



Academic Policy Handbook

v1. June 2020



Introduction

The ICS Learn, Academic Policy handbook gives formal notice and explanation to the policies and procedures written and agreed by key stakeholders within the business. All policies, prior to release are ratified by a board member, on behalf of ICS Learns' Senior Management and Executive Team.

This Academic Policy Handbook, 'APH', provides clear guidance to the expectations of students and ICS Learn whilst undertaking your studies. The APH is written in conjunction with, and supported by both the student contract and ICS Learn Quality & Performance framework.

Although the handbook outlines the key policies relating to your studies, the supporting course level student handbook will also provide supplementary and supporting guidance to support you whilst studying with ICS Learn, therefore please ensure you read the student handbook.

We thank you for choosing to study with ICS Learn and wish you the utmost success with your studies.



Contents

| | |
|--|---------|
| Student Charter | Page 4 |
| Appeals Policy | Page 5 |
| Assessment Policy | Page 6 |
| Authentication and Verification Policy | Page 8 |
| Certificate Policy | Page 10 |
| Complaints Policy | Page 12 |
| Conflict of Interest Policy | Page 14 |
| Examination Policy | Page 18 |
| Feedback Policy | Page 19 |
| Internal Quality Assurance Policy | Page 21 |
| Malpractice Policy | Page 23 |
| Non- Exam Assessment Marking Review Policy | Page 26 |
| Plagiarism Policy | Page 28 |
| Reasonable adjustments and special considerations policy | Page 29 |
| Policy for Recognition of Prior Learning | Page 31 |
| Safeguarding Policy | Page 33 |
| Glossary | Page 36 |



ICS Learn is the world's most experienced online learning organisation and offer online courses for students to learn and engage within their chosen subject area. As a result, we have set out a student charter which we hope helps to guide you through your study and make the process as efficient and as effective as possible.

Responsibility of ICS Learn

Throughout the course you may expect to:

- ✓ be treated fairly and with respect
- ✓ have access to accurate information about your course and ICS Learn policies, including complaints and appeals procedures
- ✓ receive a high standard of teaching, assessment, advice and guidance from appropriately qualified staff
- ✓ be able to discuss academic progress with the appropriate course staff
- ✓ have access to the learning resources you need to support your studies
- ✓ have access to personal guidance and support from ICS Learn services if appropriate
- ✓ be given a timescale and framework for work set
- ✓ have clearly defined assessments, assignments and course work marked fairly and returned with appropriate comments within an agreed timescale
- ✓ have the opportunity to express views on quality of teaching, services and facilities
- ✓ receive guidance on careers and future progression routes

Student Responsibilities

Throughout the course you will be expected to:

- ✓ take responsibility for your work and actions
- ✓ attend regularly and punctually
- ✓ commit yourself to work and study outside formal teaching time
- ✓ complete your assignments within the agreed timescale
- ✓ comply with ICS Learn regulations and policies
- ✓ conduct yourself responsibly and show consideration and respect towards staff, fellow students and members of the ICS community
- ✓ do not share documents of completed assignments or engage in any plagiarism activities

Students are reminded that their responsibilities relate to all methods of communication, including electronic and social networking. From time to time, we will monitor forums and ensure that document sharing is not being discussed, proposed or actioned. ICS Learn take plagiarism very seriously and could lead to your course being terminated.

This Student Charter summarises the aspirations and expectations of ICS Learn. It is not intended as a legally binding contract, or to define or limit the legal rights and responsibilities of ICS Learn.

1. Introduction

ICS Learn is committed to the provision of a continuously high standard of assessments and feedback on all programmes. In the event of an appeal by a student regarding an assessment grade or outcome, we aim to follow a clearly defined process to determine the validity of such an appeal.

The application of this policy will ensure fairness across the board in dealing with any case of dissatisfaction regarding an assessment outcome.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all appeals made by any ICS Learn student who is dissatisfied with a grade or assessment outcome. It is also applicable to appeals made either during or after the student has completed their studies with ICS Learn.

The circumstances resulting in the appeal will be assessed by the relevant department in accordance with the provisions of this policy and any supporting documents.

3. Policy Statement

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- 3.1** The Appeals policy is in place to ensure that all students have a chance to contest and appeal any academic decision that they do not agree with. All appeals received are to be dealt with in a fair and timely manner.
 - 3.2** Appeal outcomes will follow careful consideration of evidence and the decisions of all staff members involved.
 - 3.3** A process examining all evidence is to be carried out to give a satisfactory outcome for both ICS Learn and the learner involved. The learner will be kept informed of any outcomes in a timely manner and has the right to accept or refute any decisions. The decisions made by both parties will be dictated by the appeals procedure.
 - 3.4** The Appeals policy ties in with ICS Learn's commitment to fair assessment and ensuring learner satisfaction. All appeals will be treated fairly, and all relevant feedback will be imbedded in the company's policies as part of a continuous commitment to improving services.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Curriculum Coordinator, the Head of Curriculum Delivery and the Head of Student Services will review all evidence and assessment records as part of this process, however the entire appeals process will be overseen by the Head of Curriculum Delivery.

The Curriculum Coordinator will work in conjunction with the tutor in following the relevant appeals procedure to ensure that a fair assessment of the student's appeal request is carried out.

5. Associated or Related documents

This policy will work in conjunction with the ICS Learn Quality & Performance Framework as well as the ICS Learn Assessment Policy, ICS Learn Malpractice Policy and ICS Learn Plagiarism Policy.

1. Introduction

This policy aims to provide all ICS Learn staff involved in assessment of coursework and other non-supervised learner submissions clear guidance on the principles of assessing coursework.

In higher education, “assessment” describes any process that involves the evaluation or appraisal of a learner’s knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes or abilities. In line with ICS Learns Quality and Performance Framework, assessments are taken to be an integral component of teaching and learning and serve multiple purposes.

The aim of this policy is to develop a company-wide approach to assessment and feedback that enhances the effectiveness of assessment in aiding learners to achieve their goals. The policy also aims to fulfil Expectation 22-24 of the ICS Learn Quality and performance Framework by ensuring that there are effective policies in place which ensure that academic standards are set and maintained for each qualification offered.

This policy should be applied in conjunction with the ICS Learn Assessment Procedure and the ICS Learn Feedback Policy and procedures.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all learners on all programmes of study in the ICS Learn portfolio as well as the assessments within each programme. Any assessment, regardless of the method, be it written, oral or otherwise, falls within the remit of this policy. Each individual programme will follow its own guidelines and procedures and will be outlined with the individual course, student handbook. All assessment guidelines will underline the key principles shown in section 3.

3. Policy Statements

To ensure that ICS Learn meets all internal and Awarding Organisation standards, ICS Learn will ensure that all assessments are:

Transparent: such that all parts of the assessment process are explicit and readily accessible.

Equitable: so that all assessments are fair, taking account of learning requirements, actively removing barriers to achievement, and operate through consistent application of criteria.

Valid: so that assessments are integral to learning and fit for purpose, particularly in relation to level, content and intended learning outcomes.

Authentic: being the candidate’s own work is able to be submitted and subsequently assessed

Reliable: such that the judgements derived from assessments are accurate, verifiable and criterion referenced.

Current: so that all learners have the best possible opportunity to demonstrate their learning to the best of their potential and that assessment allows for current practice/knowledge to be evidenced.

Sufficient: so that the assessment allows the student to provide evidence that meets the requirements of the assessment criteria

Consistent: such that assessment judgements are agreed and moderated, and courses, units and modules receive feedback of comparable quality and promptness.

Just: so that there are effective mechanisms that deal with breaches of assessment regulations and can resolve appeals against assessment decisions.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The principles of this policy will be applied by all members of staff associated either directly, i.e. tutors or indirectly i.e. Curriculum Coordinators with the marking and assessment of all submitted learner work.

Staff involved in assessing learners' work are responsible for:

- Assessing learners' work according to published assessment criteria which are aligned to intended learning outcomes;
- Designing assessments that effectively facilitate learners' achievement of intended learning outcomes;
- Assessing learners' work according to published assessment criteria which are aligned to intended learning outcomes;
- Informing learners when, where and how feedback will be provided;
- Engaging in dialogue with learners about assessment and feedback; and
- Continuously reviewing their approach to assessment and to reflect effective practice.

