QUALIFICATIONS, CERTIFICATED LEARNING AND EXAMINATIONS

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Version 2 Sept 24	Full re-write in line with AIM Qualification and Assessment Group policy changes
Version 3 Sep 25	Incorporation of certificated learning and examinations.
Version 4 Oct 25	Updated to include strengthened learner age verification procedures and explicit reference to qualification-specific age requirements.
Version 5 Sep 26	Full re-write to simplify processes and include ASDAN PEQ and the examination procedure for Open Awards.

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1. PURPOSE

Overworld AMP Limited ("the Provision") delivers internally assessed qualifications and certificated learning through AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group, AIM Quality Mark, ASDAN (including Personal and Employability Qualifications (PEQ)) and the AQA Unit Award Scheme (UAS).

Formal Functional Skills examinations are delivered through Open Awards and conducted in accordance with current Open Awards requirements and any applicable examination regulations.

The Provision's qualifications and learning programmes are delivered using a trauma-informed and neuro-affirming approach, enabling learners to feel safe, understood and supported to achieve their potential.

The Provision is committed to making qualifications and certificated learning accessible to all learners, including those who may have experienced barriers to education or struggled in traditional settings. Learning is tailored to individual needs and may include face-to-face, online or blended delivery, flexible pacing, reasonable adjustments where appropriate, and progression through smaller units of learning before undertaking larger qualifications.

Details of our current learning programmes are available on the Provision's website.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all individuals involved in the design, preparation, delivery, assessment, internal quality assurance, centre management, marking and certification of qualifications and certificated learning at Overworld AMP Limited. It also covers the arrangements for, and conduct of, examinations delivered on-site, remotely or through external awarding organisations.

This policy is informed by, and should be read alongside, the current policies, procedures and guidance issued by the relevant awarding organisations, including:

- AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group
- AIM Quality Mark
- ASDAN, including Personal and Employability Qualifications (PEQ)
- Open Awards
- AQA Unit Award Scheme (UAS), where applicable

Where the requirements of an awarding organisation differ from this policy, the awarding organisation's current requirements will take precedence.

This policy should also be read alongside the Provision's:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Young Person Protection Policy
- Data Protection and GDPR Policy
- Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1. Centre responsibilities

All Provisions and centres wishing to gain and subsequently receive centre recognition and/or qualification approval from the awarding organisation must ensure that:

- A contingency plan is in place which details how the centre will respond should centre recognition or qualification approval be withdrawn by either the awarding organisation or at the request of the centre

- Provide the awarding organisation with the required notice, which will normally be at least 60 working days where specified by the awarding organisation.
- All reasonable steps are taken to prevent Learners being adversely affected by the removal of centre recognition or qualification approval, regardless of whether this is from a centre request, or a sanction applied by the awarding organisation
- Retain records for the period required by the relevant awarding organisation and the *Provision's Data Protection and GDPR Policy* and, in any event, for no less than three years.

3.2. The Directors

- Have overall responsibility for the safe and proper running of the business e.g. Health and Safety, Insurances, Risk Assessments, Data Protection and GDPR Internal Policies and compliance with them.
- Ensure the Provision remains compliant with awarding organisation requirements and maintains high standards in the delivery of qualifications, certificated learning and examinations.

3.3 The CEO will:

- Field questions directly from Learners that the Centre Manager cannot.
- Manage complaints and whistleblowing process.
- Manage Business Continuity.

3.4. The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** (or an appropriately trained **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead** acting on their behalf) will:

- provide safeguarding advice and guidance relating to learners undertaking qualifications, certificated learning and examinations;
- oversee the management of safeguarding concerns arising from qualification delivery or assessment;
- support staff where safeguarding issues may affect assessment, examinations or learner wellbeing; and
- ensure safeguarding concerns are managed in accordance with the *Young Person Protection Policy*.

3.5. The Centre Manager will:

- Ensure the Provision maintains centre recognition and complies with the requirements of all relevant awarding organisations.
- Act as the primary point of contact with awarding organisations, including notifying them of any changes affecting centre approval or qualification delivery.
- Oversee the delivery, assessment, internal quality assurance, certification and administration of qualifications and certificated learning.
- Ensure learners are registered, assessed and certificated in accordance with awarding organisation requirements.
- Verify learner identity and eligibility prior to enrolment and certification, where required by the awarding organisation.
- Ensure assessment activities and materials are fair, valid, reliable and accessible, including making reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Ensure staff involved in the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of qualifications are appropriately trained, competent and familiar with the Provision's policies and awarding organisation requirements.
- Maintain the Provision's Quality Improvement Plan and oversee continuous quality improvement.
- Ensure awarding organisation documentation, guidance and updates are communicated to relevant staff.

