



Policy for Distance/Blended Learning

East Birmingham Community Forum (EBCF)

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Aims:

To ensure that distance and blended learning delivery meets the guidelines set by the awarding organisation.

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

EBCF is committed to delivering high-quality distance and blended learning that is accessible, inclusive, and aligned with best practice and regulatory requirements.

To do this EBCF 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 OCN Centre Agreement.

EBCF is an online provision, and all learning and assessment is delivered through an open learning or 'distance' learning model.

Ensure that all staff involved in delivery are appropriately trained and supported to deliver effective distance and blended learning.

Ensure that learners are provided with clear guidance on how to access learning platforms, resources, and support services.

Validity and approval for online delivery

EBCF's delivery model and assessment arrangements have been designed with strict adherences to the OCN Distance Learning and Assessment policy, produced by OCN Assessment services. At centre and qualification approval stages, the OCN verification professionals have checked that EBCF's arrangements reflect the standards and requirements set out in the policy. Further, on an annual basis through the LSV (Lead Standards Verification) activity conducted by OCN regular checks are carried out to ensure ongoing compliance and adherence to the policy.

EBCF's model of delivery includes both Distance Learning, and Distance assessment, as defined by the OCN policy:

Distance Learning is a mode of delivering education and instruction, often on an individual basis, to learners who are not physically present in a traditional setting such as a classroom.

Distance Assessment is a method of assessment delivered to learners away from a centre, with little or no or very little face to face contact with tutors. Assessment is designed to be carried out remotely. Distance Assessment enables access to assessment for learners who are in situations/settings where traditional methods of assessment delivery may be difficult or impossible to operate. Distance Assessment is frequently delivered electronically

EBCF will ensure ongoing compliance through regular internal review and quality assurance processes.

Potential risk for online learning

Online learning, where learners are not in direct and regular face to face contact with trainers, assessors or other front line delivery staff can present a unique set of risks that may threaten the integrity of the qualification, or the validity of assessment. EBCF have undertaken a robust risk assessment to identify associated risks and have put in place controls to mitigate risks so that they are minimised. This policy seeks to identify said risks, and show what steps EBCF take to mitigate, manage and control the risks identified.

Risks relating to safeguarding, data protection, learner engagement, and academic integrity are reviewed regularly to ensure appropriate controls remain effective.

Registration:

During registration with EBCF, learners are required to authenticate their identity using specially designed industry software. Formal ID is checked, and a verification photo of the learner is retained

All learner data collected during registration is handled and stored in accordance with GDPR and data protection requirements.

EBCF's admissions policy allows a 'roll-on, roll-off' approach to programme delivery. This means that learners can enrol on a programme at any point of the year, and a free to work at their own pace through the learning material and assessment tasks. Suggested timelines are presented at the start of each programme for the learners. These timelines suggest the amount of time to be spent on each learning activity and assessment task, and the duration of time to be spent working through each unit of module. The centre management team monitor learner achievement and progress against the set timescales and contact learners to review progress where slow progress has been evidenced. This intervention supports learner retention and achievement.

Learner progress monitoring is used to identify early intervention opportunities to support achievement and retention.

As the mode of delivery follows a roll on-and-off model group learning at EBCF is unusual, as learner numbers on any course or programme could fluctuate, and learners enrolled onto the same programme will be at different stages, and work at their individual pace.

EBCF's e-learning is provided in a 'flat' format. This means that there are learning materials for the learner to 'consume'. Learning is set out in a logical sequence, covering each learning outcome of a programme, using engaging methods such as Ted Talks, Videos, quizzes, PDFs, screencasts of presentations, pictures and diagrams, links to external websites and further reading or research, reflection exercises and 'head and shoulder' armchair style video introductions and explanations from course staff. Learning at EBCF is not usually delivered using interactive chatrooms, real-time teaching or online seminars, although their occasional use may be embedded. Where this style of teaching is included, the following guidelines should be adhered to:

Where interactive delivery methods are used, they will be planned and monitored to ensure effective learner engagement and participation.