It is the responsibility of the Curriculum Coordinators to ensure that feedback is standardised, internally quality assured where applicable and standards are maintained by all tutors and other staff involved in providing academic feedback to learners.

It is the responsibility of the Curriculum Coordinators to review assessment procedures to ensure that these set out standards continue to be maintained and improved upon.

This policy should be adhered to across ICS Learn. The implementation of the policy will be monitored by the Quality and Performance Team.

5. Associated or Related documents

This policy works in conjunction with and compliments the ICS Learn Feedback Policy. This and all other ICS Learn Policies are set out to be in line with the ICS Learn Quality and Performance Framework.



1. Introduction

The objective of this policy is to outline and the accompanying procedure document is to ensure that all assessments submitted by learners, where applicable, are properly verified for both the authenticity of the written work as well as the identity of the learner; this is relevant in meeting Expectation 25 of the ICS Learn Quality Enhancement and Performance Framework.

The Authentication and Verification policy will provide a measure of consistency, reliability and validity for assessments and assessment processes. The application of the policy also aims to ensure that ICS Learn remains compliant within the assessment requirements and regulations of all relevant Awarding Organisations, ensuring that all learners have an equal opportunity to achieve their goals.

2. Scope

This policy is applicable to all learners enrolled with ICS learn as well as all members of staff (permanent and freelance) involved in the authentication and verification of submitted assessments. It particularly applies to all agreed processes in the authentication and verification of all formative and summative assessments on all relevant programmes.

3. Policy Statements

- 3.1** All formative and summative assessments submitted as part of any programme of study with ICS Learn must be appropriately authenticated and verified by the tutor. The tutor must be confident that the work produced is the learner's own work.
- 3.2** The identity of all learners submitting unsupervised coursework assessments as requested by the applicable Awarding Organisation, must be properly verified.
- 3.3** All learners must be advised at the beginning of their studies that their submitted assessments will be authenticated and verified before they are given a final grade. They must also be made aware of the implications where assessments are not able to be authenticated. (See: ICS Learn Malpractice Policy, ICS Plagiarism and ICS Learn Assessment Policy)
- 3.4** Where appropriate, learners should be informed of the authentication or verification process for their specific programme of study and what is required of them particularly where verification documents need to be sent to ICS Learn.
- 3.5** All tutors must have access to this policy and the accompanying procedure documentation. Tutors are given appropriate training where applicable on the authentication and verification process as set by ICS Learn or as specifically required by applicable Awarding Organisations.
- 3.6** All documentation, tools, software, resources and contact information must be easily accessible by every member of staff, both permanent and freelance, involved in authentication and verification of assessments to ensure this process is seamless and efficient.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The application of the policy will be predominantly overseen by the Head of Quality with support from the Head of Curriculum Delivery and relevant course, curriculum coordinator who will ensure that all resources required for the application of this policy are made available to all relevant members of staff.

The Examinations Officers, along with the Quality and Performance team will be responsible for the verification of learner's identity either after enrolment on a programme of study or when a non-supervised assessment is submitted as requested by the relevant Awarding Organisation.

The tutors responsible for assessing learner work will be responsible for following the authentication process to ensure the assessments submitted are the learner's own work.

5. Associated or Related Documents

This Policy will be applied in conjunction with the ICS Learn Malpractice Policy, ICS Learn Plagiarism Policy and ICS Learn Assessment Policy. The ICS Learn Quality and Performance Framework will also be referred to in the application of this policy with regards to the relevant quality expectation and indicators.

1. Introduction

ICS Learn is committed to ensuring that every learner who successfully meets all the requirements for the relevant qualification is issued with a certificate confirming their achievement from the relevant Awarding Organisation (AO) within the agreed timescale.

The certificate will state the name of the award or qualification, the classification of the award (where appropriate) and the learner's name as recorded on our database. The application of this policy and the accompanying procedures aim to fulfil Expectation 27 of the ICS Learn Quality and Performance Framework by ensuring that all learners who successfully complete their programme will receive their certificate of completion in a timely manner following the request being made.

2. Scope

This policy is applicable to all learners enrolled with ICS Learn on one or more of the programmes in our portfolio. It also applies to all members of staff and any external stakeholders who are involved in the recording of learner's grades and other indicators of achievement as well as requesting the certificate upon the successful completion of the programme of study.

The Online Learning team who are responsible for ensuring that learner grades are captured and stored on the Online Student Community where assessments are mainly submitted, are also subject to the remit of this policy and accompanying documents.

3. Policy Statements

- 3.1** Every learner who successfully completes all the required units or modules within their programme of study is eligible to request a certificate of achievement as well as an academic transcript. The Certificate will provide evidence of attainment that can be presented to public or professional bodies, service authorities, educational institutions and employers. The transcript document on the other hand will provide details of the individual units or modules studied as well as the grades or scores gained where applicable.
 - 3.1.1** Learners who pass one or more modules or units on their programme of study, but don't successfully complete all the modules, are also eligible to request unit certification for the modules or units they have completed.
 - 3.1.2** Learners who require proof of their achievement can request a provisional transcript from ICS Learn while they are waiting for the delivery of their certificate from the relevant Awarding Organisation. This transcript document issued by ICS Learn will confirm the programme of study, period of study, units or modules that have been completed and what grades or scores were achieved as applicable.
 - 3.1.3** Once a learner requests a certificate of completion and achievement and it is confirmed from our database or the Awarding Organisation database as applicable, that the learner has completed, a certificate will be requested and delivered to the learner within a timely manner.¹

¹ Awarding Organisation timescales/SLAs may vary per individual AO, therefore please refer to the student handbook or contact the relevant AO.

- 3.1.4** The name that will appear on the certificate will be the name by which the Learner is registered with ICS Learn which is also the name that will be registered with the relevant Awarding Organisation. If a learner changes their name before the end of their programme and wishes this to appear on their certificate, they must notify the ICS Learn Student Services team when they make the request for their certificate. It is also imperative a student notifies the AO of a name change.
- 3.1.5** The certificate will be posted to the address as recorded on the ICS Learn database or to the address the learner recorded with the Awarding Organisation upon registration.
- 3.1.6** Only one original certificate will be issued to the learner for any award or qualification. Replacement certificates will be paid for by the learner who requires it except for an error on the certificate caused by ICS Learn or the Awarding Organisation.
- 3.1.7** Learners who have successfully completed their programme of study and are eligible to request a certificate will not be able to do so if they have any standing balance in course fees owed to ICS Learn. Certificates will only be requested and delivered once any outstanding amounts owed have been paid in full. Any exceptions to this policy statement will be applied on a case by case basis or if a requirement of the Awarding Organisation.²

4. Issue of Replacement Certificate or Transcript of Achievement

ICS Learn recognises 4 instances where it may be necessary to request and issue a replacement certificate:

1. Where a certificate has been lost in transit or following receipt by the learner;
2. Where a certificate has been damaged in transit or following receipt by a learner;
3. Where the learner's name has been spelt incorrectly or the learner changes their name later;
4. Where an incorrect grade or score has been recorded on the certificate or transcript.

Where a certificate has been lost or damaged prior to receipt by the learner, the learner's name has been incorrectly spelt or a grade or score incorrectly recorded as an error on the part of ICS Learn or the relevant Awarding Organisation, a replacement will be requested and provided without charge. In all other cases, a fee will be applicable as advised when the learner contacts ICS Learn to request a replacement.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The application of this policy and the accompanying procedures will be predominantly overseen by the Quality and Performance team with the support of the Examinations team. The Student Services Team will be the first reference point for any learners requesting a certificate, transcript or any replacements. Their requests will then be forwarded to Quality & Performance and/or Examinations team to action.

² ICS Learn will ensure adherence to all requirements and guidelines related to the certification of a student if fulfilled. All course student handbooks will detail any exception(s) to the above rule if it conflicts with requirements from the Awarding Organisation.

