

Assessment Policy

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

Approved / reviewed by:	
WSL SLT	
Date of last review:	September 2019
Date of next review:	September 2020

Vision:

We find and nurture each young person's unique spark.

Mission Statement:

To engage with children and young people to enable them to identify their own talents and strengths. To prepare them for a successful and enriched future, where they can work and contribute to society around them irrespective of their starting point.

Our Values:

Our values are underpinned by our passionate belief in inclusion, equality, the transformational power of learning and the right of each person to be a productive member of society.

Assessment

Assessment is a means of gathering information, which provides insight into students' knowledge, skills, understanding and progress. It enables staff to plan the curriculum appropriately for students' needs and so ensure that each young person performs to the best of their ability. This enables us to achieve our Vision and Mission.

Assessment poses challenges for our students as they have experienced little success in their schooling when they reach us. Assessment opportunities will vary from student to student and will be built to ensure students achieve success so that their self-esteem as learners grows. As well as academic assessment, we will monitor pupil progress social and emotional progress.

When students are referred to us, we will complete a Student Profile which includes some history of their school achievements. We will extract relevant information from their EHC Plan, other reports and documents. Where attainment levels have been provided by mainstream schools or other establishments and settings, these are also taken into consideration. Such assessment contributes to establishing a baseline level on entry. This helps us to ensure students are supported in making informed curriculum choices. Individual Education Plans are created with parents/carers and all appropriate professionals working with the students.

All adults are responsible for informal and formal assessments of students' academic, social and emotional progress. Students' achievements will be recorded, and will be measured against the learning intentions for lessons. Individual needs are met by monitoring of teaching, so that it is good and provides differentiation. Each student can work and make progress at their level. Progress is monitored through regular reviews and it tracked on a termly basis against targets set.

Students' work is regularly marked/ annotated using green pen marking. Marking/annotation should indicate both effort and attainment by the pupil and should be as positive and encouraging as possible, guidance should always be given to aid pupils with development towards the next steps.

Summative assessment will be planned into teaching in line with external requirements and where teachers feel it useful, for example at the end of a particular topic. Small step summative assessment may be offered in the form of adult basic literacy and numeracy exams that students can take when they are ready. Many of our vocational courses are portfolio based; these are internally verified by our internal verifier, who ensures the quality of assessment is acceptable to the external verifier from examination boards. Care is taken to prepare our students for external examinations such as GCSEs both academically and emotionally.

Progress from their baseline is recorded and monitored and a termly report is written which records students' achievements against the targets set, and outlines the next steps in learning and teaching. These reports are sent home to parents and carers.

PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

All assessment in Work Skills Learning (WSL) follows the five principles below:

- **Authenticity:** All assessment activity must have in place processes to ensure that the achievement is the learner's / candidate's own work. Learners/ candidates must sign a statement to this effect. Awarding Bodies boards have their own rules and regulations about authenticity and tutors/ assessors must make themselves familiar with them and abide by them (see Appendix 1: Plagiarism policy)
- **Validity:** The method of assessment and the evidence provided must be appropriate and capable of demonstrating the achievement of learning outcomes/ competencies and related assessment criteria of the provision at the appropriate level.
- **Reliability and consistency:** The assessment results should be standardised across levels and provision. Moderation and standardisation must follow the board procedures (see Appendix 2: Internal Verification Policy)
- **Fitness for purpose:** Assessment must be fit for the learners/ candidates and the learning. The assessment strategy must be clearly appropriate for the target group of learners/ candidates in the correct context in which they are learning e.g. homework must be supportive, or initial diagnostic must not be intimidating. The criteria and methods which are being used to judge the work must be clear to the learner, staff and internal and external moderators / verifiers and meet and exceed the requirements of QCA/QAA, the awarding bodies and our learner/ candidate charter.

- **Inclusiveness:** Assessment should be based on learners'/ candidates' needs. It must allow all learners/ candidates to demonstrate their achievements regardless of individual circumstances. It must comply with the Equalities policies of the company.

FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

- **Initial/ Diagnostic** assessment usually takes place at the start and is used to identify the current learning needs in order to provide appropriate support.
- **Formative** assessment is developmental, supportive and encouraging and ongoing throughout the course. It is used to give feedback and support to the learner on progress to date and to inform the learner and tutor of action to take to maintain or improve performance.
- **Summative** assessment takes place at the end of a course and counts towards a final assessment decision. It is used to measure how much learning has taken place. It is a judgement on whether the learner has achieved all or some of the learning outcomes for a given level.
- **Formal** assessment is structured and usually takes place in clearly stated conditions, e.g. the completion of a practical task, or presentation. It may be undertaken by the whole group or by an individual. It is usually summative in nature and may be assessed externally.
- **Informal** assessment is ongoing integrated and flexible. It is varied and may be recorded by the learner and the tutor/assessor. It can include self-assessment or verbal feedback given by the assessor. It can be formative or summative or both. If it is summative it must be recorded although NVQs record formative assessments to demonstrate competency over time.

