be applied to staff or learners when investigations confirm that malpractice or maladministration has taken place.
- To reinforce college expectations linked to both professional standards for staff and positive learner behaviour

### 2. Definitions

- Malpractice is any act which deliberately undermines and breaches the rigour of the assessment and internal verification procedure and therefore the validity of a certificate or qualification. In addition to potentially tarnishing the reputation of Milton Keynes College or its partners.
- Maladministration is any act which results in non-compliance with administrative regulations and requirements.

#### 2.1 As per JCQ guidance, the college recognises that malpractice includes but is not limited to:

- Inadequate centre procedures for the induction of members of staff
- Failure to provide learners and members of staff with the knowledge of their responsibilities through relevant policies and procedures

- Failure to review systems, policies and procedures to ensure they remain fit for purpose
- Failure to follow the policies and procedures established by the college regarding malpractice and maladministration
- Failure to maintain accurate records relating to learners, assessment or internal quality assurance or to retain such records for the required period of time in accordance with Awarding Organisation regulations
- Failure of a member of staff to report any instances of suspected or confirmed malpractice or maladministration to the Quality Team
- The unauthorised obtaining, disseminating, or the facilitating of access to, secure examinations or assessment resources
- Assisting or prompting learners in the production of answers to examinations or assessment activities
- Members of staff undertaking any examination on behalf of learners
- Deliberately claiming for certificates where there is no evidence to support Certification
- Manipulating learner samples for the purpose of the external quality assurance or moderation
- Unauthorised changes to examination timetables
- Amendment of examination materials without permission from the relevant Awarding Organisation

Milton Keynes College acknowledges that failure to notify, investigate and report to the relevant Awarding Organisation all allegations of malpractice or suspected malpractice constitutes malpractice in itself. Also, failure to take action as required by an Awarding Organisation or to co-operate with an Awarding Organisation's investigation, constitutes malpractice. This may result in sanctions being applied to the Head of Centre and/or the centre

**2.2 As per JCQ guidance, the college recognises that maladministration includes, but is not limited to:**

- Persistent mistakes or poor administration within the college resulting in the failure to keep appropriate learner assessment records
- Inaccurate recording of learner assessment decisions leading to invalid claims for certification
- Non-compliance with Awarding Organisation requirements



- Failure to keep question papers secure prior to and after examinations

**2.3 As per JCQ guidance, the college recognises that learner malpractice includes, but is not limited to:**

- Any form of deliberate plagiarism, collusion or cheating
  - Falsification or fabrication of examination or assessment evidence
  - Any form of impersonation
  - Obtaining or attempting to obtain secure examination or assessment resources
  - Offering a bribe of any kind to an invigilator, member of centre staff or Awarding Organisation staff
  - False declaration of authenticity in relation to the contents of an assessment produced by a learner
  - Misuse, or attempted misuse, of examination or assessment resources
  - Failure to abide by the instructions of an invigilator or supervisor
- a. In the event a move to a Centre assessed grade process (eg Covid-19), the following instances are examples provided from JCQ guidance of what may need to be investigated as suspected malpractice:

**Centres/Centre Staff**

- A Head of Centre fails to submit the required declaration when approving and submitting their Centre Assessment Grades and rank orders.
- A failure by a centre to appropriately manage Conflicts of Interest (COIs) within a centre.
- Centre Assessment Grades and/or rank orders being released to learners (or their parents/carers) before the issue of results.
- If new exam entries are created for learners who had not intended to enter, or if tier changes are made to gain an unfair advantage rather than as an accurate reflection of a learner's ability.
- A failure to submit Centre Assessment Grades and rank orders which honestly and fairly represent the grades that learners would have been most likely to achieve if they had sat their assessments as planned. This might include situations in which centre staff have been unreasonably pressured into making changes to their Centre Assessment Grades and

rank order judgements or making such changes themselves without reasonable grounds.

- A failure to accurately report grades of completed units for vocational qualifications.

## Learners

- Learners may attempt to influence their teachers'/assessors' judgements on their Centre Assessment Grades and/or rank order. Learners might try to do this by submitting false evidence of performance or by applying pressure.

### **3. Investigating Alleged malpractice or maladministration:**

Milton Keynes College will comply with all relevant Awarding Organisation and JCQ guidelines and procedures with regard to reporting an alleged, suspected or actual incident of malpractice or maladministration.

The relevant Awarding Organisation will immediately be made aware of all alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice. The only exception to this is candidate malpractice discovered in controlled assessments, coursework or non-examination assessment before authentication forms have been signed by the candidate. In this instance staff must refer to the MK College Plagiarism, Collusion & Cheating Policy and associated procedures.

Channels of communication will remain open and transparent with the relevant

Awarding Organisation throughout the investigation, with the college responding to appropriate advice and guidance from the Awarding Organisation as required.

Candidates and staff affected by the investigation will be informed in writing at the earliest opportunity, highlighting their individual responsibilities and rights as well as the possible consequences and outcomes of the investigation and will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation, preferably in writing.

In order to avoid conflicts of interest, which can otherwise compromise the investigation, investigations will be managed by a senior member of the

Quality Team who is independent and not connected to the department or candidate involved in the suspected malpractice.

In cases where the outcome of an investigation deems certificates or assessment decisions are invalid, claims will be withdrawn or certificates recalled.

#### **4. If malpractice is reported by others:**

Allegations of malpractice are sometimes reported directly to Awarding Organisations by employers, centre staff, regulators, funding agencies, candidates, other awarding organisations and members of the public.

Sometimes these reports are anonymous and where requested, Awarding Organisations will not disclose the identity of individuals reporting cases of suspected malpractice, unless legally obliged to do so.

In the event that an Awarding Organisation should identify potential malpractice they will initially conduct their own 'fact find' and inform the Head of Centre or the named Centre Contact that this is occurring.

The initial 'fact find' may provide sufficient information to confirm the alleged malpractice has taken place, in which case an investigation will be conducted, and an appropriate sanction will be imposed.

If the initial 'fact find' does not provide sufficient information the Awarding Organisation may choose to conduct a more formal investigation. Milton Keynes College will give the Awarding Organisation full support and assist with the investigation should this occur. This may include interviewing candidates or staff.

During this investigation period registration/ certifications may be suspended.

College staff making allegations of malpractice within the college will be protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, if:

- The disclosure amounts to a "protected disclosure" (as set out in the relevant legislation);
  - The staff member is raising a genuine concern in relation to malpractice;
- and

- The disclosure is made in compliance with the guidelines set out in the legislation and/or the MK College 'Speak Out' procedure for Whistleblowing.

For the avoidance of doubt, Awarding Organisations are not identified in the legislation as bodies to whom protected disclosures can be made. Ofqual, however, is described in the legislation as a body to whom protected disclosures can be made.

