

Assessment Policy including Appeals against Assessment Decisions

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The aim of the Policy is to ensure that all assessments produce valid, authentic, reliable and sufficient evidence to make sound assessment decisions.
- 1.2 The assessment process remains open to inspection and both internal and external verification at all times, ensuring all students receive fair and accessible assessment.
- 1.3 The Assessment Policy and Procedures have been developed as a practical guide to assist practitioners within the assessment process.

The Appeals section of the policy aims to ensure that students have the right to appeal against any assessment decision if they believe that a decision is unfair. As an assessment centre, the College also has the right to appeal to Awarding Organisations in certain situations. Students are entitled to;

- access to fair assessment,
- information about the appeals process,
- support in making an appeal,
- a prompt response to an appeal, and
- written feedback on the outcomes of each stage of the appeals process.

- 1.4 The policy outlines the Appeals Procedure applicable to both internal and external assessment decisions, covering the rights and processes available to individual students and to the College, in its capacity as an assessment centre.
- 1.5 The appeals section is in place to ensure that we meet the expectation that there are fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all Higher Education students in line with the Office for Student (OfS) regulations and the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education.
- 1.6 The Appeals section notes that an Awarding Organisation will publish information on its appeals process, allowing assessment results to be formally appealed. However, students must first exhaust the College's internal appeals process before approaching the Awarding Organisation.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy and linked procedures apply to all forms of assessment in all programmes offered by the College and are designed to meet the standards required by the Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition, appropriate Awarding Organisations and Sector Skills Council assessment strategies, specifications and requirements.
- 2.2 In the instance that an Awarding Organisation or HEI has a policy that supersedes this, then their policy and procedure will take precedence.
- 2.3 This policy covers all stakeholders involved during the registration, assessment, quality assurance and claiming of externally accredited qualifications.
- 2.4 This policy meets the expectation that Higher Education Providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints; the provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students (QAA Revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education).

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 This policy is owned by the Director of Student Experience, Quality and Safeguarding and is to be reviewed every 3 years.
- 3.2 The Quality Team and SLT are responsible for the ratification of this policy.
- 3.3 All college staff have a responsibility to implement this policy and underpinned procedures and share it with stakeholders involved during the registration, assessment, quality assurance and claiming of externally accredited qualifications should it be required.

4. Assessment Strategy

- 4.1 An assessment schedule will be made available to students and will be reviewed regularly, and the College will ensure that students have access to the assessment policies and procedures. These include:
- Student Malpractice procedure.
 - Complaints procedures.
- 4.2 Academic Appeals Procedure.
- 4.3 Lecturers and assessors will ensure that the assessment requirements for the course are published and this will include the following:
- Course handbook and programme specification.
 - Assessment schedule.
 - Learning outcomes.
 - Assessment criteria.
 - Weightings and mode(s) of assessment for each unit.
- 4.4 Formal assessment opportunities are identified on the lecturers/assessors' schemes of work and on assessment schedules for students.
- 4.5 Students are expected to work to the deadlines set out in their assessment schedule (or year planner) and should be made aware from the outset of the consequences if they miss deadlines. It is important that all students are assessed fairly and consistently, and that lecturers/assessors do not give individuals an unfair advantage by giving them additional time to complete their assignments.
- 4.6 Assessments are carried out regularly and outcomes reported within 20 working days with written and verbal feedback. The information given to the student:
- Must show the formal decision and how it has been reached, indicating how or where criteria have been met.
 - May show why attainment against criteria has not been demonstrated.
 - Must not provide feedback on how to improve evidence but how to improve in the future.
- 4.7 Second marking, Internal Verification / Moderation and Standards Moderation will conform to Awarding Organisation requirements.
- 4.8 All students should be made aware of their right to appeal against an assessment decision, and the attached procedure should be available.

5. Access arrangements for students

- 5.1 The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Organisation to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment.

5.2 The College sets out the procedure for access arrangements in relation to assessment in the associated Procedures for Assessment document.

5.3 A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.

5.4 How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled student. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

5.5 There is no duty on the Awarding Organisation to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.

6. Appeals against Assessment Decisions

6.1 This applies to all qualifications delivered at the College unless the HEI or Awarding Organisation has a policy that supersedes this.