- Coordinate internal and external quality assurance activities and facilitate centre approval and external quality assurance visits.
- Oversee the secure administration of examinations delivered by the Provision, ensuring compliance with awarding organisation requirements.
- Review this policy and associated qualifications policies at least annually, or sooner where required by changes to legislation or awarding organisation requirements.
- Ensure information relating to the Provision's qualifications and learning programmes remains accurate and up to date.

3.6. Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) will:

- Support the Centre Manager in maintaining the quality and integrity of qualifications and certificated learning, provided this does not create a conflict of interest.
- Monitor assessment practice to ensure assessments are fair, valid, reliable and consistent with awarding organisation requirements.
- Sample assessment decisions and provide constructive feedback, support and guidance to assessors.
- Verify that learner registration, identity and eligibility requirements have been completed where required by the relevant awarding organisation.
- Ensure assessment materials and activities are fit for purpose and provide learners with appropriate opportunities to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- Coordinate or participate in standardisation and moderation activities to promote consistency in assessment decisions.
- Identify training or continuing professional development needs relating to assessment and quality assurance and communicate these to the Centre Manager.
- Support external quality assurance activities, including centre approval visits, monitoring activities and audits.
- Maintain accurate quality assurance records and report any concerns, risks or non-compliance to the Centre Manager.
- Support the certification process by confirming that assessment and quality assurance requirements have been met before certification claims are submitted.

3.7. Tutors/Assessors will:

- Deliver learning and assessment in accordance with the relevant qualification specification, awarding organisation requirements and the Provision's policies.
- Plan, deliver and assess learning using fair, valid, reliable and inclusive assessment methods.
- Support learners to achieve the required knowledge, skills and behaviours while maintaining the integrity of the assessment process.
- Identify learner support needs and implement approved reasonable adjustments in accordance with awarding organisation requirements.
- Maintain accurate, timely and secure assessment records.
- Participate in standardisation, moderation, quality assurance and continuing professional development activities as required.
- Work collaboratively with the Centre Manager and Internal Quality Assurer to maintain the quality of qualifications and certificated learning.
- Declare and appropriately manage any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.
- Report any safeguarding concerns, suspected malpractice or other issues that may affect the integrity of assessment in accordance with the Provision's policies.

3.8. All staff involved in the delivery, assessment, quality assurance or administration of qualifications and certificated learning will:

- Comply with this policy and all other relevant Provision policies and procedures.
- Be familiar with, and work in accordance with, the current requirements of the relevant awarding organisations.
- Maintain the confidentiality, integrity and security of learner information, assessment materials and examination processes.
- Complete the training and continuing professional development required for their role.
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion, ensuring learners are treated fairly and with respect.
- Identify and communicate learner support needs promptly to enable reasonable adjustments or other appropriate support to be considered.
- Declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.
- Report safeguarding concerns, suspected malpractice, maladministration or other issues that may affect learners or the integrity of qualifications in accordance with the Provision's policies.

3.9. Learners are supported to:

- Be fully aware of this policy and how to refer to the current policies for the awarding organisation
- Refer to the Qualification Handbook relevant to their chosen course
- Declare any disabilities, illnesses or conditions, for the purposes of reasonable adjustments being made, prior to course commencement
- Declare any disabilities, illnesses or conditions, for the purposes of special consideration being given, prior to the assessment
- Always behave in a professional and courteous manner towards centre staff and other Learners
- Maintain the integrity and security of the Learner assessment process
- Cooperate fully with any compliance investigation

4. DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

4.1. AIM Quality Mark

An endorsement awarded by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group recognising high-quality, bespoke learning programmes developed by a centre.

4.2. AQA Unit Award Scheme

AQA's scheme that recognises achievement through the successful completion of individual units of learning.

4.3. ASDAN

Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network, an Ofqual-recognised awarding organisation providing programmes and qualifications that develop personal, social and employability skills.

4.4. ASDAN Personal and Employability Qualifications (PEQ)

Regulated qualifications designed to develop personal, social, employability and independent living skills.

4.5. Awarding Organisation Assessment Handbook

The awarding organisation's published guidance setting out qualification requirements, assessment methods, regulations and quality assurance arrangements.

4.6. Conflict of Interest

A situation where personal, professional, financial or other interests could compromise, or be perceived to compromise, impartiality or objectivity in the delivery, assessment or quality assurance of qualifications.