1. Anything we say or do online can be recorded, stored, edited and forwarded without our knowledge.

Google Hangouts Meets, for example, can be set to autonomously record your meetings and autogenerate a transcript of what was spoken and by whom. We must keep every interaction with our learners professional and clean. The same high standards of personal conduct that are expected of us in the classroom apply even more when we are teaching online.

2. Know when your camera and microphone are switched on.

If engaging in video conferencing ensure that the microphone and video is activated only for the face-to-face time, and switched off immediately, so that there is no inadvertent capture of audio or video. In addition, be equally aware of video conferencing apps that can auto-generate captions. If you switch your camera off, but fail to switch off your microphone, otherwise audio will not only be audible to your students, but captions may even appear on their screens

3. Parents and/or others may watch you teach, so be prepared for that. Your audience may be larger than anticipated. It is always recommended to include 'ground rules' to protect confidentiality and protect the contribution of members of the group. Where learners' cameras are switched off, be cautious about who else may be present. This places us, as teachers, under even greater pressure to deliver high-quality learning. Be professional and keep standards high. If we aim to be clear, caring and professional, then our students and their parents will respect and appreciate our efforts more for it.

4. Be aware of chat features that are built into apps. These can contain casual emojis that one can choose to use; but we must be careful not to chat casually with any student (even by adding emojis to our messages). Keep all communication conducted through integrated chat as professional as you would in any classroom environment. (Click here for a useful article on how teachers should behave on social media.

Requirements in relation to managing approved distance learning and distance assessment provision at EBCF.

When learners are registered on Edexcel online (EOL) we inform OCN that our learners have been taught or assessed at a distance, using the dropdown menus and checkboxes available

EBCF will maintain accurate records of delivery methods and ensure transparency with awarding organisations and external quality assurance bodies.

We inform at the earliest opportunity SV and LSV associates, and any other monitoring personnel from OCN that our learners follow distance learning and distance assessment and provide whatever details requested to support effective and robust external monitoring

EBCF does not offer any programmes where assessment is set and marked by OCN and which must be taken under specified conditions.

EBCF is committed to following OCN guidance on the conduct of assessment and the requirements and procedures regarding suspected malpractice; details of EBCF's compliance with these regulations are provided within the Assessment Policy and the Malpractice policy

Delivering of learning, using EBCF's distance learning approach:

Course information clearly describes EBCF's responsibilities for the delivery of the programme of study and states what support is available

For each programme there is a clear suggested timeline for learners to follow, which outlines the delivery of the learning package and associated resources and study materials.

The process for summative assessment of learners' work is clearly laid out for each programme, with a suggested timeline, and allocation of time to each task. Learners are encouraged and able to work at their own pace to complete assessed work in line with work-life balance

For each assignment submission, there are clear instructions for learners on the way in which we ensure that evidence submitted by each learner is authentic. Learners are required to submit an

authenticity statement from their Moodle account with each piece of work submitted, using industry standard authentication confirmation

EBCF staff are provided with clear information on the ways in which learner's evidence of achievement will be assessed. This is provided through the assessment policy, and staff handbook

- EBCF does not deliver qualifications which include workplace-based performance evidence

How EBCF supports learners within our 'distance learning' framework:

Learners are provided with:

A clear explanation of the requirements of the programme and of the type and amount of independent and supported learning they can expect. This is provided both prior to registration and enrolment and as part of the induction module to each programme

The qualification specification, to show the intended learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria.

An explanation of the learning and assessment methods for the programme.