Awarding Organisations are aware that the reporting of malpractice by a member of staff or a candidate can create a difficult environment for that staff member or candidate. Accordingly, an Awarding Organisation will try to protect the identity of an informant if this is asked for at the time that information is given.

If the information is provided over the telephone, the informant will usually be asked to confirm the allegation in writing.

When an Awarding Organisation receives an allegation from someone other than the Head of a Centre, or Centre Contact (including anonymous reports), the Awarding Organisation will evaluate the allegation in the light of any available information to see if there is cause to investigate.

## **5. Rights of the accused individuals**

When, in the view of the investigator, there is sufficient evidence to implicate an individual in malpractice, that individual (a candidate or a member of staff) accused of malpractice must:

- Be informed (preferably in writing) of the allegation made against him or her
- Be advised where all relevant Awarding Organisation Malpractice policies and procedures can be found
- Know what evidence there is to support that allegation
- Know the possible consequences should malpractice be proven
- Have the opportunity to consider their response to the allegations (if required)
- Have an opportunity to submit a written statement

- Be informed that he/she will have the opportunity to read the submission and make an additional statement in response
- Have an opportunity to seek advice (as necessary) and to provide a supplementary statement (if required);
- Be informed of the applicable appeals procedure, should a decision be made against him or her
- Be informed of the possibility that information relating to a serious case of malpractice may be shared with other Awarding Organisations, the regulators and other appropriate authorities.

## 6. The Report

After investigating an allegation of malpractice, the Head of Centre, or the Centre Contact (on their behalf) must submit a full written report of the case to the relevant Awarding Organisation.

The Report should be accompanied by the following documentation, as appropriate:

- A statement of the facts, including a clear and detailed account of the circumstances of the alleged malpractice and an objective assessment of the evidence gathered
- The evidence relevant to the allegation, such as written statement(s) from the invigilator(s), assessor, internal verifier(s) or other staff who are involved
- Written statement(s) from the candidate(s) in their own words
- Any exculpatory evidence and/or mitigating factors
- Information about the college procedures for advising candidates and staff of the Awarding Organisation regulations
- Seating plans showing the exact position of candidates in the examination room
- Unauthorised material found in the examination room or photographs of material which cannot be submitted to an awarding organisation
- Any candidate work and any associated material (e.g. source material for coursework) which is relevant to the investigation.
- Any teaching resources/material relevant to the investigation

- Details of the actions to be taken by the centre to mitigate the impact of any malpractice or actions to be taken to avoid a recurrence.

### **7. Penalties/ Sanctions by Awarding Organisations:**

If malpractice is proven at either college or staff level any of the following or additional sanctions may be imposed:

- Written warning issued with a robust action plan
- Withdrawal of approval at either qualification or centre level
- Additional conditions relating to approval at either qualification or centre level
- Suspension of candidate registrations and or certifications for an allocated period of time
- Training requirements for staff member(s) implicated
- Restriction of involvement of staff member(s) implicated
- Suspension for up to 5 years from any involvement in the administration, delivery, assessment, moderation, verification, invigilation of any programmes belonging to the Awarding Organisation involved.

### **8. Penalties / Sanctions by the College:**

If malpractice is proven at either staff or learner level penalties or sanctions will be imposed in line with the relevant Disciplinary Policy.

### **9. Centre Action relating to imposed sanctions:**

In the event that an imposed sanction included suspension or removal of qualification approval and or certification rights Milton Keynes College will take immediate action to protect registered candidates and support them to achieve the outlined qualification.

These measures may include:

- Liaising with the Awarding Organisation involved to promptly rectify issues identified to remove sanctions
- Review alternative qualifications, with different Awarding Organisations, which meet the same learning outcomes and allow for the accreditation of prior learning (APL)

- Apply to alternative providers to make arrangements for learner transfers

## **10. Appeals:**

If candidates, staff or centres disagree with the decision made by an Awarding Body, appeals can be made following the appeals process linked to the relevant Awarding Organisation.

Awarding Organisations have established procedures for considering appeals against penalties arising from malpractice decisions.

The following individuals have a right to appeal:

- Heads of Centre, who may appeal against sanctions imposed on the centre or on centre staff, as well as on behalf of candidates entered or registered through the centre.
- Members of centre staff, or examining personnel contracted to a centre, who may appeal against sanctions imposed on them personally.
- Private candidates.
- Third parties who have been barred from taking or delivery of the awarding organisation's examinations or assessments.

# APPENDIX 4 - Plagiarism, Collusion & Cheating Policy

## 1. Introduction

The College recognises that learner achievement must be based on robust, fair assessment and verification activities. When learners achieve at Milton Keynes College stakeholders should be confident in the credibility of these achievements. It is vital that learners and staff share a consistent understanding regarding what constitutes potential plagiarism, collusion and cheating and the potential consequences of such malpractice.

The College expectation is that all staff have the expertise to make fair and consistent grading decisions for all learners when assessing and moderating assessment decisions. The policy requires active commitment from all staff assessing on all programs to validate that learner work is original and to take consistent action when plagiarism, collusion or cheating is suspected.

This policy has been developed to reflect current JCQ guidance and been informed by consideration of a number of Awarding Organisation policy documents.

## 2. Policy Statement

The aim of this policy is to ensure consistency and fairness when dealing with potential plagiarism, collusion and cheating. This policy aims to ensure:

- The assessment process is valid, rigorous and reliable
- Learner work that is accepted for assessment is original to that learner
- Learners have an understanding of what plagiarism, collusion and cheating are and how these are relevant to them
- A consistent approach when dealing with potential cases of plagiarism, collusion or cheating
- Support and to enable learner success
- The assessment and investigation processes meet the requirements of relevant Awarding Organisations



### 3. Content

#### 3.1 What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is a form of cheating and is classed as academic misconduct. If a learner is found to have plagiarised then they have committed a serious academic offence.

Plagiarism comes in many forms but ultimately means attempting to pass off someone

else's work or ideas as the learner's own. The most common forms are:

- Copying another learner's work (past or present)
- Copying or paraphrasing from textbooks, journals, or magazines
- Cut/copy and pasted material from the Web
- Copying course material or lecture notes
- Using diagrams, images or course notes without acknowledgement of their source
- The misuse of sources outside the College
- Employment of a professional ghostwriting individual or company or anyone else to produce work for the learner

Plagiarism does not just occur with written work but can occur with work produced in any form. Regardless of the format, the key is proper attribution of source material. Plagiarism is wrong because it is fundamentally dishonest and contravenes Awarding Body requirements. If undetected, it can provide learners with an unfair advantage over others in the group and it devalues the qualification being sought.