1. Introduction

ICS Learn is committed to providing high quality service and achieving the highest standards of support of all our students and other stakeholders. The company encourages an environment in which constructive complaints are valued and contribute to the positive experience of everyone who uses our service or is a stakeholder of the company. This policy is designed to encourage prompt resolution of complaints at the earliest possible stage.

We aim to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as simple as possible;
- We treat a complaint as any clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for a response;
- Every complaint is dealt with promptly, politely and professionally;
- Complaints are responded to in the right way, for instance with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong or information on any action taken etc.
- We learn from complaints and use them to improve our service.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all complaints made by all ICS Learn stakeholders which includes our learners, tutors and other members of staff as well as other external stakeholders of the business, regarding the services offered by the business.

3. Policy Statements

- 3.1** ICS Learn is committed to treating all valid complaints seriously and assessing them thoroughly.
- 3.2** A complaint can be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by an individual or a group of individuals about the standard of a service, action or lack of action by or on behalf of an institution. A complaint may relate to:
- The quality and standard of service offered by ICS Learn;
 - Failure to provide a service that is agreed or promised;
 - The quality of learning resources;
 - Treatment by, or attitude of a, member of staff,³ student, contractor or any other stakeholder;
 - Inappropriate behaviour by a member of staff, student, contractor or any other stakeholder;
 - Failure by ICS Learn to follow an appropriate administrative process;
 - Dissatisfaction with the company's policies or procedures.
- 3.3** ICS Learn reserves the right to conduct an initial investigation into a complaint but to decline to consider it if it is deemed to be vexatious or where irrational demands are made or where the complainant is unreasonably persistent.
- 3.4** The company reserves the right to refuse to deal with a complainant who takes an overly aggressive or abusive approach towards any member of staff; all members of staff have a right to be treated courteously and with respect

³ External stakeholders include Suppliers, Contractors, Awarding Organisations or any other entity with which ICS Learn have a business relationship.

- 3.5 Complaints should be raised as soon as problems arise to enable prompt investigation and swift resolution.
- 3.6 The company requires that staff must record all complaints so that the data can be used for analysis and management reporting. By recording and using complaints information in this way, the causes of complaints can be identified, addressed and, where appropriate, training opportunities can be identified and improvements made to the services offered.
- 3.7 All formal complaints unless about services offered by an external body which then needs to be referred to them, will be investigated and we will aim to send a response to the complainant within 10 working days.

Complaints involving other organisations/contractors

Complaints relating to services offered in conjunction with ICS Learn and other external stakeholders, will be considered based on the merit of the complaint. Complaints relating to services provided by the external body on behalf of ICS Learn will either be referred to the relevant officer or department within the organisation or dealt with by ICS Learn depending on the nature of the complaint.

The complainant will be informed of which department is dealing with the complaint and given any relevant contact details. Collaboration may be required between ICS Learn and the relevant department at the external body to ensure that the complaint is successfully addressed and resolved.

Roles and Responsibilities

Complaints should be made in writing by email to the ICS Learn Student Services team at studentservices@icslearn.co.uk.

Once a complaint is received, the Student Services team will refer it to the relevant department for investigation and follow up with the complainant.

Complaints will be dealt with by any member of the relevant team to which it is referred at first instance, depending on the nature of the complaint. Some complaints will need to be dealt with by the relevant Team/Department Manager.

Serious complaints regarding the quality of service offered by ICS Learn and which require a significant amount of money to be refunded to the complainant or more drastic action on the part of the company may be referred to the Director of Education & Skills or to the Chief Executive Officer depending on the particular case.

Please note that the complaints process may also vary, slightly dependant upon specific AO regulations, therefore please refer to your student handbook for further detail. If no further detail exists, the above shall be followed in its entirety until its conclusion.

1. Introduction

A conflict of interest is where:

- a person is engaged within a role involved with the accreditation of a study programme, and that person has some other degree of involvement in the process, directly or indirectly, that might compromise confidentiality, give unfair commercial advantage, or threaten the integrity of ICS Learn qualifications and Awarding Organisation membership.
- a person has links with one or more learning providers/centres that would constitute a conflict of interest including personal, academic/business and financial interest.

Guidance is provided in this document to ensure that all parties involved in the process of accreditation of study programmes understand what constitutes a conflict of interest and they can demonstrate their full independence.

Conflicts of interest are taken seriously by ICS Learn - failure to do so could:

- risk the integrity of ICS Learn qualifications
- effect credibility and professionalism
- potentially effect candidates
- breach commercial confidentiality
- give rise to claims of unfairness or even litigation
- effect contracting capability and give rise to difficulty in offering quality assurance roles, centre and work allocation and service level reviews.

This guidance note sets out some principles of the approach that ICS Learn takes in this area and confirms how this is intended to be used and applied.

2. Scope

Everyone involved in advising, assessing, verifying or managing ICS Learn study programmes is affected by this policy.

It is also applicable to investors, management, staff and associates, external teaching staff, internal quality assurers, and ICS Learn quality assurance staff.

3. Criteria used by ICS Learn

Drawn from the definition, ICS Learn bases conflict of interest decisions on the following indicative criteria:

- demonstrable independence:
 - o factual
 - o conduct
- roles and responsibilities:
 - o positions held
 - o nature of contract
 - o type of involvement
 - o degree of involvement
 - o nature of conflict (direct/indirect)

- commercial advantage:
 - o potential
 - o actual

4. Policy Statements

- 4.1** It's essential that all those involved in the ICS Learn accreditation processes declare any potential for a conflict of interest at the point of centre approval, application or renewal of an ICS Learn quality assurance role and when a conflict arises during the period of approval or contract.
- 4.1.1** On centre approval, application or appointment to an ICS Learn quality assurance role, ICS Learn expects there to be appropriate independence of organisational ownership from the exercise of academic authority, to ensure the distinction between the academic function and other functions within the organisation is managed to avoid any conflicts of interest, barriers to access or restrictive practices and to maintain the integrity of study programmes.
- 4.1.2** ICS Learn expects that applications for any quality assurance role will include full details of any prior involvement with other learning providers in order that a decision can be made about the potential for a conflict of interest and therefore any appropriate action or restrictions can be applied, including not pursuing or not appointing the candidate, or placing operational restrictions on activities.
- 4.1.3** ICS Learn also expects that the learning provider where the individual already has an association will have been informed in a similar way so that they can also make any appropriate decisions from a learning provider perspective.
- 4.1.4** Subsequent to approval or appointment in, if a new invitation to apply for any quality assurance role is offered to anyone already working with another learning provider, ICS Learn expects that all interested parties will be informed by the person involved, as above, in order that appropriate decisions can be made based on those described as above.
- 4.1.5** If anyone involved with ICS Learn uses conduct that appears to indicate a conflict of interest, ICS Learn reserves the right to take action as described below, following counselling of the individual concerned. When an actual or potential conflict of interest is identified the following is expected:
- Explicit records covering the conflict of interest, and how independence has been assured.
 - Greater sampling and checking of the issues surrounding the conflict of interest by internal and external quality assurers and moderators.
- The following actions may be judged appropriate by ICS Learn:
- Requests or requirements for a change of quality assurance role or activities to minimise the potential for conflict of interest.
 - Possible non-renewal of contract for services.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The application of the procedures relating to this policy will be dealt with by the relevant Curriculum Coordinator and predominantly overseen by the Head of Curriculum Delivery and the Head of Quality & Performance.

a. Curriculum and Quality Team

This policy spells out the principles of what is currently a difficult area for ICS Learn, as many staff and associates (ICS Learn tutors, internal quality assurers and authors) bring notable advantage to the various study programmes by their significant experience and involvement in a variety of ways and in different contexts. However, this also brings with it most of the potential difficulties and problems identified earlier in this policy.

In an ideal world, the approach outlined here would be applied quite rigorously, although this would potentially diminish the range of experience within the ICS Learn teams and also make it harder for members of the various teams to maintain their occupational competence in aspects of their work that ICS Learn likes or expects to be maintained.

