

Exemplars – Policies & Procedures

The following are examples of the policies and procedures BCS expect Accredited Training Providers to have in place.

Please use these templates as required to form the basis of your policies and procedures. Amend them to reflect what happens within your organisation.

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Quality Assurance Procedure

The minimum requirement for a Training Providers Quality Assurance procedure is detailed below:

- The procedure must set out:
 - the purpose of the procedure
 - who it's intended for
 - who owns it
 - when it will be reviewed

- The Training Provider is committed to Quality Assurance and believes it is an integral part of the Training Providers processes.
- The focus of the Training Provider is on Learners with the provision of relevant and flexible quality training programmes and assessment to suit their needs and lifestyles.
- The provision is regularly monitored and reviewed by your named quality assurance representative.
- All staff involved in the administration and/or assessment of qualifications will have undergone relevant training to their role
- All new invigilators will be observed during their first test session and annually thereafter to ensure assessment regulations are being followed.
- Existing invigilators will be observed conducting an assessment at least once a year.
- Information from the awarding body is disseminated to all members of staff involved in the delivery of qualifications.
- The organisation's policy for Equal Opportunities is followed and monitored.

- For manual testing and evidence based assessment:
 - An Internal Verification process is in place to ensure that consistent testing and assessment standards are maintained by cross-marking.
 - Internal Verification is carried out on an on-going basis.
 - All cases of borderline achievement are Internally Verified.
 - At least 10% of other assessments are checked across all markers and modules.
 - Where a new marker is assessing, all work is double marked until the Centre Manager is satisfied with the standard.
 - Internal Verification is recorded on Learner work and records and on central recording systems.

Equal Opportunities Policy

The minimum requirement for a Training Providers Equal Opportunities policy is detailed below:

- The policy must set out:
 - the purpose of the procedure
 - who it's intended for
 - who owns it
 - when it will be reviewed
- The Training Provider is committed to seeking equality of opportunity for all, irrespective of race, gender, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, age, class or disability.
- The Training Provider actively seeks to demonstrate this commitment by adopting policies, codes of practice and action plans to combat discrimination in any form.
- Staff and students are required to reflect their commitment to equality of opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices.
- The Training Provider will promote equality of opportunity for all students and staff by:
 - Demonstrating opposition to all forms of discrimination in every aspect of its operations
 - Identifying and removing practices and procedures which unfairly discriminate
 - Increasing awareness and positive attitudes at all levels in the organisation toward people experiencing discrimination
 - Creating a welcoming atmosphere for all students, staff and visitors
 - Monitoring all operations to ensure no form of discrimination or harassment is taking place
 - Provision will be made for Learners who require reasonable adjustments to be made by providing suitable assessment locations and technical aids where appropriate.

Learner Appeals Procedure

The minimum requirement for a Training Providers Learner Appeals procedure is detailed below:

- The policy must set out:
 - the purpose of the procedure
 - who it's intended for
 - who owns it
 - when it will be reviewed
- The procedure is required to dovetail into the BCS Learner Appeals Policy.

For all assessments:

- Learners who are unhappy with any aspect of the assessment and award process should first discuss the problem with their Training Provider Representative or the Centre Manager. The reasons for dissatisfaction must be made clear by Learner at this time.
- The Training Provider will keep a record of such discussion together with date and outcome.
- If a Learner is not able to resolve an appeal at the Training Provider, then he/she has the right to appeal to BCS. This may be done via the Training Provider Representative or the Centre Manager or direct to the BCS Channel Partner Quality Team in writing. Learner appeals must be made to BCS as per the BCS Learner Appeals Policy within 20 days of the assessment.
- During any stage of the Appeals Procedure the Learner is entitled to be represented or accompanied, should they wish.

For Manual Marking:

- Where necessary the assessment will be re-marked
- If this does not provide satisfaction the Learner may raise a formal appeal in writing to the Centre Manager, outlining clearly the circumstance of the appeal
- If required the assessment will be re-marked again, and any aspects of the Learner's performance during the assessment taken into consideration
- In some circumstances the Learner may be offered a free re-test (e.g. hardware or software problems)

For Automated Assessment:

- Assessments are undertaken using automated testing software which has been approved by the ECDL Foundation. In the event of a Learner raising a complaint the assessment report that will have been produced by the system will be fully discussed with the Learner

- An action plan will be agreed and a further assessment date scheduled. In some circumstances the Learner may be offered a free re-test (e.g. if there had been hardware or software problems)

For Evidence Based Assessment:

- The Learner should appeal in writing to the Assessor clearly stating their reasons for disagreement and the evidence in the portfolio which the Learner believes meets the competence requirements of the knowledge and understanding and skills and techniques. The Assessor will meet with the Learner and go through the assessment process, clearly explaining the outcome. The Assessor will confirm the outcome in writing to the Learner.
- Learners who are not satisfied with the outcome following a meeting with their Assessor, may then appeal in writing to the Internal Verifier. The Internal Verifier will meet with the Learner and the Assessor and will confirm the outcome in writing to the Learner.
- Learners who are not satisfied with the outcome following meeting with their Assessor and Internal Verifier and have exhausted all of the internal appeals procedures may then appeal in writing to BCS. The Training Provider will be requested to provide reports from Stages 1 and 2.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy

