

White Trees  
independent school



## Qualifications & Examinations Policy

See also, 'Who We Are, What We Do & How We Do It' & Curriculum Policy

Our vision is to provide pupils with the confidence, skills and ambition to achieve a successful and productive life. We aim to ensure they leave the school with a 'new day, new opportunity' ethos and are capable of becoming positive members of their communities. To do this, we have 3 principles that underpin our policies, practices and everything we do:

- Everyone can learn, achieve and has the potential to be successful
- Positive relationships are key to success and are underpinned by mutual trust, respect and caring for one another
- We have high expectations in everything we do

**W**onderful  
**E**xcellent  
**L**ovely  
**C**lever  
**O**utstanding  
**M**agnificent  
**E**nthusiastic

(Acronym created by White Trees pupils)

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## Introduction

All candidates are 'recruited and registered' as current learners within the school. The Examinations policy is decided by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with reference to the guidance and regulations supplied by the JCQ and the Awarding Bodies. The Examinations Officer is responsible to the Head Teacher for the day-to-day administration of the examinations system.

All candidates should note that the Awarding Bodies are often unable to process appeals and queries relating to the examinations process, timetabling, internal assessment or complaints from students or parents. All queries of this type must be raised in the first instance with the school Examinations Officer.

Should a complaint relating to the administration of some part of the exams process be made against the Examinations Officer, this must be raised with the Head Teacher.

At the time of the exams, candidates must be aware of the JCQ 'Warning to Candidates', a copy of which is posted inside and outside of each examination rooms. During examinations, candidates must follow all instructions given to them by the Examinations Officer or any Invigilator present.

Candidates must also be aware of the regulations regarding the submission of coursework, particularly those relating to the proper acknowledgement of sources. Failure to do so can result in the Awarding Bodies or the JCQ setting penalties which can include official reprimands, loss of examination marks or in extreme cases the loss of all examination results and banning from future examinations.

The school undertakes to run the examinations system in accordance with the published JCQ guidance, given in the Instructions for the Conduct of Examinations (I.C.E.) document, and others.

## Registration and certification

The Examinations Officer will verify the identity of all candidates then collate, organise and register our learners with the appropriate body and on their appropriate courses each year. This will be done well in advance of final deadlines, with accessibility needs and requirements also robustly applied for and in place as appropriate. It is also down to the exams officer to apply for, receive and distribute results and certificates (dependent on qualification).

## Mobile Phones and Examinations

The possession of a mobile phone in an examination room, whether switched on or not, is an offence under JCQ regulations. School policy is that mobile phones must not be brought into the examination room. Failure to observe this regulation may result in the loss of all results for the exam.

## Internal Assessment

Under the Joint Council Code of Practice, the Awarding Bodies require school centre's offering their examinations to:

- Have a published appeals procedure relating to internal assessment decisions;

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- Make this document available and accessible to candidates. The Awarding Body will moderate the assessed coursework/oral tapes and the final mark awarded is that of the Awarding Body. This mark is outside the control of the school and is not covered by this procedure.

## The school will ensure that

- Work submitted by the candidate for assessment has been authenticated as original work according to the guidance issued by the Joint Council;
- At the beginning of the school year, candidates are given written guidance about the Awarding Bodies regulations on the production of coursework, the school's deadlines for submission as well as information about the school's appeals procedure.
- Within each department, candidates are given adequate and appropriate time to produce the coursework;
- Internal assessments are conducted by staff who have an appropriate level of knowledge, understanding and skill;
- The consistency of the internal assessment is secured through the departmental mark scheme or marking criteria and internal standardisation, as necessary;
- The staff responsible for internal standardisation of a subject will endeavour to attend appropriate training sessions given by the relevant Awarding Body.
- Pupils have the opportunity to feedback on their experience with a relevant member of staff who records it (APPENDIX 1);
- Progress, achievements and awarded credits (where applicable) are tracked and recorded;
- Data on pupils is up to date, accurate and kept safely and securely

## Examination Coursework Procedure

Coursework is defined as any piece of written or practical work which is marked by the school or an external examiner.

Pupils must read and understand fully the Notice to Candidates from the Joint Council for Qualifications about Coursework Regulations.