6.2 In the instance that an Awarding Organisation or HEI has a policy that supersedes this then their policy and procedure will take precedence.

6.3 Students have the right to appeal against any assessment decision if they believe that a decision is unfair.

6.4 Students are entitled to:

- Access to fair assessment.
- Information about the appeals process.
- Support in making an appeal.
- A prompt response to an appeal.
- Written feedback on the outcomes of each stage of the appeals process.

7. Grounds for appeal:

7.1 Assessment undertaken by a national Awarding Organisation

Examinations

7.2 This applies to examinations sat in the college but marked by examiners employed by an Awarding Organisation, for example A Level or GCSE scripts.

7.3 A request for the remarking of a student's examination scripts will normally be considered when the grade awarded is significantly lower than what would reasonably be expected based on the student's prior performance. Any such request must be submitted to the relevant Awarding Organisation in accordance with their published procedures.

7.4 Guidance on the process can be obtained from the College Exams Team. Students are strongly advised to consult their subject lecturer/assessor before submitting a request. They are also entitled to receive support and guidance from their lecturer/assessor throughout the process.

7.5 Other grounds for appeal may vary depending on the specific Awarding Organisation. It is the responsibility of the relevant Programme Manager to establish these grounds and ensure they are clearly communicated to students.

Internally assessed coursework-Further Education and Apprenticeships

- 7.6 This procedure applies to student's work submitted as part of the coursework requirements of the Awarding Organisation. Any internal appeal against an assessment decision must follow the procedure outlined in Section 4.
- 7.7 Students can appeal against the following:
- Students may appeal if they disagree with the proposed methods, location, timing, or criteria of the assessment.
 - Students may appeal if they believe the assessment differed from the agreed plan or if they feel the assessment was unfairly conducted.
 - Students may appeal if they feel that the assessor's judgment was unjust or biased.

Assessment of an element of a course-Further Education and Apprenticeships

- 7.8 In most cases, feedback from the lecturer/assessor should clarify the reasons behind the grading decision and address any concerns. However, if a student still believes that an assessment error has occurred, and the issue falls under one of the categories listed below, an appeal may be lodged.
- 7.9 If, after internal verification/moderation, the validity of the assessment methodology is confirmed, the grounds for appeal are:
- There has been a significant administrative error.
 - The assessment was not conducted in accordance with the approved Awarding Organisation regulations for the course.
 - There was a procedural irregularity in the conduct of the assessment.
 - The student's performance was adversely affected by illness or other factors which for valid reasons were not divulged when the work was submitted.
 - The assessment does not reflect the stated assessment criteria.

Assessment decisions for awards delivered collaboratively with a university partner and for Level 4 and above Edexcel (Pearson) Higher and Professional awards

- 7.10 A HE Examination Board/Award & Progression Board is convened to apply the relevant progression and assessment regulations. The regulations are as identified in the Student Handbook and/or relevant College policies. The Board verifies the marks presented, receives the External Examiner feedback and considers the standard of assessment in each module or unit and decides whether the student has met the award or progression requirements of the course.
- 7.11 The only grounds for the review of a decision of an examination board are:
- There has been a material and significant administrative error.
 - The assessments were not conducted in accordance with the approved regulations for the course.
 - There was some other material irregularity in the procedure of the examination board.
 - The student performance was adversely affected by illness or some other factors which the student was unable or, for valid reasons, was unwilling to divulge before the meeting of the examination board and which could have a bearing on the board's decision.

- 7.12 Appeals Process for Validated and Franchised Programmes.

Appeals against progression and award decisions for Higher Education programmes must follow the procedures relevant to the Validating or Franchising University, as outlined in the student's transcript.

- For programmes validated Pearson, appeals must be submitted to the College or in accordance with the process outlined in the transcript.

- For programmes validated by the University of Plymouth or the University of the West of England, appeals must be made directly to the respective University or as outlined in the transcript.
- For programmes franchised by Bath Spa University, appeals must be submitted directly to the University or following the process outlined in the transcript.