A pragmatic approach is therefore necessary, and this section sets out the principles that ICS Learn curriculum delivery and quality & performance will apply:

- 5.1.1** Any conflict of interest should be formally logged, so that ICS Learn has records relating to exactly what conflict of interest (however small) exist for their staff and associates.
- 5.1.2** Logs as described above should show clearly the process that the centre is implementing to guarantee independence so that the centre can demonstrate the monitoring that is being undertaken to ensure the conflict does not:
 - lead to the integrity of the study programme being compromised
 - give any unfair commercial advantage
 - jeopardise confidentiality.
- 5.1.3** ICS Learn will be prepared to show these records to relevant Awarding Organisations so that the process and its implementation can be checked and to demonstrate that conflict of interest has been recognised as such and are being monitored in an appropriate way to minimise their effects.
- 5.1.4** ICS Learn will undertake a 'conflict of interest' check before contracting any new associates and include the results of such checks in any subsequent registration application to the relevant awarding organisation, together with clear statements of the duties to be performed and how the conflict will be monitored within normal operations.
- 5.1.5** Whenever renewing, adding to or changing contracts, jobs, roles or responsibilities, ICS Learn will examine the extent to which an actual or potential conflict of interest exists, and resolutions confirmed before accepting the change.
- 5.1.6** ICS Learn reserves the right not to approve individual staff members, or may require restrictions on their duties, if the conflict of interest appears in their view to carry an unacceptably high risk, or where monitoring of the conflict is inappropriate.
- 5.1.7** ICS Learn quality assurance will check ongoing conflict of interest monitoring records as part of their routine quality assurance monitoring.

5.2 ICS Learn

- 5.2.1** Members of ICS Learn curriculum delivery and quality & performance staff and those individuals undertaking a quality assurance role under a contract for service should formally log any actual or potential conflict of interest with the appropriate Curriculum Co-ordinator, the Head of Curriculum Delivery or the Head of Quality & Performance.
- 5.2.2** Logs as described above will show clearly the process that ICS Learn is implementing to guarantee independence so that ICS Learn can demonstrate the monitoring that is being undertaken to ensure the conflict does not:
- lead to the integrity of the learning programme being compromised
 - give any unfair commercial advantage
 - jeopardise confidentiality.
- 5.2.3** ICS Learn will make these records available to relevant awarding organisations as required so that the process and its implementation can be checked and to demonstrate that conflict of interests have been recognised as such and are being monitored in an appropriate way to minimise their effects.
- 5.2.4** ICS Learn will undertake a 'conflict of interest' check before offering any contract for service, and thereafter periodically, and will include the results of such checks in any subsequent decision, together with clear statements in the contract of the duties to be performed and how the conflict must be monitored and managed.
- 5.2.5** ICS Learn Quality & Performance Team will assess the nature and extent of the risk, and reserves the right not to contract an individual, or to place restrictions on their duties, if the conflict of interest appears in their view to carry an unacceptably high risk, or where monitoring of the conflict is inappropriate.

6. Associated or Related Documents

This policy will be applied in conjunction with the accompanying Conflict of Interest Procedures.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to support a fair and impartial examination experience for all learners at ICS Learn, meeting academic requirements, and ensuring practicalities are met as effectively and efficiently as possible. It confirms that all staff and learners are clear as to their responsibilities regarding examinations, and how to work with and access the services provided.

The Examinations policy will ensure that learners are provided with clear guidance on the process to be carried out during the examination process. This will be applied across ICS Learn and we will adhere to the standards of the various Awarding Organisations we work with, while ensuring that our learners are treated fairly. This will confirm that the highest standards of quality are constantly maintained at all times.

2. Scope

This policy relates to all formal examinations which occur as part of a learner's programme of study.

The policy outlines the practical arrangements for learners' participation in examinations.

3. Policy Statements

In support of the principle that the assessment process is fair, ICS Learn has an examinations policy that is used to ensure that learners do not have an unfair advantage for themselves or cause unfair disadvantage to other learners.

Examinations will be booked at authorised exam centres and supervised by qualified invigilators.

Learners should pay all necessary fees to the exam centre or where applicable, to ICS Learn in order to be admitted to an examination

Learners must meet all pre-requisite requirements to allow them to be admitted to the exam centre to complete the qualification exam. ICS Learn have the responsibility to store all coursework materials in a secure location and transport them safely to the Awarding Organisation.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Centre

Has overall responsibility of study centre and deals with any appeals and re-marks.

Exams Officer

Deals with administration of external exams.

Explains the exam procedures laid out by the awarding organisation to learners.

Organises the dissemination of exam results and certificates to learners.

Curriculum Coordinator

Ensure learners are efficiently completing all learning components necessary for their qualification.

Advising course tutors on any guidance they are required to provide to learners for their studies.

1. Introduction

This policy aims to give all ICS Learn staff members involved in learner assessment clear guidance on the principles, rationale and aims involved in providing effective feedback in relation to learner coursework.

ICS Learn views feedback as an integral part of a learner's success to help effectively support learning. Because of this, factors such as response times and quality of feedback are regarded as being of high importance.

The aim of the current policy is to develop an overall approach to feedback that enhances the effectiveness of assessment in aiding learners to achieve the necessary knowledge and skills described in a module or programme's intended learning outcomes.

To ensure that these standards are met, this policy works in line with ICS Learn's current Quality & Performance Framework, specifically expectations 19 and 26. These expectations stipulate that; learners are able to monitor progress through feedback and academic discussion and that feedback is timely and constructive and allows learners to develop academically and meet intended learning outcomes.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all learners on all study programmes offered by ICS Learn, covers all work and feedback given to and submitted by all ICS Learn learners. Any feedback, regardless of the form it is given in, be it written, spoken or otherwise falls under the remit of this policy. Each individual programme will follow its own guidelines.

All feedback guidelines will underline the key principles shown in section 3.2.

3. Policy Statements

3.1 Feedback Guidelines

ICS Learn understands the importance of timely and constructive feedback. Because of this, we agree to ensure that:

- All relevant feedback service level agreements (SLAs) are communicated to learners from the onset of the course to establish learner expectations.
- Feedback will be delivered promptly to the learner.
- Constructive feedback will be provided to the learner and this will help them to progress and improve in their studies.
- Feedback will be given in the appropriate format and will be accompanied by a feedback/marking sheet where one is available.
- ICS Learn aims, where possible to give thorough and individualised feedback to a learner and will where appropriate respond to a learner's request for further feedback.

3.2 Feedback Principles

To ensure that all feedback provided to learners meets set out standards, ICS Learn adheres to the following principles:

- All feedback is constructive and recognises a learner's strengths as well as areas for development. To ensure this, feedback should acknowledge what learners have done well, as well as areas for improvement. This will help boost morale and

motivation as well as help them to gain a full appreciation of why they did well or where they need to improve.

- Feedback is to be given in a timely and prompt manner. This ensures that learners are able to use the feedback to effectively make progress throughout their course.
- All feedback should be comprehensive and easy to understand; it should be clear and unambiguous with clear contexts.
- All feedback should be relevant and relate to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the task so that learners are aware of what is expected of them.
- Feedback should be encouraging and positive where possible to allow the learner to know what they need to work on to improve for future assessments.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

All aspects of feedback set out in this policy apply to all members of staff associated either directly, i.e. tutors or indirectly i.e. Curriculum Coordinators involved in the marking of learner work.

Staff involved in assessing learners' work are responsible for:

- Assessing learners' work according to published assessment criteria which are aligned to intended learning outcomes;
- Providing timely, informative and helpful feedback which enables learners to further improve their learning and performance wherever possible;
- Informing learners when, where and how feedback will be provided;
- Engaging in dialogue with learners about assessment and feedback; and
- Continuously reviewing their approaches to assessment and feedback to reflect effective practice.

It is the responsibility of the Curriculum Coordinators, within their individual curriculum to ensure that feedback is standardised and maintained by all tutors and other staff involved in providing academic feedback to learners, however support and guidance from both the Head of Curriculum Delivery and Head of Quality if required.