Irregularities in coursework discovered prior to the student signing a declaration of authentication will not be reported to the Awarding Body but dealt with as an internal disciplinary matter.

The work will not gain any credit. An irregularity in coursework discovered after the signing of the declaration of authentication by the student will be reported to the Awarding Body which may lead to disqualification from the subject.

- Coursework must be handed in by the agreed published subject deadline.
- All Pupils are given the same and sufficient time to complete the work.
- Pupils are given clear instructions as to the time and place for handing in the work.

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- The work must be handed in by the pupil to the designated teacher and not given to another pupil to hand in.
- If the pupil is absent from school on the deadline day, a parent/carer or friend must bring the work to school to be handed in to meet the deadline.
- If it is impossible to deliver the work to school, the appropriate teacher or, in case of absence, his or her representative, must be contacted by phone on the deadline day for advice.
- If the coursework has not been completed by the deadline, the incomplete work must be handed in on the deadline day to receive a mark. There will be no further opportunity to complete this work for an improved mark.
- Normally there will be no extension of a coursework deadline if a pupil is absent for a day or two during the period that the coursework is being completed.
- If there are any special circumstances e.g. a prolonged absence covered by a medical certificate, there is a possibility of an extension but this must be negotiated with the subject teacher.

## Internal Appeals Procedure

The grounds for appeal relate only to the procedures used in arriving at internal assessment decisions or the production of externally assessed work and do not apply to the judgement themselves.

The appeal must be made in writing to the school's Examinations of the coursework being assessed. The grounds for the appeal must be clearly stated. The candidate can be supported in the presentation of his/her case by a parent/carer/friend.

The Head teacher will nominate a member of staff, normally the Examinations Officer, to lead the enquiry provided that the Examinations Officer has played no part in the original assessment process. An experienced subject teacher will also be on the panel to act as an independent member.

The panel will examine the evidence for the procedures used in the assessment, decide upon their appropriateness and that the procedures have been properly followed as required by the Awarding Body concerned. The enquiry will be completed by the end of June of that examination series. The panel's findings will be reported back to the candidate/parent/carer, in writing, at the beginning of July. Records of the request for the appeal, the evidence, deliberations of the panel and the result will be kept by the Examinations Officer and made available to the Awarding Body if required.

## Emergency Evacuation of an Examination Room

In an emergency, the lead invigilator must take the following action:

- Tell the candidates to stop writing and leave the question papers and scripts on their desks.
- Evacuate the room in an orderly fashion without talking. The candidates must not attempt to collect bags or coats.
- The invigilator should collect the exam register and evacuate the candidates by following the emergency exit signs.
- Assemble the candidates at the fire assembly point but away from other pupils.

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- When assembled, check the candidates against the exams register.
- The examination candidates must not have contact with other pupils and must not have mobile phones in their possession.
- Make sure that the candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room.
- Make sure there is no discussion about the examination. Inform the candidates that they are still under examination regulations.
- Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted
- At the end of the emergency, the examinations officer or a member of the senior management team will inform the candidates when they may return to the examination room.
- On return to the examination room, the candidates will be allowed the full working time left for the examination.
- After the examination, the lead invigilator will make a full written report of the incident and give it to the examinations officer.

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## Centre Contingency and Adverse effects

Should there be a situation where the centre is unable to operate and offer qualifications to pupils, the Senior Leadership Team would update their process and policies and seek a partnership with one of the many local secondary schools and colleges who already have centre approval. This would be at the expense of the school, who's parent company, White Trees Group, has the infrastructure to adapt financially to adjustments identified.

## Exam fees

All exam fees of all types are paid by the centre, for all qualifications. This includes late entry, re-sit or amendment fees.

## Equality legislation & equal opportunities

All exam centre staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of any equality legislation, as outlined in our equality policy. All our pupils have education, health & care plans for their special educational needs. All qualifications are available to all pupils. The centre will comply with the legislation, including making reasonable adjustments to the service that they provide to candidates in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies, and JCQ. This is the overall responsibility of the head teacher (head of centre).