Explicit, programme-specific information about the appeals procedure must be:

- Included in the student handbook
- Sent to all students alongside their transcript
- Made available on the HE Tab of the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

8. The Appeals Procedure

Assessment Decision – Awarding Organisation

- 8.1 The student should first discuss the issue with their lecturer/assessor in an attempt to resolve the dispute. If no resolution can be reached, an informal discussion with the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) for the qualification should take place at the earliest opportunity.
- 8.2 If, after the informal discussion with the IQA, the student wishes to make an appeal, the student should complete the Student Initial Appeals Form (Appendix1) and email their appeal to appealassessment@cityofbristol.ac.uk.
- 8.3 A member of staff, such as the Programme Manager, must be assigned to support the student and is responsible for ensuring that;
 - The Student Initial Appeals Form is completed and submitted via email to appeals@cityofbristol.ac.uk, and
 - Identified action is taken and outcome recorded in Appeals Log (Appendix 2).
- 8.4 Upon receipt of the formal appeal from the student, the College will:
 - Attempt to reach a resolution through negotiation between the relevant assessor and the student.
 - Notify the Awarding Organisation of the outcome of the appeal, if required by the Awarding Organisation's procedures.
- 8.5 The outcome of the appeal before Awarding Organisation notification may be:
 - Confirmation of original decision.
 - Re-assessment by an independent assessor.
 - Judgement that adequate evidence of competence has been shown.
 - Opportunity to resubmit for assessment within a revised agreed timescale.
- 8.6 Should the appeal remain unresolved, a subsequent appeal can be made directly to the Awarding Organisation, following their specific appeals procedure. Details of this procedure can be obtained from the Awarding Organisation.

9. Decisions of College HE Examination/Award & Progression Boards

- 9.1 HE (Higher Education) student must first complete a Student HE Appeals Form (Appendix 3) within 10 working days of the date of the notification of results.
- 9.2 The student must submit the completed Student HE Appeals Form to the HE Team, along with a covering letter outlining the scope and background of the appeal. This can be emailed to headmin@cityofbristol.ac.uk.
- 9.3 The HE Team will decide whether the application meets the criteria for appeals. If it does, they will establish the facts and convene a Review Panel, comprising of at least two and not more than four members of the HE Board. The HE Team will write to the student within five working days of receiving the appeal informing them of the course of action being taken.
- 9.4 The Review Panel will either;
- Require the Examination Board/Award & Progression Board to review its decision, or
 - Determine that there are no grounds for review and reject the application.

The student will be notified in writing of the Review Panel's decision.

- 9.5 An Examination Board/Award & Progression Board which is required to review its original decision will do so at the next available opportunity or reassessment board meeting. The student will be informed in writing of the decision of the Examination Board/Award & Progression Board.
- 9.6 Students have the right to appeal to the Deputy Principal, but only on the grounds that the Review Panel did not follow proper procedures. If students believe this is the case they should email- Catherine.Howett@cityofbristol.ac.uk
- 9.7 Appeals against progression and award decisions to be made directly to a University Partner must be made using the relevant procedures. Details are available in the student handbook and the relevant University website.
- 9.8 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your appeal, and you have exhausted the college's HE internal procedures, you may be eligible to apply for a review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The OIA is an independent body set up to review student complaints. You must submit your application to the OIA within 12 months of receiving your Completion of Procedures Letter. For more information you can visit www.oiahe.org.uk

Assessment of an Element of a Course during the academic year-Higher Education

- 9.9 The student will send the completed Student Initial Appeals Form to the Programme Manager or, if the Programme Manager is directly involved in the assessment, to the Higher Education Quality and Partnerships Manager (HEQ) by emailing - Zahid.Gill@cityofbristol.ac.uk
- 9.10 The Programme Manager or the HEQ will decide whether the application meets one of the criteria for appeal. If it does, the Programme Manager or the HEQ will establish the facts and if appropriate, arrange for the work to be reassessed by an appropriate lecturer/assessor not associated with delivering the programme.
- 9.11 The Programme Manager or the HEQ will write to the student within five days of receiving the appeal request informing them of the course of action being taken. If the request is not granted, the Programme Manager or the HEQ will explain why not.
- 9.12 After writing to the student, at the earliest opportunity the Programme Manager will discuss with the Head of Department the facts and the outcome of any reassessment.