All staff involved should follow the ICS Learn Feedback Procedure to ensure that standards are maintained.

It is the responsibility of the Curriculum Coordinators, alongside the Quality and Performance Team to review feedback procedures to ensure that these standards continue to be maintained and improved upon.

This policy should be adhered to across ICS Learn. The implementation of the policy will be monitored by the Quality & Performance Team, specifically by the curriculum Quality Coordinator.

It is also imperative to consider the implications of staff during annual leave on the feedback return times. Reasonable measures should be taken during times where tutors or other staff are on annual leave to help ensure that any feedback given out with Service Level Agreement (SLA) is minimised, e.g. by making alternative arrangements for marking. If an extension to the SLAs cannot be avoided, this should be predicted, and a new return date agreed and communicated to learners as soon as feasibly possible.

5. Associated or Related Documents.

This policy works in conjunction with and compliments the ICS Learn Assessment Policy. This and all other ICS Learn Policies are set out to be in line with the Quality & Performance Framework.

1. Introduction

ICS Learn is committed to carrying out internal quality assurance for all students to meet the standards set out internally by us and by the various awarding organisations whose qualifications we offer. Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is also a tool which is used to develop our tutors experience and consistency in marking and feedback.

2. Scope

This policy relates to ICS Learn accredited courses and applies to all internal quality assurance. For the purpose of this policy, the term “Internal Quality Assurance” encompasses all forms of activity that check and validate assessments.

It may be implemented through the systems of internal quality assurance as required or laid down by examining or awarding organisations; or it may occur through formative and summative assessment and verification of learner’s assessments.

3. Policy Statement

ICS Learn is committed to ensuring that standards of assessment and quality assurance are consistent, transparent and in line with the requirements of our awarding organisations.

This policy aims to fulfil Quality Expectations 21 and 26 from the ICS Learn Quality and Performance Framework and their subsequent indicators by; ensuring that all learners work is fairly, accurately and regularly internally quality assured in a consistent manner, valid assessment decisions are reached for all learners, and all external requirements are fully met.

Staff are supported in their training and assessment activities by providing the opportunity to receive detailed feedback on the assessment decisions reached. Learners work is assessed in a consistent and transparent manner ensuring that all the outcomes are fair, reliable and valid.

ICS Learn ensure that assessment standards and specifications are fully implemented, so that no risk is posed to the reputation of ICS Learn and that of the awarding organisations. We work to establish quality control and recording mechanisms for assessments through a system of sampling moderation and internal quality assurance. ICS Learn provide inclusive person-centred approaches to assessment, and verification that provide opportunities for learners to achieve and progress.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to give full and active support for the policy by ensuring that the policy is known, understood and implemented and actions are taken to implement and develop policy.

Appropriately qualified staff must carry out all internal quality assurance. Ideally all IQA staff will complete the approved internal quality assurance award. Where newly appointed internal quality assurers undertake IQA, this must be monitored by the Quality Coordinator. Also, each course must have at least one qualified internal quality assurer who will verify or standardise the assessments for that particular course.

IQA must be carried out continuously throughout the year. This should include both formative and summative quality assurance. In addition to this, appropriate periods of time when IQA takes place will be recorded. Any evidence that is produced must meet the requirements of the awarding organisations.

IQA evidence must be recorded on appropriate documentation, which takes into account the requirements of awarding organisations Quality System. Internal quality assurance must be completed before assessment decisions are confirmed and notified to students and certification is requested.

Annually, evidence that IQA practice has taken place must be available for the awarding organisations quality review and ICS Learn Internal Programme Review. Internal monitoring of IQA activity will also be carried out via the Curriculum team on an ongoing basis.

Records of IQA also must be kept in a secure location and only be accessed by staff authorised to do so.

All IQA or moderation must be in line with current awarding organisations recommendations. Sampling must be across all, tutors, all types of evidence and all learners including plans, reviews and records in addition to learners' evidence.

Annually, as a minimum, internal quality assurers must organise and host standardisation meetings in conjunction with the Curriculum Coordinators and maintain a current continuous professional development file.⁴

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be monitored by the Head of Quality and through established quality assurance procedures.

5. Associated or Related Documents

- ICS Learn Internal Quality Assurance Procedure
- ICS Learn Assessment Policy
- ICS Learn Appeals Policy
- ICS Learn Equality and Diversity Policy
- ICS Learn Complaints Policy
- ICS Learn Data Protection and Privacy Policy
- ICS Learn Plagiarism Policy
- ICS Learn Safeguarding Policy
- ICS Learn Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy

⁴ Standardisation events may vary, dependent upon the frequency as requested by the Awarding Organisation or if requested by the Head of Curriculum Delivery and/or Head of Quality.

1. Introduction

ICS Learn treats all cases of suspected malpractice very seriously and will investigate all suspected and reported incidents of possible malpractice.

Where a case of suspected or reported malpractice⁵ is being investigated, ICS Learn, where appropriate, will advise the relevant Awarding Organisation for the qualification. It is accepted that in certain circumstances, the Awarding Organisation may take actions of its own, including imposing sanctions, where appropriate.

The application of this policy aims to fulfil Expectation 22 of the ICS Learn Quality and Performance Framework in ensuring that there are appropriate assessment policies in place which maintain the academic standards set internally and by the external organisations we work with.

2. Scope

The purpose of this Policy is to set out how allegations of malpractice in relation to all qualifications are dealt with. The scope of the policy is to provide:

- a definition of malpractice;
- examples of student and centre malpractice and maladministration;
- possible sanctions that may be imposed in cases of malpractice.

3. Policy Statements

3.1 Malpractice by students

Some examples of student malpractice are described below. These examples are not exhaustive and all incidents of suspected malpractice, whether or not described below, will be fully investigated, where there are sufficient grounds to do so.

- Obtaining examination or assessment material without authorisation.
- Arranging for an individual other than the student to sit an assessment or to submit an assignment not undertaken by the student.
- Impersonating another student to sit an assessment or to submit an assignment on their behalf.
- Collaborating with another student or individual, by any means, to complete a coursework assignment or assessment, unless it has been clearly stated that such collaboration is permitted.
- Damaging another student's work.
- Inclusion of inappropriate or offensive material in coursework assignments or assessment scripts.
- Failure to comply with published examination regulations.
- Disruptive behaviour or unacceptable conduct, including the use of offensive language, at centre or assessment venue (including aggressive or offensive language or behaviour).
- Producing, using or allowing the use of forged or falsified documentation, including but not limited to:
 - I. personal identification;
 - II. supporting evidence provided for reasonable adjustment or special consideration applications.

⁵ The term 'malpractice' in this policy is used for both malpractice and maladministration.

- III. False results documentation, including certificates.
- IV. Falsely obtaining, by any means, an awarding body certificate.
- V. Misrepresentation or plagiarism.
- VI. Fraudulent claims for special consideration while studying.
- Possession of any materials not permitted in the assessment room, regardless of whether or not they are relevant to the assessment, or whether or not the student refers to them during the assessment process, for example notes, blank paper, electronic devices including mobile phones, personal organisers, books, dictionaries / calculators (when prohibited).
- Communicating in any form, for example verbally or electronically, with other students in the assessment room when it is prohibited.
- Copying the work of another student or knowingly allowing another student to copy from their own work.
- Failure to comply with instructions given by the assessment invigilator, i.e., working beyond the allocated time; refusing to hand in assessment script paper when requested; not adhering to warnings relating to conduct during the assessment.

3.2 Malpractice by centre employees and stakeholders

Examples of malpractice by, teachers, tutors and other officers, (including, external invigilators and examination administrators) are listed below. These examples are not exhaustive and all incidents of suspected malpractice, whether or not described below, will be fully investigated, where there are sufficient grounds to do so.