#### 3.2 Why does plagiarism happen?

Changing the words of an original source is not sufficient to prevent plagiarism. If the essential idea of an original source has been retained, and it has not been correctly referenced or acknowledged, then no matter how drastically its context or presentation has been altered, it has still been plagiarised. Plagiarism can be prevented by providing a reference which attributes the work to the correct source, regardless of the form that this work takes.

There are two main types of plagiarism – intentional and unintentional. The list below is not exhaustive but contains the most commonly encountered reasons for plagiarism:

Typical unintentional reasons for plagiarism:

- Misunderstanding about using a quote, or extract from a source and how to reference correctly
- Over-reliance on original source material
- Following practices encouraged or accepted in previous educational experience or culture
- Not understanding what is meant by plagiarism if it has not been explained
- Not fully understanding where group work ceases and individual work begins
- Compensating for poor English language skills
- Poor note-taking practice
- Not understanding the concept of individual ownership of ideas
- Being unclear about the ownership of electronic or web-based material
- Being unable to distinguish between intellectual property rights and common knowledge
- Lacking referencing skills so being unable to record and acknowledge sources correctly.
- Lacking effective study or research skills
- Not knowing how to adapt published information so that it does not require referencing
- The direct and unacknowledged translation of foreign language texts into English

Typical intentional reasons for plagiarism:

- Not believing that plagiarism is wrong
- Regarding academic regulations as unimportant or irrelevant
- Regarding plagiarism as a shortcut to success
- Intentional cheating and passing off of another's work for one's own ends

Whilst the majority of plagiarism is committed unintentionally, this does not reduce the seriousness of the offence or provide an excuse, for this as a form of

academic misconduct. It is the responsibility of the learner to ensure they have met all the requirements of correct referencing and citation and sufficient acknowledgment of source material.

### **3.3 How is plagiarism identified?**

Assessors provide the best safeguard against plagiarism, and additionally through the use of electronic detection systems e.g., Turnitin. Indicators to an assessor or internal quality assurer (IQA) of potential plagiarism could include:

- Assignments that contain unfamiliar words
- A written style of a far higher standard than that demonstrated previously
- An unexpected rise in the quality and accuracy of work
- Use of texts familiar to the assessor but not referenced
- Use of American spelling or unfamiliar terminology
- Differences in the level of performance between assignments and activity completed under uncontrolled conditions
- Learner being unable to explain what they have written about when questioned
- Changes in the font, text size or colour during a piece of written work

### **3.4 What is Cheating and Collusion?**

Cheating is an attempt to deceive College/Awarding Organisation assessors, examiners and/or external verifiers and includes:

- Providing or receiving information about the content of an examination before it takes place, except when allowed by the Awarding Organisation (e.g. case study materials issued before an examination)
- College staff giving excessive help to learners in writing an assignment, or writing any of it for them
- Someone impersonating or trying to impersonate a learner, or attempting to procure a third party to impersonate oneself
- Learners using books, notes, instruments, computer files or other materials or aids that are not permitted (usually relevant only to examinations and online tests)

- Assistance, or the communication of information, by one learner to another in an assessment where this is not permitted (usually relevant only to examinations and online tests)
- Copying or reading from the work of another learner or from another learner's books, notes, instruments, computer files or other materials or aids
- Offering a bribe of any kind to an invigilator, examiner or other person connected with assessment
- Any attempt to tamper with assignment or examination scripts after they have been submitted by learners
- Staff fabricating or falsifying data or results by individual learners or groups of learners  
Because of the nature of cheating, this mainly applies to examinations and online tests. Examples of collusion and cheating include but are not limited to:
  - Presenting group work within assessments without acknowledgement of the source
  - Use of diagrams and/or images without acknowledgement of the source
  - Taking notes into an examination, unless it is an open book examination
  - Impersonation
- Offering a bribe of any kind to an invigilator, a member of centre staff or Awarding Organisation staff
- Obtaining or attempting to obtain secure/assessment material
- Submission of work purchased from a third party. For example, from an essay or assignment writing service
- Introduction of unauthorised material into the examination room
- Disruptive, violent or offensive behaviour
- Any form of communication with other learners during an examination (written, verbal, gestures, expressions, pointing etc.)
- Failure to abide by the instructions of an invigilator or supervisor
- Copying others answers during an examination

Milton Keynes College appreciates in some circumstances learners may work together on projects; however, we expect learners to write up the assignment individually and reflect on their own learning from completion of the joint project. Any materials shared within the project must be acknowledged in order to avoid plagiarism and where possible content should be created independently to avoid this occurring.

Milton Keynes College also acknowledges that cheating may involve a member of staff (e.g. tampering with assessment or examination scripts or results after learners have submitted them), which would be a case of malpractice. In such an instance the suspected malpractice will be reported to the relevant Awarding Organisation.

An investigation will then take place in accordance with the Awarding Organisation guidelines and the College Malpractice & Maladministration Policy and Procedure.

### **3.5 Procedure for dealing with suspected Learner plagiarism, collusion and cheating**

JCQ guidance recognises that centres can resolve the matter themselves prior to the signing of the declarations. Where plagiarism, collusion or cheating is suspected **PRIOR TO THE DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICATION BEING SIGNED** the following steps will be taken:

- The assessor will first seek to confirm the authenticity of the work by asking the learner questions to verify their knowledge or by seeking to identify original source materials by using search engines or referring to textbooks
- If these investigations confirm that plagiarism, collusion or cheating has occurred, the assessed work will be referred back to the learner potentially for revision
- Where plagiarism, collusion or cheating is believed to have occurred as a result of poor academic skills, the assessor will also provide further support in the development of appropriate skills. This could include referring the learner to additional support mechanisms
- Teachers must not accept work which is not the candidate's own
- Instances of deliberate plagiarism, collusion or cheating by an individual will result in work not being accepted for assessment and appropriate action will be taken in line with the learner disciplinary procedures

Learners may appeal against decisions made. Appeals should be made to the IQA in the first instance. This effectively covers stage 1 of the MK College Academic Appeals Procedure. The IQA will consider the evidence provided by both the learner and the assessor. The IQA will then either confirm the original identification of plagiarism, collusion/cheating or re-instate the learner's right to assessment.

Where the IQA is unable to form a judgement based on the evidence presented, the matter would then progress through stages 2-4 of the MK College Academic Appeals Procedure:

- Stage 2 (informal) – Head/Deputy Head of School/Prison Education Manager

- Stage 3 (Formal) - Quality Compliance Coordinator/Prison Services Quality Manager
- Stage 4 (Formal) – Head of Quality/Group Quality Director

Ultimately, the Head of Centre has the responsibility for ensuring that candidates do not submit plagiarised work.