- 9.13 A decision about whether the assessment stands or should be adjusted, will be taken by them and communicated to the student in writing as soon as possible. The Appeals Log (Appendix 2) will also be completed by the Programme Manager.

Recording Appeals

- 9.14 Records of all appeals are to be lodged in line with the requirements of the Awarding Organisation and college monitoring procedures. The Appeals Log (Appendix 2) must be completed by the Programme Manager and submitted to the Head of Quality Assurance. The HE appeals log will be maintained by the Higher Education Quality and Partnerships Manager and HE Team.

10. Awarding Organisations

- 10.1 Please refer to the Awarding Organisation's website or documentation for their appeals procedure.

11. Malpractice and Maladministration (Including AI Use in Assessments)

- 11.1 For the purpose of this document 'malpractice' is defined as: Any act, or failure to act, that threatens or compromises the integrity of the assessment process or the validity of a qualification and its certification.
- 11.2 These can include:
- Maladministration and the failure to maintain appropriate records or systems.
 - The deliberate falsification of records or documents for any reason connected to the award of a qualification.
 - Acts of plagiarism or other academic misconduct; and/or
 - Actions that compromise the reputation or authority of the College and/or its employees.
- 11.3 The College treats all cases of suspected malpractice seriously and will investigate all suspected and reported incidents of possible malpractice. The College ensures that they are handled in accordance with the JCQ or appropriate Awarding Organisation or HEI policy.

12. Responsibilities associated with Malpractice

- 12.1 All staff and students must report suspected malpractice immediately to their line manager who in turn must report this to the Quality Assurance Manager.
- 12.2 Investigations into student malpractice will be handled in accordance with the JCQ or appropriate Awarding Organisation or HEI policy and investigated by a named manager.
- 12.3 Findings of investigations will be considered in line with the ABC Policy - Positive Attendance, Behaviour and Commitment to Study.
- 12.4 Investigations into staff malpractice will be undertaken by a manager in either the Exams Team or the Quality Team.

- 12.5 The findings from any malpractice investigation relating to staff, conducted under this policy will be passed to People Services who will then review if a disciplinary investigation/hearing is required. Where a case of malpractice is proven it can be considered as gross misconduct.
- 12.6 The College will report all relevant cases of suspected malpractice to the relevant Awarding Organisation or HEI, accepting that in certain circumstances the Awarding Organisation or HEI may act on its own, including imposing sanctions.
- 12.7 For further information refer to the Malpractice/Maladministration Policy (Including AI Use in Assessments)

Appendix 1

<i>STUDENT INITIAL APPEAL FORM</i>	
Name of Student	
Student Ref No	
Course Code	
Qualification Name	
Qualification Number	
Unit or Element appeal relates to	
Name of Lecturer/Assessor	
Name of Internal Quality Assurer	
Name of Programme Manager	
Cause for appeal	
Programme Manager Signature*	
Date	
Student Signature*	
Date	

Appendix 2

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Appendix 3

STUDENT HE APPEAL FORM	
Name of Student	
Student Ref No	
Course Code	
Programme	
Awarding Organisation or University	
Name of Programme Manager	
Cause for appeal, e.g. appeal against decision of HE Examination/Award and Progression Board decision:	
Student Signature	
Date	

NB. To be sent to the Higher Education Manager together with a covering letter explaining the scope and background of the appeal. Details/form can also be emailed to headmin@cityofbristol.ac.uk

Higher Education Institutions and Awarding Organisations validating courses delivered at City of Bristol College

Linked Policies

- IQA policy and procedure
- Malpractice/Maladministration Policy (Including AI Use in Assessments)
- Access Arrangements Policy
- Protocol for on-line testing
- JCQ regulations
- Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (RPL)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Compliments, Complaints & Feedback Policy & Procedure
- Fitness to Study / Practice Policy
- ABC Policy - Positive Attendance, Behaviour and Commitment to Study

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Lead Officer:	Head of Quality Assurance
Senior Manager responsible:	Director of Student Experience, Quality and Safeguarding