- Failure to adhere to the relevant regulations and procedures, including those relating to centre approval, security undertaking and monitoring requirements as set out by the awarding organisation.
- Knowingly allowing an individual to impersonate a student.
- Allowing a student to copy another student's assignment work or allowing a student to let their own work be copied.
- Allowing students to work collaboratively during an assessment, unless specified in the assessment brief.
- Completing an assessed assignment for a student or providing them with assistance beyond that 'normally' expected.
- Damaging a student's work.
- Disruptive behaviour or unacceptable conduct, including the use of offensive language (including aggressive or offensive language or behaviour).
- Allowing disruptive behaviour or unacceptable conduct at the centre to go unchallenged, for example, aggressive or offensive language or behaviour.
- Divulging any information relating to student performance and / or results to anyone other than the student.
- Producing, using or allowing the use of forged or falsified documentation, including but not limited to:
 - I. personal identification;
 - II. supporting evidence provided for reasonable adjustment or special consideration applications; and
 - III. awarding organisation results documentation, including certificates
 - Falsely obtaining by any means an awarding organisation certificate.
 - Failing to report a suspected case of student malpractice, including plagiarism, to the awarding organisation.
 - Moving the time or date of a fixed examination.
 - Failure to keep examination question papers, examination scripts or other assessment materials secure, before during or after an examination.
- Allowing a student to possess and / or use material or electronic devices that are not permitted in the examination room.

- Allowing students to communicate by any means during an examination in breach of regulations.
- Allowing a student to work beyond the allotted examination time.
- Leaving students unsupervised during an examination.
- Assisting or prompting candidates with the production of answers.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Possible malpractice sanctions

Following an investigation, if a case of malpractice is upheld, ICS Learn may impose sanctions or other penalties on the individual(s) concerned. Where relevant we will report the matter to the awarding organisation, and the awarding organisation may impose one or more sanctions upon the individual(s) concerned. Any sanctions imposed will reflect the seriousness of the malpractice that has occurred.

Listed below are examples of sanctions that may be applied to a student, or to a teacher, tutor, invigilator or other officer who has had a case of malpractice upheld against them.

Please note that:

- this list is not exhaustive and other sanctions may be applied on a case-by-case basis.
- where the malpractice affects examination performance, the awarding organisation may impose sanctions of its own.

Possible study centre sanctions that may be applied to students:

- A written warning about future conduct.
- Notification to an employer, regulator or the police.
- Removal from the course.

Possible sanctions that may be applied to teachers, tutors, invigilators, and other officers:

- A written warning about future conduct.
- Imposition of special conditions for the future involvement of the individual(s) in the conduct, teaching, supervision or administration of students and/or examinations.
- Informing any other organisation known to employ the individual in relation to courses or examinations of the outcome of the case.
- ICS Learn may carry out unannounced monitoring of the working practices of the individual(s) concerned.
- Dismissal.
- Review.

Reviews of marking - centre assessed marks

(GCSE controlled assessments, GCE coursework, GCE and GCSE non-examination assessments and Project qualifications)

1. Introduction

ICS Learn is committed to the provision of a continuously high standard of assessments and feedback on all of our programmes. In the event of an appeal by a student regarding an assessment grade or outcome, we aim to follow a clearly defined process to determine the validity of such an appeal.

The application of this policy will ensure fairness across the board in dealing with any case of dissatisfaction regarding an assessment outcome.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all appeals made by any ICS Learn student who is dissatisfied with a grade or assessment outcome. Candidates' work will be marked by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skill, and who have been trained in this activity. ICS Learn is committed to ensuring that work produced by candidates is authenticated in line with the requirements of the awarding body. Where a number of subject teachers are involved in marking candidates' work, internal moderation and standardisation will ensure consistency of marking.

The circumstances resulting in the appeal will be assessed by the relevant department in accordance with the provisions of this policy and any supporting documents.

3. Policy Statement

- 3.1** ICS Learn will ensure that candidates are 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.
- 3.2** ICS Learn will inform candidates that they may request copies of materials to assist them in considering whether to request a review of the centre's marking of the assessment.
- 3.3** ICS Learn will, having received a request for copies of materials, promptly make them available to the candidate.
- 3.4** ICS Learn will provide candidates with sufficient time in order to allow them to review copies of materials and reach a decision.
- 3.5** ICS Learn will provide a clear deadline for candidates to submit a request for a review of the centre's marking. Requests will not be accepted after this deadline. Requests must be made in writing.
- 3.6** ICS Learn will allow sufficient time for the review to be carried out, to make any necessary changes to marks and to inform the candidate of the outcome, all before the awarding body's deadline.

- 3.7** ICS Learn will ensure that the review of marking is carried out by an tutors who has appropriate competence, has had no previous involvement in the assessment of that candidate and has no personal interest in the review.
- 3.8** ICS Learn will instruct the reviewer to ensure that the candidate's mark is consistent with the standard set by the centre.
- 3.9** ICS Learn will inform the candidate in writing of the outcome of the review of the centre's marking.
- 3.10** The outcome of the review of the centre's marking will be made known to the head of centre. A written record of the review will be kept and made available to the awarding body upon request.

The moderation process carried out by the awarding organisations may result in a mark change, either upwards or downwards, even after an internal review. The internal review process is in place to ensure consistency of marking within the centre, whereas moderation by the awarding organisation ensures that centre marking is line with national standards. The mark submitted to the awarding organisation is subject to change and should therefore be considered provisional.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Curriculum Coordinator and the Head of Curriculum Delivery will review all evidence and assessment records as part of this process; however, the entire appeals process will be overseen by the Head of Curriculum Delivery.

The Curriculum Coordinator will work in conjunction with the tutor(s) in following the relevant appeals procedure to ensure that a fair assessment of the student's appeal request is carried out in line with the above process.

1. Introduction

ICS Learn is committed to the provision of a continuously high standard of assessment throughout all our courses, therefore aim to ensure plagiarism is addressed and the necessary, required action taken. In the event of suspected plagiarism, we aim to follow a clearly defined process to determine the outcome.

2. Scope

This policy and supporting procedure apply to all suspected cases of plagiarism by ICS Learn students as identified through assignment marking/verification by the curriculum tutor or associated curriculum team member as well as IQA's or a supporting electronic submission systems/portal used by ICS Learn.

3. Policy Statement

- a. ICS Learn defines plagiarism as the use of someone else's work, ideas or theory without proper recognition through citation or referencing.
- b. All students on a course with ICS Learn have a requirement to indicate the use of work that is not their own through accurate citation and referencing
- c. ICS Learn will recognise that all possible claims of plagiarism require a burden of proof to determine the outcome of the claim.
- d. The burden of proof rests with ICS Learn to provide supporting and satisfactory evidence to indicate suspected plagiarism
- e. Plagiarism hearing/appeal outcomes will follow careful consideration of evidence and the decisions of all staff members involved.
- f. The Plagiarism policy ties in with ICS Learn's commitment to ensuring fair assessment. All hearing/appeals will be treated fairly, and all relevant feedback will be imbedded in the company's policies as part of a continuous commitment to improving services.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1** All ICS Learn staff have a responsibility to ensure they give their full support to the policy and supporting procedure by;
- a) Ensuring the policy and procedure is read, understood and implemented where possible within the realms of their role.
 - b) ICS Learn students on all courses across all levels are made aware of the concept of plagiarism, the severity of plagiarism and how they must ensure clear citation and reference during submission of their work to mitigate the risk of a flagged plagiarised piece of work.
- 4.2** All ICS Learn curriculum tutors will liaise with the Curriculum Coordinator and where required, Head of Curriculum and Head of Quality where there is a suspected case of plagiarism in conjunction with the plagiarism policy and procedure in order to achieve the most appropriate outcome for the student and ICS Learn.

5. Related Documents

The Plagiarism Policy will be applied in conjunction with the Plagiarism, Procedure and Process document as well as the ICS Learn Appeals and ICS Learn Quality and Performance Framework.

1. Introduction

ICS Learn is committed to applying reasonable adjustments and providing special considerations for all courses where necessary to allow all learners equal opportunity to complete their course.

The Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations policy will ensure that learners are provided with a fair study and assessment process, this is applied across ICS Learn and we adhere to the standards of the various awarding organisations we work with, while ensuring that our learners are treated fairly. This will confirm that the highest standards of quality are always constantly adhered to and maintained.

