

Access to Fair Assessment Policy and Procedures

The Trust will ensure that all LASER and other awarding body accredited courses and units are designed and assessed in a way that gives all candidates the fairest possible opportunities to show their attainment.

Learning needs will be identified and addressed where necessary to ensure that information is accessible and tasks appropriate.

Tuition will be of a high standard and will be internally assessed.

Assessment tasks will be relevant, clearly defined and supported by Tutors.

In designing an assessment strategy and/or individual assessment tasks Tutors and Internal Quality Assurers (IQA) will be transparent and the following principles will be included:

- Reliability
- Validity
- Fitness for purpose
- Transparency
- Recognition of and respect for equality and diversity

Candidates will be kept informed in a timely manner of progress after submission of evidence, including validation and results.

All accredited courses, assessment and verification will comply with LASER and other awarding bodies guidelines and procedures.

Learner Malpractice

This is malpractice committed by a learner. Some examples of learner malpractice are given below. This list is not exhaustive:

- Cheating in assessments e.g., referring to unauthorised material or mobile phone.
- Falsification of, or making any changes to, a certificate.
- Providing false identity documents or identity documents relating to another person.
- Plagiarism.
- Collusion.
- Deliberate destruction of another's work.
- Acting in a disruptive manner during assessments.
- Inclusion of inappropriate, offensive or obscene material in assessment tasks.

If learner malpractice is discovered before the learner completes their course assessment tasks and signs their authentication declaration, the Lead Tutor will alert the IQA and follow our procedures as set out in our Access to Fair Assessment Policy and Procedures & Responsible Use of Technology policies.

If learner malpractice is discovered after the learner has signed their authentication declaration and their work has undergone the IQA, EQA or certification process, this will be reported to LASER or relevant awarding body as per our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

Registration and withdrawal timeframes

Registration of learners via Quartz will take place within 2 weeks of the start of any new training course. Registration information is requested from the learners via our booking platform Eventbrite and entered directly by the learner. The data is pulled as a report and copied into the e-registration spreadsheet to avoid any inaccuracies and mistakes. Data is stored securely as per the Trusts' GDPR policy and retained as per the awarding body's data retention policy (e.g. LASER 3 years) at which point personal data is deleted from our system. The lead Tutor will ensure the correct units are listed on the e-registration form. Our Centre deals with a small number of qualifications and so template e-registration forms are saved, and unit codes are checked whenever we are notified by the awarding body of qualification changes.

If a learner wishes to withdraw from the course, the learner will need to confirm their decision via email/letter to the lead Tutor who will then mark them off as withdrawn on Quartz within 30 days. We understand that sometimes the learner's situation may change during a year-long course, and we offer flexible deferrals of either 6 months or a year, depending on the circumstances, for example maternity leave, death of a family member, change of workplace etc. It is the responsibility of the lead Tutor to maintain communication with those learners on a deferral, to track completion of GLH and to agree upon the length of the deferral and agree new deadlines. The Trust's typical cut off, depending on the learner's circumstances, has been set at 3 years at which point the learner will be notified and given a final deadline before being withdrawn on Quartz.

Certification

Tutors are to double check IQA feedback on learners recommended for award which will list the units to be claimed.

- FS Level 3 (LASER) all 5 mandatory units to be claimed
- FS L2 (LASER) both mandatory units to be claimed
- WB (LASER) all units to be claimed

- Lead Tutor to double check certificates are correct before posting. Any errors must be reported immediately to the IQA and awarding body.
- Certificates returned to awarding body within 7 days.
- Refer to the policy set by the awarding body for learners requesting reprints where error is regarding spelling mistakes.
- Report any errors regarding units awarded or qualification title to the IQA and Head of Centre to investigate and report to the awarding body as maladministration, as per our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

Tutors to check for address updates from learners before posting certificates and complete the trainee tracking spreadsheet with certification posting or collection by hand date details.

Complaints and appeals

These will be recorded and handled according to LASER & other awarding body guidelines and are specified in our Learner Complaints and Appeals document. Details of this are made available to every learner registering on a course.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. Reasonable adjustments are made for individual learners, based on each learner's individual needs. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability and validity of the assessment outcomes, but may involve:

- Changing usual assessment arrangements, for example allowing a learner extra time to complete the assessment activity.
- Adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in Braille.
- Providing specific assistance for the learner to access the assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or a reader.
- Re-organising the assessment room, such as removing visual stimuli for a learner with autism.
- Changing the assessment method, for example, from a written assessment to a spoken assessment.
- Using assistive technology, such as screen reading or voice activated software.

Identifying learners' needs

The Centre has a responsibility to ensure it has effective internal procedures for identifying learners' needs, and that these procedures comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Reasonable adjustments must be approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place, to enable the learner to access the assessment. The work produced by the learner must be marked in the same way as the work of other assessed learners – 'allowances' cannot be made once the assessment is complete, and ad hoc, unapproved adjustments may not be put in place.

The Trust is required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, the impact of the disability on the individual, cost implications, and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence, must also be taken into consideration. Different types of assessment make different demands on the learner and will influence whether reasonable adjustments will be needed and the kind of reasonable adjustment which may be put in place.