## Access arrangements

All candidates have special educational needs and an education, health & care plan for their social, emotional and mental health difficulties, and other associated needs. A candidate's access arrangements requirement is determined by the head of centre. Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement is the responsibility of the head of centre. Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer with the support of the SENCO. Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the exams officer. Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the exams officer and head of centre.

## Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual, or organisation, has competing interests or loyalties. In the case of an individual, the conflict of interest could compromise or appear to compromise their decisions if it is not properly managed. The most important feature of the policy is the requirement that an individual disclose any activity that might give rise to a potential conflict of interest. If there is any doubt whether or not it represents a conflict of interest, it must be reported. Any conflict of interest, or potential conflict of interest, must be disclosed to a member of the leadership team with delay.

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# BTEC qualifications

## Assessment

Internal Assessment is defined as the process where staff make judgements on evidence produced by pupils against required criteria for the BTEC qualification. All school devised assessment materials must be internally and/or externally verified before being issued to students.

- Completed pupil assignments will be assessed internally, be subject to internal verification and external moderation by the awarding body.
- Pupils must be left in no doubt that any grade awarded will be subject to internal moderation and that ultimately the final decision rests with the awarding body.
- The assessor is responsible for ensuring that assessment processes are consistent and transparent, that evidence is valid, sufficient, authentic and that judgement of evidence is valid and reliable.
- Pupils will be given an interim deadline for each assignment. Following feedback, a new deadline will be set after which the work is assessed and the outcome recorded. The assessment decisions are then internally verified according to the procedure outlined below. There is a further opportunity to improve assignments before the final deadline.
- All coursework must be handed in on the stated date. If work is handed in late, a decision about whether it should be marked will be taken by the head of centre.

## Role of the Assessor

The role of the assessor is to

- Set tasks which allow pupils to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do so that they have opportunities to achieve the highest possible grades on their BTEC courses
- Ensure that pupils are clear about the criteria they are expected to meet in their assignments and that they are fully briefed on the skills which need to be demonstrated in the coursework / portfolio components of a subject
- Encourage pupils by giving detailed feedback and guidance on how to improve work
- Set interim deadlines for coursework and advise pupils on the appropriate amount of time to spend on the work, ensuring it is commensurate with the credit available
- Mark and return drafts within one week of submission
- Adhere to the Awarding Body's specification in the assessment of pupils' assignments
- Record outcomes of assessment using appropriate documentation. Outcomes will be held securely for 5 years, measured from the point of certification. Associated IV records will also be kept, to support and verify the decisions that were made for the cohort
- Ensure each candidate signs to confirm that the work is their own and that it is endorsed by the teacher after marking the work. A completed original document must be securely attached to the work of each candidate and to that of each sample request.
- Provide accurate records of internally assessed coursework marks to the exams officer in a timely manner for transfer to the awarding body

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## Internal Verification

The Internal Verifier is at the heart of quality assurance on BTEC programmes. In our small school, teachers of BTEC qualifications will internally verify each other's BTEC qualifications, as multiple subject specialists of the same subject are obviously not available. The role is to ensure that internally assessed work consistently meets national standards but can also lead to staff development and quality improvement.

- Each course will have an identified Internal Verifier (IV) who is not otherwise involved in the assessing or setting of work which he or she is asked to verify.
- Internal Verifiers will have the knowledge and qualifications relevant to the qualification(s) and other competence-based award(s) for which they are responsible to enable accurate judgements to be made regarding candidate performance in relation to competence criteria.

## The role of the internal verifier

The internal verifier should:

- Not verify their own work or assignments.
- Ensure that all assignment briefs are verified as fit for purpose prior to their being circulated to pupils. They should enable pupils to meet the unit grading criteria.
- Make recommendations to the assessor on how to improve the quality of the brief if necessary.
- Make all IV evidence available to the external verifier
- Consider the assessment decisions of all units and all assessors to judge whether the assessor has assessed accurately against the unit grading criteria
- Verify 50% of the sample for National Standards Sampling (NSS), though this proportion could be higher, particularly for assessors who are new to BTEC.
- Maintain secure records of all work sampled as part of their verification process using a standard template.
- If a concern is raised the IV should discuss this with the assessor prior to the final confirmation of the marks for all the pupils taking the assignment. As a result of the IV process it may be necessary for the assessor(s) to reconsider the marks awarded for the entire cohort of pupils and, as a consequence, to make changes either to all marks or to some marks.
- Where re-sampling is necessary the work should be verified again before being sent to the EV and records kept.