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Any assessment will include a variety of assessment activities or methods, formal or informal mapped to the learning outcomes/ performance indicators or criteria. These may include where applicable (please note some qualifications do not recognise some activities):

- observation of activities such as role plays, simulations, practical activities, performance etc
- discussion ranging from unstructured informal conversations to guided discussions This can be used in a group with a clear set of conditions for recording individual achievement, or on a one to one basis;
- question and answer sessions, oral or written, formally or informally structured e.g. worksheet, quiz, IT based activities, photographs where appropriate etc
- structured tasks such as a research project, experiment, essay, or case study, or workplace task or presentations (individual or group)
- examinations and tests, either seen or unseen, with a formal structure and time constraints

RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSESSMENT

The assessment strategy for each programme/ course outlines who is responsible for making and recording judgements. 1. Tutors: The tutor is responsible for:

- Planning the assessment strategy in accordance with the Awarding Body's guidelines and ensuring that it complies with the WSL assessment Policy
- Including assessment details of assessment on the Scheme of Work
- Notifying learners of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria before the assignment is undertaken
- Giving guidance to the learner when there are choices regarding assessment • Ensuring that assignment briefs have been verified before they are given to the learner
- Using the criteria equitably and fairly.
- Recording the assessment either in the Record of Work Book, the ILP or other agreed tracking sheet.
- Setting appropriate homework in line with WSL Policy on Assessment including homework
- Returning marked homework in a timely manner in line with WSL's Service standards by which date all learners will have had the opportunity to complete the assessment.
- Retaining coursework in accordance with the Awarding Body guidelines and the

WSL Records Management Policy

- Participating in the moderation process by keeping all the necessary records, attending moderation meetings and submitting marked learner assessments as requested.
 - Ensuring that provisional assessment decisions are internally verified before they are given to the learner, and explaining that they may change after external moderation. This should be clearly stated on the assignment brief.
 - Keeping all assessment records secure.
 - Giving on-going feedback which is not just a word like "good" or "excellent" but specifically identifies the achievements of the learner and very clearly what learners have to do to improve.
 - Ensuring that all learners have equal opportunities for their achievements to be assessed
 - Ensuring that Plagiarism and cheating are detected
2. Learners: Evaluating their own work it helps learners to improve. This is a skill which is developed in tutorials and communications classes. Work based candidates may have reflective accounts.
3. NVQ Candidates
- Attend workshops as per the programme requirements

- Familiarise themselves with the standards for their qualification (NVQ and/or Key Skills)
- Negotiate and develop a personal action plan with their Assessor
- Complete and sign their ILP with their Assessor
- Build a portfolio of evidence in accordance with Awarding Body and Centre requirements, mapping evidence against standards on Evidence Grids
- Be available to discuss assessment evidence with Internal and/or External Verifier if requested

4. Peers: Peer assessment involves learners in formal or informal situations, either as groups or individuals giving feedback in assessment. Assessment by other learners in the group can encourage evaluative skills and increase group cohesion. This sort of assessment must always be supported and moderated by the tutor/assessor (see Appendix 2)

5. External assessors: This may include NVQ assessors, work placement coordinators and supervisors in the workplace. They must have full access to the WSL assessment policy and the assessment strategy of the provision. They are responsible for:

- ensuring that each candidate is aware of his or her responsibility with regard to the collection and presentation of evidence;
- ensuring that the candidate is fully briefed and understands the NVQ and, if appropriate, Key Skills standards;
- advising the Centre if a candidate has any special assessment requirements that are not
 - advised at the beginning of the programme but have subsequently come to light;
 - completing the Individual Learning Plan with the candidate;
 - assessing the candidate against the performance criteria, range statements and underpinning knowledge associated with elements of competence;
 - contributing to the candidate's ongoing assessment plan to identify valid and sufficient evidence and assessment;
 - judging all evidence against performance criteria range statements and underpinning knowledge to identify candidates achievements;
 - identifying gaps in evidence and discuss/agree remedial action with the candidate;
 - carrying out regular observations of the candidate within their workplace and provide written reports;
 - providing the candidate with written feedback on assessment and action planning;
 - signing and dating the candidate's assessment/action/training plans, all evidence and any other documentation;
 - using the Centre documentation for all records relating to the assessment process;
 - following the Centre Guidelines for reporting assessment and candidate progress;
 - following the assessment guidance given by the Awarding Body and Internal Verifier;

- attending standardisation meetings as required and liaising with the Internal Verifier and other assessors, Centre co-ordinator as necessary;
- explaining and discussing special assessments or problems with the Internal Verifier;
- maintaining records of their candidates' achievements and feeding back to the co-ordinator and Internal Verifier;
- carrying out appropriate risk assessment of where the candidate is working to ensure they are working in a safe and healthy environment
- being mindful of the data protection act and the candidates' rights to see any information recorded about them.