The application of this policy also aims to fulfil Expectation 7 of the ICS Learn Quality & Performance Framework by ensuring that enrolment procedures, in particular are inclusive and any reasonable adjustments or special consideration that a prospective student would need is clearly identified at the enrolment stage of their student journey.

2. Scope

This policy relates to all situations and circumstances where a learner is identified according to The Equality Act 2010 (Equality Legislation) as having a disability or impairment, which would affect their learning journey in any way. It is also applicable to cases where unpredictable situations or circumstances negatively impact a learner's performance in their student journey.

Adjustments to the assessment process will typically be made in the following circumstances:

- Learner's with a physical, sensory or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.
- A learner is defined as disabled under the Equality Legislation.

Under The Equality Legislation, learners who require to have reasonable adjustments made to their assessments, are deemed to have such an impairment if they can show that the condition:

- is more than minor or trivial.
- has an effect that has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months.
- effects everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping.
- A learner is defined as disabled under the Equality Legislation.

Under this act, Special Consideration will be given to unexpected situations which negatively affect a learner's assessment. These include but are not limited to:

- Where a learner has a sudden temporary illness or indisposition such as influenza.
- Where a learner has a serious accident of any kind.
- Where a learner's assessment such as an exam is interrupted by a fire alarm or any other unforeseen circumstances.
- Where a learner has had a bereavement of a close family member or friend.
- Evacuation of the assessment venue, and disturbances during the assessment.

3. Policy Statement

Learners with temporary physical, sensory or mental impairment are also covered by this policy and are entitled to have reasonable adjustments or special considerations made as applicable and where required.

A learner is deemed to have a temporary physical, sensory or mental impairment if the condition is under one year's duration and is likely to improve. Examples of temporary disability could include broken limbs or injury to hands which could impair a learner's ability to write. Supporting evidence will be required in all cases.

Where a learner applies for an adjustment due to a temporary physical, sensory or mental disability, evidence must be re-submitted in writing for each assessment series.

Special consideration must be applied for no later than 10 working days after the assessment, and supporting evidence must be provided, e.g. letter from doctor/hospital/authorised person/invigilator's report, etc.

Types of Reasonable Adjustments available

- Extra time
- Supervised rest breaks
- Use of readers, scribes, transcribers, word processors, laptops or other micro processing devices
- Miscellaneous types of reasonable adjustments including baling of non-secure assessment material, taped responses, modified question papers (e.g. enlarged, or printed or coloured paper).

Types of Special Considerations available

- An extension on the submission deadline where a written piece of work is required to be submitted.
- Extra time in a written examination.
- A different assessment where the occurrence of the unexpected situation has resulted in the learner not being able to fulfil the expectations of the original assessment as set.
- Depending on the Awarding Organisation, there may be some review of the marking or there may be discretion used regarding capping or paying for a resit.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Supporting evidence will be required in all cases. Evidence could include medical reports from doctors, psychiatrists, educational psychologists, specialist teachers, or funding agencies.

Providing the adjustment required is the same for each assessment, learners do not need to re-submit evidence with subsequent applications for reasonable adjustment; however, they must alert ICS Learn. Requests should be put in writing to the Head of Curriculum Delivery at the usual ICS Learn address.

For further information and to view the relevant Awarding Organisation Reasonable Adjustment Policy, please see applicable section of the course Student Handbook or online via the Awarding Organisations website.

5. Review and Appeal

Wherever possible, the Awarding Organisation will deal sympathetically with requests for reasonable adjustments or special consideration. In cases where a request is turned down the learner has the right to request a review of the decision. We will be guided by the individual Awarding Organisations procedures for appeals in such scenarios.

6. Associated or Related Documents

This policy will be applied in conjunction with the ICS Learn Quality & Performance Framework and if so required, the ICS Appeals Policy.

1. Introduction

The objective of this policy is to ensure that all recognition of prior learning (RPL) applications submitted by learners, where applicable, are properly submitted and processed according to the guidelines and requirements of the relevant Awarding Organisation. This policy is relevant in meeting Expectation 5 of the ICS Learn Quality & Performance Framework.

2. Scope

This policy is applicable to all learners enrolled with ICS learn who wish to apply for an exemption or credit transfer, as well as all members of staff (permanent and freelance) involved in the RPL process.

Learners can claim exemptions, credit transfers and RPL using evidence of prior learning and/or certified achievement. Differences on how and when these will be applied to a learner's academic achievement with ICS Learn will depend on the policies and procedures from the relevant Awarding Organisation.⁶

3. Policy Statements

- 3.1** This policy is intended to give both ICS Learn staff and learner's guidelines on how RPL policy is set out and handled by ICS Learn in conjunction with the relevant Awarding Organisations. Along with the RPL procedure, it gives guidelines on the proper processes by which learners can apply for and obtain either exemption or credit transfers which will contribute towards their qualification.
- 3.2** By working directly with the learners and the relevant awarding organisations, applications for RPL will be administered and processed by the Curriculum Coordinators to ensure that all eligible learners are able to successfully have any applicable credits applied to their learner record and towards their final qualification
- 3.3** The RPL policy works in line with other ICS Learn policies and procedures and ties in specifically with the Quality & Performance Framework, to ensure that good practices and learner satisfaction is maintained and adhered to.
- 3.4** Learners are responsible for paying the relevant Awarding Organisation any applicable fees as part of their application where a fee is required. ICS Learn does not take any responsibility or provide support in paying these fees on behalf of learners.
- 3.5** Any limitations as to how many exemptions or credits can be transferred are defined by the relevant awarding organisation. ICS Learn does not have a say in or have influence over the outcomes of any awarded exemptions credits or RPL. All decisions are made and granted by the relevant awarding organisation.

⁶ *If you can provide evidence of gaining a previous, relevant qualification from an external Awarding Organisation, you may not have to sit all assessments that would otherwise be required of the awarding organisation.*

If you have already studied qualification units featuring the same content, you should not need to duplicate work. This means you can fast track on the most appropriate qualification.

3.6 Any application for RPL, exemption or credit transfer is subject to the policy and procedural requirements of the Awarding Organisation. ICS Learn takes no responsibility for the refusal to grant any such privilege by the Awarding Organisation. Learners must be made aware that all decisions made by any Awarding Organisation are final and ICS Learn has no powers to alter these decisions.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The application of the policy will be predominantly overseen by the relevant Curriculum Coordinator who will ensure that all applications for RPL are processed efficiently and correctly. This policy and accompanying procedures are made available to all relevant members of staff.

5. Associated or Related Documents

This policy will be applied in conjunction with the ICS Learn Recruitment and Enrolment Policy along with the ICS Learn Quality & Performance Framework.

1. Introduction

ICS Learn provides learning programmes that are open to everyone, including young people⁷ and vulnerable adults.⁸ In line with current legislation and guidance in the United Kingdom, ICS Learn recognises that we have a responsibility of care in ensuring that the learning environment is safe for vulnerable groups during their studies and we are committed to ensuring that they are safeguarded and protected from harm.

The ICS Learn Safeguarding Policy has been developed in regard to Government guidance, in particular The Children Act 1989, The Education Act 2002 and The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003. The Children Act 1989 allocates a duty of care to local authority, courts and parents to safeguard children's welfare. The Education Act 2002 gives duty to schools to protect and safeguard students and their welfare. The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 aims to improve safeguards for children by preventing unsuitable people from working with them.

2. Scope

ICS Learn aim to provide a safe environment for learners who are considered to be in a vulnerable group,⁹ this is a priority and is the shared responsibility of all staff¹⁰ at ICS Learn.

Vulnerable groups should be free to learn and develop their potential without fear of abuse or exploitation. At ICS Learn, we value all learners, irrespective of their age, gender, racial origin, religion, belief or sexual orientation and will ensure that their rights are respected.

ICS Learn takes reasonable measures to ensure that members of staff who have regular and significant contact with vulnerable groups do not have a known history of harmful behaviour.

All suspicions or allegations of inappropriate behaviour will be taken seriously by ICS Learn and responded to as appropriate. All members of staff are expected to operate in accordance with all ICS Learn policies including Safeguarding.