IF PLAGIARISM, COLLUSION OR CHEATING ARE DETECTED BY THE CENTRE AND THE DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICATION HAS BEEN SIGNED, THE CASE MUST BE REPORTED TO THE AWARDING BODY FOLLOWING THEIR PROCEDURES.

- The procedures for reporting the suspected / confirmed plagiarism are detailed in the Awarding Organisation Standards Guidelines, the JCQ Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments: Policies and Procedures.

The Awarding Organisation will then consider the case and, if necessary, impose a sanction in line with the relevant guidance. The sanctions applied to a candidate committing plagiarism can range from a warning regarding future conduct to the candidate being barred from entering for one or more examinations for a set period of time.

If plagiarism is suspected by an Awarding Organisation moderator or examiner or has been reported by a candidate or member of the public, full details of the allegation will be reported to the College. The Head of Centre (or a delegated Senior Manager) will conduct an investigation into the alleged malpractice and submit a written report to the relevant Awarding Body Organisation.

# APPENDIX 5: Extenuating Circumstances & Late Submission Policy (with form)

## 1. Introduction

During their study learners may encounter significant personal difficulties that are outside their control and impact on their ability to study and/or complete assessments. Such difficulties are referred to by the College as Extenuating Circumstances.

Extenuating Circumstances must meet the following criteria:

- They must be outside of the control of the learner – the learner could not have prevented them.
- They must have had an impact – they must have had a negative impact on the ability of the learner to study or to undertake an assessment.
- The timing of the circumstances must be relevant to the claimed impact.

The appropriate management of extenuating circumstances affecting learners' study and assessment is significant in ensuring that academic standards are maintained and that learners perceive that they are being treated fairly.

This policy is applicable to all types of learner on all programmes or courses.

## 2. Policy Statement

The aim of this policy is to ensure consistency and fairness when dealing with cases of extenuating circumstance.

This policy aims to ensure:

- The assessment process is valid, rigorous and reliable
- Learners have an understanding of what an extenuating circumstance is and its relevance to them
- A consistent approach when dealing with potential cases of extenuating circumstance
- Support learner success
- The support process meets the requirements of the awarding bodies.

## 3. Extenuating circumstances policy

If an examination or assessment has been affected by a serious matter, then a learner can ask the College to take this into consideration. The aim of the policy is to ensure no learner is disadvantaged by circumstances beyond their control whilst maintaining academic standards.

There is an expectation that, whilst an assessment may be delayed because of extenuating circumstances, it should not be missed altogether. It is essential that the Exam Board should have as complete a profile as soon as possible so that a decision on progression can be made. Learners can submit a claim for extenuating circumstances to cover late submission of work, non- submission of work or non-attendance at a time specific assessment, e.g. examination, test or field trip.

**Valid extenuating circumstances will not result in an adjustment to a mark. Improvement to marks can only be achieved by reassessment.** Details of how extenuating circumstances may be taken into account are given later in the policy.

#### 4. What is an extenuating circumstance?

*Extenuating Circumstances are circumstances which:*

- Affect the ability of a learner to attend or complete an assessment or a number of assessments
- Are outside of the control of a learner
- Can be corroborated by independent evidence
- Occur during or shortly before the assessment in question

*Examples of circumstances which might be considered valid:*

- Hospitalisation, including operations
- Diagnosed health problems
- Personal or psychological problems for which the learner is undergoing counselling or has been referred to a counsellor or other qualified practitioner
- Childbirth (including a partner in labour)
- Bereavement causing significant impact/effect
- Major accident or injury, acute ailments or conditions which coincide with an assessment deadline or an examination or test, or are sufficiently long-lasting to impact on a significant part of a term
- Clinical depression or other mental health problem
- Recent burglary/theft/serious car accident
- Jury service which cannot be deferred



- Late diagnosis of, for example, dyslexia, resulting in no support or examination provision.
- Separation or divorce - Learner or parental (provided the facts and the effects are independently corroborated)

## 5. What is NOT an Extenuating Circumstance?

It is not possible to lay down hard and fast rules in every case. The key issue is whether the claim meets the criteria above. For instance, the College would not normally accept claims relating to travel delays which you might be expected to have planned for, but if the delay was exceptional, a claim would be considered. Similarly, a cough, cold or throat infection during a term would not normally be a valid extenuating circumstance, since learners would be expected to plan their work taking into account the likelihood of minor disruptions.

Medical certification will not automatically be accepted in cases where it verifies a minor illness which within the regulations would not normally be deemed valid for, e.g. coursework submission, or simply reports a claim that you felt unwell.

This means claims supported by medical notes will be deemed invalid if it is for a minor ailment as these would be considered not exceptional e.g. unspecified anxiety, mild depression or examination stress, cough, cold, upper respiratory tract Infection, sore throat, minor viral infection, unless the illness was at its peak at the time of an examination, end-of-module test or in-class test and the corroborating evidence refers to the impact on your performance.

### ***Examples of circumstances which would not normally be considered valid:***

- Alarm clock did not go off
- Car broke down, train/bus delayed or cancelled, other public transport problems (unless the learner can demonstrate that he or she had allowed adequate time to compensate for such problems as might reasonably have been anticipated)
- Childcare problems which could have been anticipated
- Changes to work shift patterns with appropriate notice/a clear schedule given in advance.
- Accidents or illness affecting relatives or friends (unless serious, or the Learner is a sole carer)
- Unspecified anxiety, mild depression or examination stress
- Cough, cold, upper respiratory tract Infection, sore throat, minor viral infection, unless the illness was at its peak at the time of an examination, end-of-module test or in-class test and the corroborating evidence refers to the impact on the learner's performance

- Financial problems (other than cases of exceptional hardship)
- Holidays, house moves, family celebrations or other events where the learner either has control over the date or may choose not to participate
- Computer problems, corrupt data, disk or printer failure or similar
- Problems with postal delivery of work (unless recorded delivery or registered mail) time management problems (e.g. competing deadlines)
- Appointments (legal, medical etc.) which could be rearranged

Full-time learners may not make an extenuating circumstances claim relating to pressures of work, since such learners have by implication made a commitment to make available the time necessary for study. Part-time learners' claims will only be submitted if they are received with corroborating evidence from their employer which demonstrate that hours or shifts were changed with limited notice. In this case, the learner should submit work completed before change in circumstances with the EC form.

## 6. Consideration of Extenuating Circumstance Claims

Each extenuating circumstance claim will be considered individually, and all learners will be treated fairly and equitably. The decision will take into consideration the nature, timing and severity of the problem and the impact it has had on assessment.

As stated previously, marks will not be amended as a result of a valid extenuating circumstance claim. Improvement to marks can only be achieved by re-assessment. To pass a module learners are required to meet specific learning outcomes. The Exam Board must be satisfied that these have been achieved prior to allowing a learner to progress to the next stage.