6. NVQ Internal verifiers: Internal Verifiers work under the direction of the NVQ Centre Co-ordinator in accordance with the QCA guide "Internal Verification of NVQs" (QCA, March, 1998) and Joint Awarding Body Guidance on Internal Verification of NVQs and contribute to the Centre's compliance with the NVQ Code of Practice (2008). They will:

- Develop a plan for internal verification of the programmes for which they are responsible in line with the NVQ Centre Strategy for Internal Verification.
- Carry out ongoing and summative sampling of portfolios according to the IV Strategy and plan and feed back to the Assessor.
- Observe assessments by Assessors, as directed by the Centre Co-ordinator.
- Interview candidates.
- Support and guide Assessors.
- Ensure fair, reliable and consistent assessments.
- Deal with Appeals in accordance with the NVQ Centre Appeals Policy and under the direction of the Centre Co-ordinator.
- Attend and contribute to Standardisation Meetings.
- Maintain Centre records, as required. (Updating Candidate Progress Records, completing Internal Verification Reports, Internal Verification Summary Sheets and Reports on Observations of Assessors.)
- Attend meetings with the External Verifier, when requested by the Centre Co-ordinator.

ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

1. The evidence must always be linked to the assessment method e.g. if 'tutor observation' is the method there must be a 'tutor observation checklist'.
2. Evidence should comply with the principles of assessment and must always be:
 - Sufficient, i.e. there must be enough evidence to enable a reliable judgement on achievement
 - Current, i.e. up to date with the demands of the curriculum and able to demonstrate that the learner is competent at the time
 - Valid, i.e. directly related to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
 - Authentic, i.e. the result of the learner's own work.

- Validated by internal moderation/ standardisation and Awarding Bodies.
3. Evidence will be generated by the learner throughout the course and may be:
- Paper based: notes, reports, learning journals, essays, examinations etc..
 - Non-paper based: evidence of role plays, videos, audio, witness statements, computer programmes, performance, oral questions and answers etc. There must be a transparent process for recording the evidence which clearly shows how judgements were made.
 - A portfolio which is a collection of assessed evidence used to demonstrate achievement. This may be electronic if the relevant awarding body agrees.
 - It will always be flexible, varied and appropriate.

RECORDING ASSESSMENT

1. Assessment records form a vital component of evidence for the following purpose:

- to demonstrate the learner's progress towards the achievement of learning outcomes
- evaluating the learner progress (useful to both learner and tutor)
- presentation to internal and external moderator/ verifiers/ assessors as evidence of Achievement

2. Assessment records map evidence of progress through the programme. It is the tutor's / assessor's responsibility to record assessed achievement and to track this against the learning outcomes. Learners must be fully advised and aware of any assessment requirements or regulations, including the opportunities to resubmit and of the appeals procedure.

3. The assessment record must be available to learners and staff for review throughout the duration of the course / programme

4. Evidence can be recorded in a number of ways but must be

- Tracked against the individual learner and achievement of the relevant outcomes
- Clearly structured
- Available for internal and external moderators at any point throughout the year

RETENTION OF ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

1. Retaining examples of assessment enables the monitoring of standards over a period of time (see Appendix 7 Retention of Records Containing Personal Data)

2. A minimum of 2 pieces of assessed work (or portfolios) per programme should be retained for a minimum of 3 years. Ideally these should be electronic copies and not the original work.

3. The work should be representative of the sampling and standardisation process used for internal moderation initially and subsequently submitted for moderation. They should be supported by internal and external moderation records to evidence the processes of sampling and standardisation. 4. Where retention of the assessed sample is impractical e.g. for Art and Design courses suitable photographic or equivalent records should be retained.

GOOD PRACTICE IN ASSESSMENT

- Assessment is not carried out exclusively for accreditation purposes – it is used to measure progress, build up self-confidence and review the success of the course.
- Assessment has to consider the learning needs of the individuals and target groups.
- Assessment tasks are internally moderated before use.
- Assessment documentation includes the requirement that learners state the authenticity of their own work.
- Assessment procedures are explicit and public.
- Assessment procedures are varied, flexible and may be negotiable, while assessment criteria are fixed for different levels.
- Methods of assessment are creative, innovative and varied.
- Assessment procedures allow learners to work at and be assessed at the correct level.
- Assessment builds the self-esteem of the learner.
- Assessment encourages self-assessment by learners to promote independence.
- Learners are encouraged to evaluate the assessment procedures to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.

The Leadership and Management Team aims to use assessment procedures and processes to support staff to further student progress by ensuring that all teachers know what is expected of them in assessing students and helping teachers make well-founded judgements about students' attainment and progress. The Team monitors assessment for learning as a key factor in planning for teaching and learning, using assessment information when planning training and CPD and incorporating new initiatives where appropriate. Teachers are observed, so that teaching can be consistently good and appropriate action is taken when it isn't. The Team monitors the accuracy of the information provided to parents about their child's attainment and progress.

Our Awarding Bodies

We are a JCQ approved centre to deliver GCSEs. We are registered with the following awarding bodies:

NCFE

OCR

EDEXCEL

CIEH

Art Award

Trinity College

We meet the standards for their quality requirements.