The adjustments that may be appropriate for a particular assessment will depend upon:

- The specific assessment requirements of the units and/or qualification.
- The type of assessment.
- The particular needs and circumstances of the individual learner

Any adjustments made must:

- Meet the requirements of the specifications regardless of the process or method used.
- Enable the assessment criteria to be assessed, and moderated or verified.

- Ensure the assessment methods are as rigorous as those used with other learners.
- Be consistent with the learner's normal way of working.
- Not change the level of the achievement required.
- Not give the learner an unfair advantage.

Assessment criteria may not be amended, re-worded or omitted.

It is the responsibility of the Tutors to check if identified/requested reasonable adjustments require approval from LASER or other awarding bodies prior to assessment.

Special Consideration

Special consideration may be requested when a one-off, unexpected, temporary event has taken place during an assessment event, which has or potentially could have affected the performance of one or more learners at the time of assessment.

Special consideration may be given to whole groups of learners where an event affects the whole group (such as a fire alarm going off during an assessment) or may be given to one individual learner (e.g. because of bereavement). Further information and advice should be sought from LASER or other awarding body where necessary.

A learner who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment may be eligible for special consideration if:

- Performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner, for example recent personal serious illness, accident, bereavement, or serious disturbance during the assessment, such as a fire alarm.
- Part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances genuinely beyond the control of the learner.

A learner will not be eligible for special consideration if:

- No evidence that the learner has been affected at the time of the assessment by a particular condition.
- Any part of the assessment is missed due to personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absence.
- Preparation for a component is affected by difficulties during the course, such as disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes.

In some circumstances, for example for on-demand assessments, it may be more appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date. Special consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage nor should its use cause the issuer of the certificate to be misled regarding a learner's achievements. The learner's result must reflect their achievement in the assessment, and not necessarily their potential ability.

Recognition of Prior Learning

The Trust is totally committed to an inclusive approach in the provision of appropriate learning opportunities and, to this end, emphasises its responsibility to recognise prior learning and / or achievement. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessment that considers whether students can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and

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so do not need to develop through a course of learning. It is used sparingly and can be applicable to adult students returning to education. RPL provides a route for the recognition of the achievements resulting from continuous learning.

RPL enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities using any valid assessment methodology. Provided that the assessment requirements of a given unit or qualification have been met (through evidence that the relevant unit learning outcomes have been met by a students' prior learning), the use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting specific assessment criteria or a whole unit. Evidence of learning must be valid and reliable. The process of assessment for RPL will have applied the same quality assurance and quality monitoring standards as is any other form of assessment offered by the Trust.

Assessment of RPL evidence

Assessment methods for RPL must be as rigorous as those used for other methods of assessment in that they must be fit for purpose and relate to the evidence of learning provided.

It is possible to claim credit for any unit through RPL unless the assessment methods proscribed for that unit do not allow this. It is the responsibility of Tutors and IQA to ensure that the evidence presented and accepted is:

- Valid: The evidence provided by the student or potential student must be a clear demonstration of conformity with the demands of the specified learning outcome.
- Current: It is essential that the evidence should be current i.e. that it should meet up-to-date demands and not be demonstrative of a practice which has significantly changed. The exact form of the evidence required will vary from programme to programme and will depend on the extent of the experience and the nature of the outcomes claimed. If there is any doubt about the currency of any evidence supplied, then Tutors will be allowed to use questions to check for understanding and for competence.
- Sufficient: evidence must be sufficient fully to meet the requirements of the learning outcome/s. If the evidence offered is deemed to be insufficient, then that RPL evidence must be supplemented by evidence generated through other appropriate assessment method/s before the learning outcome can be said to have been met.
- Authentic: The evidence provided must have been produced only by the individual who presents it. As with any other form of assessment, it is important that the student understands the meaning and implication of plagiarism and that a declaration of authenticity is provided.
- Reliable: Evidence provided in support of any RPL claim should be such that the individual assessing it would make the same decision if the assessment was to be repeated.

The process of RPL

If the request for RPL rests on previous study, then the process set out immediately below will apply:

- The first part of the process will involve checking the prior award's learning outcomes and unit content against the corresponding elements from which the student is seeking exemption.
- The second part involves checking that any materials offered by the learner have, in fact, been produced by them. It should be noted that it is the student, not the Trust, who bears the responsibility for assembling appropriate evidence. The responsibility of the Trust is to check the evidence presented, not to seek evidence on behalf of the student

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- Once a file of evidence has been submitted then the Tutor will be asked to map the evidence from the prior award, unit by unit, against the required level of the programme to ensure that they are covered by the evidence presented. If the Tutor is satisfied that the academic requirements are met, then a report will be prepared for the IQA. The final decision will rest with the IQA

If the RPL rests on practical experience and skills, then the method set out below may be used:

- The methods of assessment chosen will depend on the assessment strategy for the programme unit being assessed and may include - examination of documents/ witness testimony/ reflective accounts or portfolios/ professional discussion.
- Assessment should: be planned with the student/ be the subject of formal decision making/ be the focus of feedback and advice/ be recorded on Moodle in the same way as any other type of assessment/ be verified in the same way as for other forms of assessment/ be considered via the Trust's appeals procedure if this is required/ be subject to the normal certification process/ be subject to the same quality assurance requirements as any other assessment method.