For HE Learners, the HE Programme Lead/Head of School may make the final decision for assessment/extenuating circumstances that arise during the year, before the summer Assessment Boards.

As a result of valid extenuating circumstances, the following action **may** be taken:

- The cap at a Pass grade will be waived and the mark will be reassessed.
- The Exam Board and tutor will agree to an extension to the coursework submission deadline.
- Allow re-assessment of not achieved elements due to non-submission during the referral period as a same attempt
- Allow re-assessment of not achieved modules due to non-submission as a repeat of the whole module during the next academic year as a same attempt

As a result of significant or repeated extenuating circumstances the faculty may want to consider the support needs of the learner involved or recommend that alternative forms of assessment are provided.

Where a learner's extenuating circumstances or health problems prevent them from making academic progress, the Exam Board may require a learner to interrupt or withdraw from the programme of study.

## **7. Chronic ill health**

Chronic ill health can be categorised as conditions which:

- Are persistent, often lasting for more than three months, and often life-long
- Cannot be solved in a short time, or which will recur regardless of action, or which need to be managed on a long-term basis
- Are a long-term or permanent illness that often results in some type of disability, and which may require the learner to seek help with various activities
- Can be managed but can "flare-up"

Examples of conditions which fall into this category are: Cystic Fibrosis, Costochondritis, Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME), Psychosis, and Bipolar Disorder.

Whilst it is hoped that the condition can be managed, we recognise that there are times when unexpected difficulties arise, and a learner may need to claim extenuating circumstances affecting specific assessments. Rather than requiring a learner to evidence their condition with every extenuating circumstance claim, learners who have a chronic condition may wish to complete a Chronic Ill Health form\*. This form must be accompanied by a statement from their GP, hospital consultant or appropriate specialist responsible for their treatment which provides clear confirmation of the nature, severity, duration and effect on their studies of their condition.

Once a claim is authorised, the learner will continue to be required to submit an extenuating circumstance claim for any missed assignment submission deadline, test, or examination or poor performance which is directly attributable to a flare-up of their chronic ill health condition, but they will not be required to resubmit evidence.

The learner must inform their tutor of any change in their condition, whether improvement or deterioration, in order that the claim can be reassessed. The personal tutor may require further evidence from time to time. We advise that the learner complete the form at the beginning of their first academic year (within the first 41 days of your programme) to ensure that any chronic ill health conditions can be taken into account immediately. The learner will be contacted at the start of each academic year to review their case.

Note: If a Chronic Ill Health issue is for an HE Learner studying with a course with a partner organisation, the partner organisation's rules will apply.

*\*The Chronic Ill Health form can be requested from the Head of School/HE Programme Lead/Prison Quality Manager. Please request their details from your personal tutor or prison tutor.*

## 8. Sources of support and information

### Within the college:

- Tutor
- Head of School
  
- Programme Leader
- Learner Services
- Learner Representatives

### Within the Prisons:

- Education Manager
- Deputy Education Manager/Quality Lead
- Programme Managers
- Teachers
- Intervention Practitioners
- Learner Support Recruitment Workers
- Prison Mentors
- Wider Prison internal/external Intervention teams

### Outside the college:

- NHS Direct [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)
- Learner's GP practice
- Youth Counselling Service (YIS)

## 9. Procedure

- Learners who wish to claim extenuating circumstances should obtain a claim form from their department.
- The form should be submitted to the Tutor, or Course Team Leader/HE Programme Lead accompanied by independent corroborating evidence.
- The Tutor or Course Team Leader /HE Programme Lead will submit the form and evidence to the Head of School/Prison Education Manager for initial consideration. The Head of School/Prison Education Manager will carry out an initial review and give an initial decision either accepting or returning the EC form with a request for further evidence.
- If the EC form is returned to the learner, they will be expected to provide further evidence within 2 working days.
- When the EC form has been accepted, it will then be taken to the next scheduled HE Executive Group or agreement.
- Until the HE Executive Group accepts the EC form, any submitted work will be considered to be late and will be marked in accordance with the exam board rules for this.
- Once Extenuating Circumstances have been agreed, the grade given will be reviewed. **No grades are considered to be final until after the end of year exam boards have been held and external verification (where appropriate) has been completed.**
- If a Chronic Ill Health issue is for an HE Learner studying with a course with a partner organisation, the partner organisation's rules will apply.

It is essential that the learner complete the details of dates and module codes accurately on the claim form. Failure to do so may mean their circumstances are not fully taken into account. Circumstances are only valid for the period covered by the evidence.

**Extenuating circumstances claims should be submitted a minimum of 5 working days before the deadline of the affected assignment(s). As this form can be sent digitally, no forms will be accepted after a submission deadline.**

## **10. Corroborating evidence**

Unless a Chronic Ill Health form has been validated, all claims must be accompanied by independent corroborating evidence.

The evidence must be specific about the nature, timing and severity of the problem and if possible, provide an independent assessment of the effect the problem may have had on the learner.

Evidence from family and/or friends will not be accepted. Self-certification for illness is not accepted

Corroborating evidence may include:

- A medical note confirming a medical or psychological condition provided at the time when the learner was suffering from that condition.
- A letter from a counsellor (qualified counsellor working outside the College) confirming a personal, psychological or emotional problem for which the Learner has been receiving counselling.
- An official document such as a police report including a police reference number, court summons or other legal document
- A letter from a solicitor, social worker or other official agency
- An insurance claim document supported by a letter from the insurance company.

Learners may be asked to provide additional evidence if the Exam Board does not consider that it has sufficient corroborating evidence to come to a decision.

### **Consideration of extenuating circumstances claims**

Forms are considered as a matter of priority and the majority are considered soon after submission. However, occasionally some forms can take a little longer to assess. Learners will be informed of the outcome by email. If the claim is deemed invalid the Learner will receive an explanation for this decision.

## Learners should not wait for a decision before submitting their work.

### Late Submissions:

- No individual academic member of staff should allow extensions, all extensions must be approved by the relevant Course Team Leader/HE Programme Lead for the programme of study.
- The College is at liberty to refuse to mark any work to be considered for formal assessment that is submitted late without approved Extenuating Circumstances extension claim.
- Work accepted past the final deadline without an Extenuating Circumstances claim must be submitted to a new re-submission brief that does not include merit and distinction criteria.
- It is good practice to notify lecturers of any late submission you may make in advance of the deadline.
- Any work submitted after the set deadline is considered late, even if this is by a minute. No grace period exists for submissions.
- Any late submissions are not included in the College marking policies and will be marked after the work of learners who submitted on time or at the end of the academic year (depending on the severity of the lateness).
- In the circumstances that a learner is likely to miss a submission deadline due to work commitments arranged by a sponsored employer a special exam board will convene to reach a timely decision on the appeal for an extension. **This will only be considered if the employer has given limited notice of additional and unexpected shifts/hours.**
- All Extenuating Circumstances requests are held over and reviewed by the Exam Board for final agreement.