## Malpractice (pupils)

This can include (this list is not exhaustive):

- plagiarism – presenting material from secondary sources as original, e.g. unacknowledged copying and pasting from the internet, copying. Pupils should be taught an appropriate format of referencing to ensure they do not inadvertently commit plagiarism.
- copying others' work

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- deliberate destruction of another's work
- fabrication of results or evidence, e.g. making false claims about having participated in a practical activity
- false declaration of authenticity, e.g. claiming work of another pupil, declaring collaboratively produced work as own etc.

White Trees Independent School aims to:

- identify and minimise the risk of malpractice by staff or pupils.
- respond to any incident of alleged malpractice promptly and objectively.
- standardise and record any investigation of malpractice to ensure openness and fairness.
- impose appropriate penalties and/or sanctions on pupils or staff where incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice are proven.
- protect the integrity of this centre and all qualifications

In order to do this, the centre will:

- seek to avoid potential malpractice by using the induction period and ongoing personalised support to inform pupils of the centre's policy on malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice. Pupils should be made aware of what constitutes plagiarism
- show pupils the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources
- ask pupils to declare that their work is their own. Pupils must sign declarations for each assignment submitted
- ask pupils to provide evidence that they have interpreted and synthesised appropriate information and acknowledged any sources used
- ensure that staff are aware of what constitutes assessment malpractice
- conduct an investigation in a form commensurate with the nature of the malpractice allegation (any such investigation will be supported by the head of centre and all staff linked to the allegation)

## Malpractice procedure (pupils)

Minor concerns about authenticity, e.g. work which has been poorly referenced through neglect (not deliberate deception) should be dealt with by the assessor in the first instance. Where an assessor has serious concerns about the authenticity or validity of a piece of work (e.g. deliberate deception, repeat offence) he/she should immediately inform the head of centre.

### The procedure

To be led by the head of centre:

1. inform the pupil of the alleged malpractice
2. give the individual the opportunity to respond to the allegations made
3. inform the individual of the avenues for appealing against any judgement made
4. document all stages of any investigation.

Where malpractice is proven, the school will inform the pupil's parents. They will work with the pupil's head of centre to apply an appropriate consequence, which may include:

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- application of schools' behaviour policy
- individualised arrangements for supervision
- other agreed actions

## Malpractice & maladministration (staff)

This can include (this list is not exhaustive):

- improper assistance to candidates
- inventing or changing marks for internally assessed work
- where there is insufficient evidence of the candidates' achievement to justify the marks given or assessment decisions made
- failure to keep candidates' work secure
- fraudulent claims for certificates
- inappropriate retention of certificates
- assisting pupils in the production of work for assessment, where the support has the potential to influence the outcomes of assessment, for example where the assistance involves centre staff producing work for the pupil
- producing falsified witness statements, for example for evidence the pupil has not generated
- allowing evidence, which is known by the staff member not to be the pupil's own, to be included in a pupil's assignment/task/portfolio/coursework
- facilitating and allowing impersonation
- misusing the conditions for special pupil requirements, for example where pupils are permitted support, such as an amanuensis, this is permissible up to the point where the support has the potential to influence the outcome of the assessment
- falsifying records/certificates, for example by alteration, substitution, or by fraud
- fraudulent certificate claims, that is claiming for a certificate prior to the pupil completing all the requirements of assessment. Where staff malpractice is suspected, you must:
  - Inform the staff member's leadership team line manager
  - The alleged malpractice will then be investigated as per the school's procedure, as per the disciplinary & conduct procedures
  - Any malpractice or attempted malpractice must be recorded and Edexcel must be informed.

## Recognition of Prior Learning

All of our pupils join us at different stages of the education journey; some in key stage 3 but many if not most in Key stage 4. In some instance it will be appropriate to recognise that a pupil has already accrued a secure knowledge of the subject being covered and the school is in a position to recognise that. It will be

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used sparingly and only in situations where staff are supremely confident and have clear reasons to evidence secure knowledge.

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