- Clarification of roles and responsibilities. We provide clear information on the learners' own responsibilities outline the role of assessors and IV and the administration team in providing support, assessment decisions and quality assurance of the process
- An identified contact who gives learners constructive feedback on their learning and progress towards their qualification aim. All learners are allocated an assessor and receive regular feedback on submitted tasks.
- The encouragement to engage fully with their learning and the assessment process. This is provided via their tutor and EBCF's admin team who monitor learner progress against the programme identified timeline • Opportunities for interim (formative) assessment of their evidence of learning to enable individual constructive feedback and guidance towards final (summative) assessment. This is provided via the feedback from assessors on submitted tasks
- Tutors, trainers and assessors with appropriate and suitable current knowledge and skills for the delivery of the programme. This is achieved through detailed and thorough staff induction, ongoing standardisation and regular updates
- Confirmation that the distance learning provision is subject to the normal, scheduled internal quality assurance processes and the quality improvement cycle. Learners receive information post-enrolment about the quality cycle related to their programme, including details of internal and external verification processes, as well as their right to appeal and the route to follow should they wish to do this
- Appropriate IT/technical support.

What EBCF does not do:

EBCF does not deliver qualifications where observation of learner performance of a task or skill is a requirement or where the qualification requires that assessment must be taken under specified conditions, which may include direct supervision, designated timings or other forms of control. EBCF does not deliver qualifications which include an element of external assessment

EBCF does not deliver qualifications which include the handling or use of secure materials

Any exceptions will only be made where approved by the awarding organisation and in line with regulatory requirements.

Assessment

EBCF deliver BTEC programmes, which do not include BTEC Firsts or Nationals. All programmes within EBCF's offering consist of assignment-based assessment. Assignments are designed according to the BTEC standard assignment brief format, and further details can be found in EBCF's Assessment Policy.

All EBCF assessment is undertaken via distance assessment, and EBCF takes steps in the design and implementation of assessment to ensure that it: is fit for purpose, by ensuring that it meets the 'Assessment Requirements' as set out in each unit within the programme specification. has content, which is appropriate to the level of assessment, including a relevant vocational scenario.

meets the requirements for assessment specific to the qualification and is

consistent with the qualification specification is delivered in a way

which is appropriate to what is being assessed.

does not disadvantage learners in line with the UK Equality Act 2010 and any other relevant UK equalities legislation;

is accessible to learners and uses straightforward language

allows each learner to generate evidence that is valid and can be authenticated;

permits Reasonable Adjustments to be made, while minimising the need for them; inline with OCN assessment guidance

has appropriate controls in place to prevent and detect plagiarism.

Assessment practices will be regularly reviewed to ensure continued validity, reliability, and fairness.

Authenticity of learner work

Through rigorous assessment and internal quality assurance processes, EBCF takes all reasonable steps to ensure that, in relation to distance assessment:

Evidence submitted by each learner for assessment is authentic

A declaration of authenticity is completed by learners and assessors

Provide access to OCN associates to ensure that as part of the external quality assurance, Standards Verifiers are able to review the process through which EBCF confirm the authenticity of learners' evidence.

EBCF will utilise appropriate tools and processes, where available, to detect plagiarism and ensure authenticity of learner submissions.

Security of learners' assessed work:

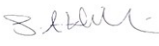
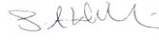

Assessed work is stored securely, readily and easily accessible for:

Learners; tutors, Internal verifiers; Standards verifiers; users at locations remote from the centre; and any other interested and validated organisation or person.

EBCF ensures that portfolio evidence is retained and accessible for standards verification and audit, assessment and internal verification records are retained for a minimum of three years.

Access to learner data and assessed work will be restricted to authorised personnel only and managed in line with data protection policies.

Version Control

Version	Description of Change	Author	Date	Approved by
1.0	First version	S.Carragher	May 2022	S.Johnson
2.0	Version 2.0	S.Khan	July 2023	
3.0	Version 3.0	S.Khan / J.Hall	July 2024	
4.0	Version 4.0	S.Khan (HR)	January 2025	
5.0	Version 5.0 Policy updated to strengthen delivery, learner support, and quality assurance processes.	S.Khan (HR)	January 2026	S.Etheridge (Head of Quality)