### Extenuating Circumstances Form & Guidance (Affecting Academic Performance)

#### Extenuating circumstances form and guidance notes:

Extenuating Circumstances (EC) are defined in the College's regulations as circumstances which are unforeseen and outside your control and which can be shown to have had a direct and substantial impact on your academic results. This may include an impact on capacity to study prior to an assessment, on ability to complete an assessment, and/or on performance during an assessment.

## Quick guide to preparing your EC form:

- Read through the form carefully and make sure you follow each instruction.
- Think carefully about whether your circumstances are likely to be accepted as 'extenuating' (see earlier in this Extenuating Procedure for guidance).
- Keep your supporting statement clear and to the point. A longer statement does not increase your chances of your case being accepted and may make it difficult for the reviewers to identify the key elements in your case.
- Make sure all your supporting evidence is directly relevant to your case and is objective, independent, third-party evidence (see Section 3 for more guidance). Only send COPIES of your evidence, keep the originals yourself.
- Make sure that you have completed every section that applies to you. If in doubt ask someone else to read your EC form for you so they can give you feedback on whether they think the form is complete, correct and clearly states the grounds for your appeal.
- Keep a copy of your EC form for your records.
- Where possible submit all your documents together, either by email or in hard copy so that there is no chance of any items going astray.

## Where do I send my form?

Once completed your form must be submitted to your personal tutor or the Course Team Leader/HE Programme Lead.

You can submit your form by email with your attachments or by hard copy with your documents enclosed with the form. We would recommend that you send your form and accompanying documents together so you can be sure they have all been received.

## What happens next?

The procedure for the submission and assessment of Extenuating Circumstances

- Learners who wish to claim extenuating circumstances should obtain a claim form from their department.
- The form should be submitted to the Tutor, or Course Team Leader/HE Programme Lead accompanied by independent corroborating evidence.
- The Tutor or Course Team Leader/HE Programme Lead will submit the form and evidence to the Head of School for initial consideration. The Head of School will carry out an initial review and give an initial decision either accepting or returning the EC form with a request for further evidence.
- If the EC form is returned to the learner, they will be expected to provide further evidence within 2 working days.



- When the EC form has been accepted, it will then be taken to the next scheduled HE Executive Group for agreement.
- Until the HE Executive Group accepts the EC form, any submitted work will be considered to be late and will be marked in accordance with the exam board rules for this.
- Once Extenuating Circumstances have been agreed, the grade given will be reviewed. **No grades are considered to be final until after the end of year exam boards have been held and external verification (where appropriate) has been completed.**

### **If your case is accepted?**

Most learners will be offered either an extension to the official deadline or additional attempt at the affected assessment if the case is accepted. If you are offered an additional attempt as submission, the mark you receive will override any previous mark for the same assessment.

Occasionally the Exam Board may arrange an alternative, equivalent assessment task if it is satisfied that a further opportunity to take the original assessment is not possible or is wholly inappropriate (e.g. because of permanent injury). You will have an opportunity to make a statement concerning this, in no cases will individual marks be changed.

### **If your EC application is not accepted?**

If your application is not accepted, your assignment will be considered as a late submission and marked accordingly, in line with the exam board policy for late submissions. Further information on what this may be, can be requested from the Course Team Leader for your programme.

### **Extenuating Circumstances Form (Campus only)**

#### **Section 1 – My Details**

Surname/Family Name:	
First Name:	
Learner ID number:	
Programme/Qualification:	
Email:	
Mobile Number:	

## Section 2 – Assessment Details

<b>Unit Code:</b>	<b>Unit Title:</b>	<b>Assessment Type:</b>	<b>Submission Deadline:</b>
<b>E.G. A/601/1401</b>	<i>Analytical Methods for Engineers</i>	<i>Coursework</i>	<i>22/07/17</i>

### Section 3 – Personal Statement

*Extenuating Circumstances (EC) are defined in the College's regulations as circumstances which are unforeseen and outside your control and which can be shown to have had a direct and substantial impact on your academic results. Please ensure your statement is concise and clearly outlines the circumstances which directly impacted your ability to submit your work by the deadline set.*

Continue on a separate page if required. Make sure you label the page with your Learner ID number.

## Section 4 - Supporting evidence

You must provide evidence in support of your extenuating circumstances.

**List** the supporting evidence you are submitting and mark whether it is being submitted by **email** or in **hard copy**. Where possible send your form and supporting evidence in a single email or letter. Mark all supporting evidence with your **Learner number**.

If your supporting evidence is in a language other than English, then you will need to submit a certified translation.

Where you cannot get the evidence in time for the deadline mark it as 'To follow'. **This must be submitted no more than 5 working days after your assignment deadline. If evidence is submitted later, it may not be considered.**

### What constitutes 'evidence'?

Evidence should be both relevant and significant. Evidence normally takes the form of written confirmation from an objective, independent, third party. Evidence should relate to facts, not personal opinions. Evidence will often come from an expert or person in authority and will be provided in the form of an official document (e.g. a police report or doctor's note). When you are providing a piece of evidence check its relevance and significance and try to ensure it includes some, if not all, of the following:

- Date that the document was written
- Signature or evidence that it comes from the person making the statement (e.g. from an official email address)
- Evidence that it is independent and verifiable (e.g. the name and contact details of their company or organisation)
- Evidence that the person has the experience or expertise to make the statement (e.g. their job title or qualifications)

'Relevance' indicates that the evidence speaks directly to the case you are making. For example, a relevant doctor's note would confirm that you were seriously ill at the time of the assessment. An irrelevant note might cover a different period of time or testify that you had told the doctor you were sick but did not attend the surgery at the time of the illness.

'Significance' means that the evidence is likely to impact on the decision of the Panel. For example, a note from a friend or relative indicating that you said you were experiencing problems at the time of the assessment would not be significant.

List each item of evidence and indicate using an X whether you are submitting it by email or hard copy. When evidence is 'To follow' you must have agreed deadline for receipt of



# APPENDIX 6 - Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

## 1. Introduction

Milton Keynes College seeks to support all learners to successfully achieve their chosen qualification. This is achieved through consistent high-quality teaching, learning and assessment.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the definition and processes to be followed to enable learners to avoid duplication of learning and assessment for the purposes of awarding credit through recognition of prior learning (RPL).

This policy aims to:

- Provide clarity around the definition of RPL
- Ensure that processes are robust and RPL is not utilised as an alternative means to achievement
- Meets the requirements placed upon Milton Keynes College by all awarding organisations
- Support and enable learners' success.