4.7. Discord

Is a communication platform that allows staff and Learners to create communities, chat via text, voice, and video, as well as share media and files in real-time.

4.8. Distance Learning

Learning delivered remotely where teaching, learning and assessment take place without learners attending in person.

4.9. External Quality Assurance (EQA)

The process by which an awarding organisation monitors and verifies that a centre is delivering qualifications in accordance with its requirements.

4.10. Google Drive

Google's cloud-based storage platform used by the Provision to store, access and share learning materials and documents.

4.11. Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

The number of hours a learner is expected to spend receiving teaching, instruction or supervised learning from an appropriately qualified tutor or trainer. GLH does not include independent study or unsupervised assessment.

4.12. Internal Verification Plan

A document setting out how assessment decisions and assessment activities will be internally quality assured.

4.13. Ofqual

Is the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation and it is a non-ministerial government department that regulates qualifications, exams and tests in England.

4.14. OneDrive

Microsoft's cloud-based storage platform used by the Provision for secure document management, collaboration and internal file sharing.

4.15. Open Awards

An Ofqual-recognised awarding organisation through which the Provision delivers Functional Skills qualifications and examinations.

4.16. Portfolio of evidence

A collection of learner work and supporting assessment records demonstrating achievement of the required learning outcomes and assessment criteria for a qualification or unit.

4.17. Qualification Handbook

The awarding organisation's published guidance detailing qualification requirements, delivery arrangements, assessment methods and administrative procedures.

4.18. Quality Improvement Plan

The Provision's plan for monitoring performance, identifying areas for improvement and maintaining high standards in the delivery of qualifications and certificated learning.

4.19. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

A process that enables prior learning, knowledge, skills or experience to be recognised towards the achievement of a qualification, where permitted by the awarding organisation.

4.20. Special Consideration

A post-assessment adjustment that may be considered by an awarding organisation where a learner has experienced temporary illness, injury or other unforeseen circumstances that have adversely affected their performance in an assessment or examination.

4.21. The Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)

The framework used by Ofqual to classify regulated qualifications by level and size.

4.22. Total Qualification Time (TQT)

The estimated number of hours required for a typical learner to achieve a qualification, including Guided Learning Hours (GLH) and independent study, preparation and assessment.

4.23. Reasonable Adjustment

An approved adjustment made before an assessment or examination to reduce the impact of a disability or other need without affecting the validity of the assessment.

4.24. Witness Statement

A written statement completed by a competent individual who has directly observed a learner demonstrating specific knowledge, skills or behaviours. Witness statements may be used as supporting evidence within a portfolio of evidence where permitted by the relevant awarding organisation.

5. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (IQA) PROCEDURE

- The Provision operates an Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) process to ensure that teaching, assessment and certification are fair, valid, reliable and consistent with the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation.
- The IQA process provides independent oversight of assessment decisions and supports continuous improvement by:
    - ensuring assessment materials are fit for purpose before delivery;
    - monitoring assessment practice throughout delivery;
    - sampling assessment decisions to confirm consistency and accuracy;
    - identifying and addressing training or development needs;
    - maintaining accurate records to demonstrate compliance with awarding organisation requirements; and
    - supporting External Quality Assurance (EQA) activities where applicable.
- The IQA process is carried out before, during and after the delivery of qualifications and certificated learning to maintain the integrity of assessment decisions and ensure learners are assessed fairly and consistently.

5.1. Teaching Materials and Assessments

Using the specific qualification handbook and the awarding organisation's assessment handbook the Centre Manager or assessor, creates teaching and assessment material in line with the aims of each unit and the TQT and GLH listed

5.1.1. All assessments MUST be:

- **valid:** the assessment evidence meets all standards and additional requirements
- **authentic:** the work is the Learner's own evidence
- **reliable:** assessment evidence is consistent and generates outcomes that would be replicated, where the assessment is repeated
- **current:** up-to-date evidence is used
- **sufficient:** enough work is available to enable a consistent and reliable judgement about the Learner's achievement
- **comparable:** assessment evidence is comparable in standard between assessments within a component/qualification and between learners of the same level
- **manageable:** the assessment(s) places reasonable demands on learners
- **fair and minimise bias**: assessments are fair to all learners irrespective of their characteristics e.g. age, gender, etc
- **Completed in English**

Holistic assessment is good practice wherever possible and permitted by the assessment strategy for the qualification if this exists.