The minimum requirement for a Training Providers Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy is detailed below:

- The policy must set out:
 - the purpose of the procedure
 - who it's intended for
 - who owns it
 - when it will be reviewed

Definition of reasonable adjustments

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. It is made to an assessment for a qualification to enable a disadvantaged learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding of the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of what needs to be assessed, but may involve:

- changing usual assessment arrangements, for example allowing a learner extra time to complete the assessment activity
- adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in Braille
- providing assistance during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or a reader
- re-organising the assessment room, such as removing visual stimuli for an autistic learner
- changing the assessment method, for example from a written assessment to a spoken assessment
- using assistive technology, such as screen reading or voice activated software
- providing the mechanism to have different colour backgrounds to screens for onscreen assessments or asking for permission for copying to different coloured paper for paper-based assessments
- providing and allowing different coloured transparencies with which to view assessment papers

Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the learner access to the programme. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a learner's work.

BCS and Training Providers are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

Principles of making reasonable adjustments

These principles should be followed when making decisions about a learner's need for adjustments to assessment:

- should not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification
- should not give the learners an unfair advantage
- should reflect the learner's normal way of working
- should be based on the individual need of the learner

Definition of special considerations

Special consideration can be applied after an assessment if there was a reason the learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment.

For example, special consideration could apply to a learner who has temporarily experienced:

- an illness or injury
- some other event outside of their control

And which has had, or is likely to have had, a material effect on that learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment.

Special consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage, nor should its use cause the user of the certificate to be misled regarding a learner's achievements. The learner's result must reflect his / her achievement in the assessment and not necessarily his / her potential ability.

Special consideration, if successful, may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark of the learner. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances and reflect the difficulty faced by the learner.

Training Providers should note that

- where an assessment requires the learner to demonstrate practical competence or where criteria have to be met fully, or in the case of qualifications that confer a License to Practice, it may not be possible to apply special consideration.
- in some circumstances, for example for on-demand assessments, it may be more appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date.

Complaints Policy

The minimum requirement for a Training Providers complaints policy is detailed below:

- The policy must set out:
 - the purpose of the procedure
 - who it's intended for
 - who owns it
 - when it will be reviewed

How a complaint is made

- Who can make a complaint
- Who the complaint should be made to
- Method of raising a complaint
- What details are required

How a complaint is handled

- Timescales for managing the complaint – from acknowledgement to resolution
- Methods of investigation
- Methods of response
- Who is responsible for managing the complaint

Appeal against a decision following a complaint

- Steps for appeal against an outcome of the complaint

Malpractice & Maladministration Policy

The minimum requirement for a Training Providers Malpractice and Maladministration policy is detailed below:

- The policy must set out:
 - the purpose of the procedure
 - who it's intended for
 - who owns it
 - when it will be reviewed
- Timescales for conducting internal investigations
- A statement that the training provider intend to co-operate fully with any Awarding Organisation or regulator investigation. Supplying timely, accurate and full information.

Training Providers & associated third party responsibility

It is important that anyone involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of BCS qualifications, and learners, are fully aware of the contents of the policy and that arrangements are in place to prevent and investigate instances of malpractice and maladministration.

Malpractice and maladministration is defined as:

Definition of Malpractice

Malpractice is essentially any activity or practice which deliberately contravenes regulations and compromises the integrity of the internal or external assessment process and/or the validity of certificates. It covers any deliberate actions, neglect, default or other practice that compromises, or could compromise:

- the assessment process
- the integrity of a regulated qualification
- the validity of a result or certificate
- the reputation and credibility of BCS
- the qualification or the wider qualifications community.

Malpractice may include a range of issues from the failure to maintain appropriate records or systems to the deliberate falsification of records in order to claim certificates.

For the purpose of this policy this term also covers misconduct and forms of unnecessary discrimination or bias towards certain or groups of learners.

Definition of Maladministration

Maladministration is essentially any activity or practice which results in non-compliance with administrative regulations and requirements and includes the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration (e.g. within a training provider, inappropriate learner records).

Process for reporting an event of malpractice or maladministration

Anybody who identifies or is made aware of suspected or actual cases of malpractice or maladministration at any time **must immediately notify BCS**.

If a training provider has conducted an initial investigation prior to formally notifying BCS, the training provider should ensure that staff involved in the initial investigation are competent and have no personal interest in the outcome of the investigation. However, it is important to note that in all instances the training provider must immediately notify BCS if malpractice is suspected or maladministration has occurred as BCS have a responsibility to the regulatory authorities to ensure that all investigations are carried out rigorously and effectively.

In all cases of suspected malpractice and maladministration reported, BCS will protect the identity of the 'informant' in accordance with our duty of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty.

Safeguarding Policy

The minimum requirement for a Training Providers safeguarding policy is detailed below:

- The policy must set out:
 - the purpose of the policy
 - who it's intended for
 - who owns it
 - when it will be reviewed

- The Training Provider is committed to protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults whilst they are a learner of the Training Provider.

- The Training Provider actively seeks to demonstrate this commitment by adopting policies, codes of practice and action plans to remove any potential risks.