## 2. A Definition Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

A method of assessment that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning.

## 3. Policy

### 3.1 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the recognition of non-certificated learning towards a full (not partial) unit or qualification. There is no difference between achievement of the required standards by RPL and achievement through a formal programme of study; therefore, RPL appears on certificates as credit-bearing.

There are three ways of recognising prior learning:

**Route 1** – Submit a portfolio of evidence based on previous relevant knowledge, skills and competences which must be assessed against the assessment criteria of

the units, or units, for which RPL is being sought to ensure that all learning outcomes have been achieved.

**Route 2** – Undertake the same assessments as learners following a formal course of learning and assessment that lead to award of the unit or qualification. The assessments may be undertaken without attending teaching sessions.

**Route 3** – Assessment through a summative assessment against a unit or full qualification.

### **3.2 Currency**

Prior learning and achievement will typically be within the last three years in order for it to be viewed as current.

### **3.3 Restrictions on Recognition**

Parts of some qualifications, such as some outcomes/competences on health and safety or licence to practise will not permit RPL but will require traditional assessment.

Additionally, RPL cannot be used where units and qualifications are subject to external assessment.

## **Procedure for RPL**

### **1. An example RPL process is outlined below, with common steps and actions outlined.**

#### **Stage 1: General awareness, information, advice and guidance**

Prior to enrolling on to a programme of study learners should reflect if they have any prior learning that may be eligible for unit accreditation. This should be raised and discussed with learners during any course IAG or interview meetings.

- Learners will need to know the following should they consider applying for RPL: The process of claiming credit through RPL.
- The sources of professional support and guidance available to them
- The administrative processes for RPL applications
- Timelines, appeals processes, and any fees involved

#### **Stage 2: Pre-assessment – gathering evidence and giving information**

This stage is vital to ensure that the learner is fully informed of the RPL process and has sufficient support to make a viable claim and to make decisions about evidence collection and presentation for assessment. During this stage the learner will carry out the evidence collection and develop an assessment plan. The evidence required for the award of credit will depend on the purpose, learning outcomes and

assessment criteria for the relevant unit(s) as set out by the Awarding Organisation. Further details of the evidence required for transfer of credits should be checked with the relevant awarding body as this will vary, depending on the qualification.

### **Stage 3: Assessment/documentation of evidence**

Assessment as part of RPL is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgements about a learner's prior learning and experience in relation to unit standards. Assessment must be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of units and qualifications and the RPL system as a whole. The assessment process for RPL must be subject to the same quality-assurance processes of awarding organisations as any other part of the assessment process.

### **Stage 4: Awarding credit**

Upon successful completion of the internal and external quality assurance procedures certification claims can be made. All assessment and internal verification records, along with any additional RPL records completed, should be retained for the standard three-year period following certification. The assessor must ensure that all learning outcomes and assessment criteria being claimed for each unit are achieved and that the records of assessment are maintained in the usual way.

### **Stage 5: Feedback**

After the assessment the assessor will need to give feedback to the learner, discussing the results and giving support and guidance on the options available to the learner, which may include, for example, further learning and development.

### **Stage 6: Appeal**

If claimant's wish to appeal against a decision made about their claim for credit, they will need to follow the standard process outlined in the Academic appeals policy.



# APPENDIX 7 – DIGITAL (BLENDED) LEARNING POLICY (Campus Only)

## 1. Aims:

1.1 To ensure that digital/blended learning delivery meets the guidelines set by the awarding organisation.

1.2 To ensure that assessment methodology is valid, reliable and does not disadvantage any group or individual learners.

### In order to do this Milton Keynes College will:

- Ensure that teaching/delivery/assessment staff are timetabled to support blended learning when learners are working remotely
- Ensure there is a process to manage feedback on assignments, questions are constructively answered, and feedback is provided in a timely manner
- Ensure the setting of assignments is undertaken in the face-to-face sessions and that deadlines are clear
- Ensure that when learners submit work measures are taken to ensure the work is authentic and has been completed by the learner
- Maintain and store securely all assessment and internal verification records in accordance with Awarding Organisation Centre Agreements.

**(Please see (sub) Appendix A which details the Milton Keynes College response to government guidelines for digital learning, which support the achievement of the aims of this policy).**

## 2. Guidance for remote delivery, including assessment

### 2.1 How remote lessons will work

Our aim is to ensure that the planning of digital learning provides learning activities which will as far as possible meet the individual needs of learners, promote progress, and build on prior learning.

In the event of a hybrid / blended model where some on campus teaching is allowed, classroom work will focus on practical skills development, providing opportunities for assessment and feedback focussing on skills and behaviour.

Remote work will focus on knowledge development with an emphasis on underpinning theory and project-based investigation and will provide opportunities for assessment and feedback of the application of that knowledge.

In the event where all delivery is fully remote, sessions will follow the same timetable and planned outcomes as face-to-face delivery. The sequencing of lessons will allow for learners to strengthen and build on their knowledge and skills with activities designed to develop the behaviours appropriate for success in learners' next steps.

Where possible, staff will investigate ways to encourage practical work to continue remotely, through loan of equipment if necessary.

## **2.2 Assessment and feedback**

Where possible, assignments must be submitted online.

The college has invested in systems which allow digital submission, assessment and feedback. Tools such as Turnitin, Microsoft Teams assignments and Moodle assignments clearly show and "push" assignment deadlines as well as allowing text or audio / video feedback.

A Learner ILP system (ProMonitor / Proportal) also has a gradebook which allows learners to track their progress through any qualification.

Teachers in their planning will also develop opportunities for in-session formative assessment and feedback using tools and strategies such as quizzes, questioning, and polls.

## **2.3 Systems used for remote learning**

Live lessons will take place through the use of Microsoft Teams which will allow remote lessons to follow the same sequence as face-to-face to encourage active participation and to include opportunities for starters, recaps, assessment, group work, class discussion and feedback using tools such as quizzes, breakout rooms, polls, online sticky notes and forums.

Facilitated independent learning, project work and research will be supported through the use of teacher curated resources in Microsoft Teams or the College's VLE (Moodle).

Progress will be tracked through an online gradebook and targets set in Proportal, or OneFile (Apprentices).

The College has invested in e-books and resources and there is an ever growing "Virtual Library" for learners to access. Find out how to access them here: [Digital Learning at Milton Keynes College - What digital resources do I have access to?](#)

All systems can be accessed via the MyMKC app which can be downloaded onto phones via appropriate app stores or accessed on the web via a browser from this link:

<https://mkcollege.myday.cloud/>

The college has provided training and support to staff to enable them to deliver effective and meaningful learning via these digital systems.