All ICS Learn policies are reviewed annually and kept up to date, taking into account any changes in United Kingdom legislation, guidance and requirements from the Awarding Organisations and other bodies we work with, as well as industry best practice.

3. Policy Statement

Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) will be responsible for dealing with safeguarding issues related to this policy. The Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) will be appointed by the Director of Education & Skills and the appointment will be reviewed regularly.

This policy will be published to ICS Learn staff so that they are aware of the Safeguarding Policy and what they can do when a concern arises. Support and advice will be provided to staff if/when such matters arise.

⁷ Young people includes anyone under 18.

⁸ The definition of vulnerable adults used is as defined per the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, section 59 – <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/section/59>

⁹ Within this policy, both young people and vulnerable adults will be referred to as "vulnerable groups"

¹⁰ "Staff" includes and refers to ICS Learn staff, tutors, internal verifiers, authors and other staff appointed on a freelance basis

The Head of the Quality will be responsible for identifying appropriate training, for ensuring that the Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) have attended the necessary training, and that they have the knowledge and skills to give advice and guidance about safeguarding issues. All ICS Learn staff will receive information and guidance about safeguarding and be made aware of who the Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) are.

This policy will be published to all ICS Learn learners through the ICS Learn website and the ICS Learn Student Community so that they are aware of our commitment to the protection of vulnerable groups. Detailed and accurate records of concerns will be kept securely and confidentially by the Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) when concerns arise.

ICS Learn is aware that some of the programmes offered may require previous experience in a particular field that is unsuitable for young people and that some of the programmes leading to a qualification by an Awarding Organisation may have minimum age requirements. ICS Learn has procedures in place to prevent young people from enrolling on such programmes and has addressed this within its enrolment criteria.

The parents/guardians/carers of young people will be made aware during the enrolment process that the young person will be studying alongside adults.

ICS Learn employ safe recruitment procedures and make sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff including – tutors/internal quality assurers/authors/internal staff who work with vulnerable groups.

All young people who have enrolled on an ICS Learn course and their parents/guardians/carers will be given guidance on what communications will be taking place and will be given advice on how to keep safe in all aspects of their studies. These communications may include online workshops, communication through the Student Community, external social networking forums and one-to-one telephone communications.

By enrolling on ICS Learn programmes which involve photographic or video assessment, vulnerable people and the parents/guardians/carers of young people consent that we can store those for assessment, internal quality assurance and external quality assurance purposes and circulate with the appointed tutors, and internal and external quality assurers.

ICS Learn will ensure that photographic and video assessment evidence are only passed to the relevant staff and are not circulated with a wider audience. Evidence will be kept securely and deleted after three years.

Reporting suspicions or concerns about abuse or inappropriate behaviour

Staff or learners need to report suspicions or concerns of abuse or inappropriate behaviour to the Designated Safeguarding Officer(s).

The Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) will record and raise concerns with the Head of Quality and/or Director of Education and Skills, following the process above and with the HR Manager as necessary. Concerns raised will then be reviewed and investigated with the Head of Curriculum Delivery who will be responsible for overseeing the matter and ensuring it is dealt with correctly and a full investigation takes place in line with this and other ICS Learn processes that are necessary.

Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) for 2019 – 2020 are:

- a) Paul Starr, Head of Quality & Performance - email: Paul.Starr@icslearn.co.uk

The Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) will be reviewed in December 2020 or if a position becomes vacant before that.

4.Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of Quality will have an overarching responsibility for the development, review and implementation of the Safeguarding Policy. They will be responsible for the appointment of the Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) for ICS Learn and will have overall responsibility for the correct implementation of the Safeguarding Policy in accordance with current legislation of the United Kingdom.

The Education Services Director, Head of Quality and the Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) will be responsible for keeping up to date with safeguarding developments and best practice.

The Education Services Director and Head of Quality will be informed of all instances relating to reports or suspicions of inappropriate behaviour by the Designated Safeguarding Officer(s).

It is not the place of ICS Learn staff to make a judgement about whether abuse or inappropriate behaviour has occurred. This is the remit of the statutory agencies and/or the police. However, all ICS Learn staff and learners have a responsibility for reporting any suspicions or concerns of inappropriate behaviour or abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Officer(s).

All ICS Learn staff have a responsibility for ensuring that suspicions or concerns of inappropriate behaviour or abuse of vulnerable groups are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer(s).

ICS Learn is committed to co-operating fully with appropriate external agencies.

If any allegations of abuse are made against a member of staff this will be taken seriously and in accordance with ICS Learn policy on Standards of Conduct and the Disciplinary Policy if appropriate.

Any member of staff who has a concern about abuse or inappropriate behaviour by another member of staff will report that concern to the Designated Safeguarding Officer(s), who will follow ICS Learn's Safeguarding Policy and work with the Head of Quality, Director of Education & Skills and HR Manager where Standards of Conduct or Disciplinary procedures are implemented.

Assessment: Any assessed piece of work (such as examinations, assignments and other assessable work) submitted by a learner that enables them to monitor their progress and contributes to their academic success.

Assessment criteria: The specific criteria in which a learner's work is assessed against. These criteria should be understood by both the assessor and the learner. Feedback given should directly relate to the assessment criteria.

Awarding Organisation: An Awarding Organisation designs, develops, delivers and awards the recognition of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competencies) of an individual following an assessment and quality assurance process that is valued by employers, learners or stakeholders. Also known as "Awarding Body".

Certificate: A certificate is an official document confirming that a learner has met the learning outcomes of a programme of study and has completed all the requirements for the award within the regulations. The programme of study will also be listed along with the period of study.

Credit Transfer: The definition of credit transfer is the process of using a credit(s) awarded in the context of one of the applicable courses towards the achievement requirements of another relevant qualification awarded by ICS Learn through the relevant Awarding Organisation.

Exemption: Exemption is defined as the facility for a learner to claim exemption from some of the achievement requirements of the Awarding Organisation, using evidence of certificated achievement which does not fall within the definition of credit transfer but is deemed by the Awarding Organisation to be of equivalent level, content and value.

Feedback: Information provided to learners on the quality of their performance in relation to assessment criteria, which forms the basis of improved learning.

Intended learning outcomes: Criteria that the learner is expected to demonstrate, in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding, by the end of a module or programme.

Internal Quality Assurer: An Internal Quality Assurer monitors the work of all assessors involved in the qualification to ensure that they are applying assessment criteria for the competency of skills consistently throughout all assessment activities. An Internal Quality Assurer will also ensure that the assessment methods employed will allow learners to demonstrate how they meet the assessment criteria.

Malpractice: Any act, or failure to act, that threatens or compromises the integrity of the assessment process or the validity of qualifications and their certification. This includes: 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 qualifications, acts of plagiarism or other academic misconduct and/or actions that compromise the reputation or authority of ICS Learn, its centres, officers and employees.

Quality and Performance Framework: The Framework defines all quality standards and expectations which the company intends to meet and fulfil within the student journey. The Framework is used to define quality standards and benchmark our performance to it.

Plagiarism: The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.
Reasonable Adjustment: Factors to be taken into consideration to enable learners with disabilities to study and carry out assessment in an equal capacity to other learners.

Safeguarding: A term to denote measures to protect health, well-being and human rights of individuals which allow people – particularly children, young people and vulnerable adults – to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.

Service Level Agreement (SLA): An official commitment between the study centre and the learner on when assessment feedback and query response should be received.

Special Consideration: Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a learner's grade to reflect temporary illness, temporary injury or some other event outside of the learner's control at the time of the assessment, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, an effect on a learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment.

Standardisation: Activity that takes place regularly to ensure the reliability of assessment decisions and the consistency and accuracy of feedback. Standardisation activities are used to identify any discrepancies between assessors in their judgement of learner evidence and allow adjustments to be made to remedy these. Furthermore, such activities can help identify and disseminate good practice.

Transcript: A transcript details the modules or units completed and grades awarded to a specific student

Vulnerable Adult: An individual who may, for any reason, be unable to care for him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against harm or exploitation.