#### **2.4 Attendance and participation**

Remote sessions will follow the same timetable as campus face-to-face delivery with all learners expected to attend.

Learners who find themselves unable to attend a live session must notify and discuss this with their teacher. In the case of circumstances caused by the current pandemic such as illness, childcare and other factors, staff may record live sessions and extend deadlines where appropriate to allow an asynchronous participation.

Attendance will be registered and monitored by staff through an electronic register and they will stay in regular contact with learners.

Teachers, Course Team Leaders and Progress Mentors will regularly monitor learner engagement, offer strategies and refer where appropriate in order to minimise non-attendance.

The Learner Development and Support Team will offer learners and teaching teams advice and support to ensure learning continues.

#### **2.5 Expectation of Learners**

The college has high expectations and standards for learner work and conduct, this applies both to the face-to-face and remote delivery. Any learner whose conduct is inappropriate or behaviour does not meet our standards will be subject to the College's normal disciplinary procedures.

When accessing live lessons, learners must be ready to attend on time, be dressed appropriately and have their camera on with headphones, where possible, with the background changed or blurred.

Learners should not share invitations to live lessons or college account details with others or leave computers logged in and open when unattended.

#### **2.6 Support for Learners**

The Learner Development and Support Team will continue to develop events and activities to enrich the learner experience and promote well-being which can be accessed remotely. The College has invested in a specialist online mental health and well-being service to supplement the in-house provision which will continue online via 1:1 advice, interventions and referrals to external agencies. The online service can be accessed 24/7 via this link: <https://togetherall.com/en-gb/>

Learners need a digital device and connectivity in order to access their remote learning. Where possible, using a laptop or PC is preferable to a phone.

The college will aim to support learners with appropriate digital resources on loan where appropriate and achievable and in some cases may investigate non-digital approaches to remote education.

If learners have any problems using the software provided for remote learning there are help guides found here: [Digital Learning at Milton Keynes College](#). If more support or training is needed, learners can contact [digitallearning@mkcollege.ac.uk](mailto:digitallearning@mkcollege.ac.uk) or ring 01908 684442.

The college aims to provide support remotely for those who received it in face-to-face sessions prior to a move to remote learning.

Learners who receive support from a Teaching Support Assistant (TSA) will continue to do so in remote sessions and in some exceptional cases on campus.

Support will be given to those learners considered vulnerable and those with special educational needs to enable them to continue to learn remotely with assistance and, where this is not possible, campus-based provision may be offered.

All requests for campus-based support will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

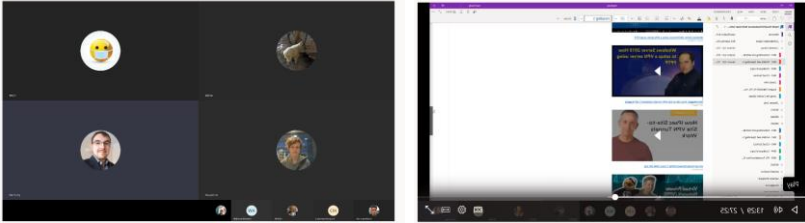
Learners who have difficulty accessing their learning should contact [ineedsupport@mkcollege.ac.uk](mailto:ineedsupport@mkcollege.ac.uk).

## Appendix A: Milton Keynes College Digital Learning – Response to Government Guidelines

Strategies for remote and blended learning should be informed by the needs of teachers and learners and their respective home teaching and learning environments. If possible, colleges and other providers should:

What the guidance says:	What we have we done / are doing:
<p>Prepare staff to teach using remote education practices through supporting staff to access training on the use of online learning platforms used within the establishment (for example, Office 365 and MS Teams, Google Classroom, Moodle, Blackboard, etc) and to ensure that staff are familiar with digital pedagogy and relevant digital content and resources available to them</p>	<p>A number of online CPD activities which have supported setting up and using Teams and Moodle.  <a href="#">Teaching, Learning and Working Remotely</a>   <a href="#">Inset Day: Delivering Online Learning</a>   <a href="#">Teaching online</a>   <a href="#">Technology Tools for the “New Normal” PART 1</a>   <a href="#">Digital Part 2 - Pedagogies</a></p>
<p>Support staff and learners to access the digital technology available, including video conferencing and other methods of remote communication, physical and digital resources, and cloud-based storage systems that can be accessed remotely (for example, Office 365 or Google G Suite), ensure that staff and learners have log-in details and know-how to access online systems and content.</p>	<p>Microsoft Teams allows video calling and remote delivery.   Learners and staff all have log in details.</p>

<p>Provide learners with clear expectations on remote education, focusing on where, when and how they are expected to engage and demonstrate their learning and how assessment and feedback will be delivered, with particular consideration given to how to support disadvantaged learners and learners with special educational needs</p>	<p>Guidance is being created in terms of expectations in online meetings / sessions.</p> <p>Staff training has covered how to give written and audio feedback to Learners both in Teams and Moodle and how to guides have been created for learners for how to access this.</p> <p>Staff have been using a new scheme of work to plan sessions to allow the development of skills, knowledge and behaviours which will be shared with learners.</p>
<p>Consider provision for partnership working with the relevant agencies (including health and social care) to help ensure support for vulnerable young people and young people with SEND</p>	<p>Strong partnerships are already in place and will continue. Transition meetings with schools and other external agencies have been conducted.</p>
<p>Follow safeguarding procedures when planning remote education strategies and teaching remotely as set out in safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19) .</p> <p>Consider how you will deploy your staff to ensure Prevent and security policies are maintained. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) provides guidance on how to work from home while adhering to these policies</p>	<p>Staying safe online guidance has been compiled and shared.</p> <p><a href="#">Safer Internet Day resources</a></p> <p><a href="#">Staying Safe online</a></p> <p><a href="#">Staying safe online ( Lockdown)</a></p>

<p>Consider lesson capture to allow learners to dip in and out of lessons at their own pace</p>	<p>Staff are saving and sharing lessons vis Teams and Stream</p> 
<p>Consider using digital content and resources identified as high quality through recent projects funded through the College Collaboration Fund</p>	<p>The college has access to a number of e-book collections, high quality resources, off air recordings and is a member of the blended learning consortium. There have been requests for other resources which are waiting for approval from the digital transformation group.</p>
<p>Be sensitive and adaptive to the wellbeing and wellness of both learners and teachers. JISC has produced a guide to the Digital Wellbeing of Learners that curates a number of resources and guides</p>	<p>The technology at the college has enabled us to create a community and allay a sense of isolation felt by some learners throughout “lockdown”. ALS staff have been available and access to well-being service such as counselling has continued online. Progress mentors have had virtual support meetings with learners and targeted those learners who were deemed at risk. Safeguarding procedures and support have continued. <a href="#">JISC Guide</a></p>