Any changes to the qualification following approval must be implemented within the required Timescales

All materials will be proof-read by at least one other member of staff

5.1.2. The IQA will then cross check **all** teaching materials and assessment tasks to ensure they:

- conform to guidance set out in the qualification handbook
- are fit for purpose and allow learners to meet all assessment criteria/standards
- permit reasonable adjustments to be made
- where appropriate and permitted by the relevant awarding organisation, include suitable scaffolding, such as writing frames, planning templates or structured prompts, as part of inclusive assessment design to support learners with SEND, without compromising the validity of the assessment or the learner's ability to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and understanding independently.
- allows learners to generate authentic evidence at the required level of knowledge, skills and understanding for the qualification
- use appropriate language and stimulus materials
- do not disadvantage any group of learners who share a common attribute or circumstance

The Provision uses the standard forms provided by AIM e.g. *internal verification of assessment tasks form,* to document the IV process. These are customised with the Provision's branding, ensuring alignment with current best practice and awarding organisation requirements.

All internal verification paperwork is kept on the OneDrive for a minimum of 3 years.

5.2. Subsequent Internal Verification Checks

The IQA must check:

- Learner evidence is authentic
- learners have provided evidence of attaining the specified levels of knowledge, skills and understanding detailed in the qualification handbook
- assessors have differentiated accurately and consistently between Learner attainment
- assessors have marked the evidence
- assessors have given quality written feedback to learners
- that any claims for RPL are appropriate and valid
- that all reasonable adjustments applied have been approved by either an internal verifier or awarding organisation as appropriate (this is defined in the reasonable adjustments and special considerations procedure).
- that any applications for Special Consideration have been submitted and recorded in accordance with the relevant awarding organisation's requirements.

5.3. When?

5.3.1. 100% of **RPL submissions** and **Reasonable Adjustment/Special Consideration claims** must be checked by the IQA prior to submission to the awarding organisation.

5.3.2. **Qualifications**

- For the first learner of each new qualification, or where a new assessor is involved, the IQA will check 100% of the marking.
- For all remaining learners, the IQA will sample 50% of the evidence.
- For straightforward qualification pathways (e.g. Mentoring, Level 2 Game Design) with a standard unit structure, sampling will be carried out across the whole cohort, regardless of delivery run. For example, one run may be sampled at Assignment 1, while another may be sampled at Assignment 2, thereby ensuring coverage across all learners and units.
- A final sample of completed marked and assessed Learner evidence will be verified using the Internal Verification of Assessment Decisions form.

5.3.3. **Certificated Learning**

- For the first learner on each new certificated learning pathway, or where a new assessor is delivering, the IQA will check 100% of the marking.
- For all remaining learners, the IQA will spot-check evidence to confirm standards and consistency.

5.3.4. **Timing of IQA**

- All units must be internally verified after they are complete but before feedback is given to learners, to ensure the quality of assessment decisions.
- Work is submitted to the IQA by the assessor on completion of each unit, whether the work has passed or failed.

5.3.5. **Outcomes of IQA**

- If the IQA agrees with the decision, this will be documented and the work returned to the Learner via the tutor/assessor.
- If the work does not pass IV, it will be returned to the Assessor with the required changes recorded via email for certificated learning or more formally for qualifications using the Internal Verification of Assessment Decisions form.
- Once changes are made and accepted, the IQA signs off the form and the work is returned to the Learner via the tutor/assessor.

5.3.6. **Escalation**

- If a dispute arises between an Assessor and the IQA, it will be escalated to the Centre Manager, who has the final decision.

- If the dispute involves the Centre Manager and the IQA, it will be escalated to the awarding organisation. The Centre Manager will contact the allocated Centre Support representative to resolve the matter.

5.3.7. **Record-keeping and Monitoring**

- All internal verification paperwork is stored within individual Learner files on OneDrive for a minimum of 3 years.
- At least every six months the Centre Manager (or a suitably qualified delegate) will observe assessor practice and record findings using the Internal Verifier Report of Observed Assessment Practice template. This is stored on the OneDrive for a minimum of 3 years.

5.4 Identified issues

- If the IQA identifies issues they must provide appropriate feedback and actions with deadlines to the assessor. The *Record of standardisation* template form can be used for this purpose (or email for certificated learning)

5.5 Completion activities

- Once the IQA has approved the assessed evidence, the Centre Manager:
  - ensures each run has been marked as 'achieved' for the units/components each Learner has achieved
  - ensures each run has been verified by the course leader (lead assessor for that course)
  - verifies to approve any claims for RPL or credit transfer
  - verifies each run as the internal verifier
  - prepares all Learner evidence and records of assessment, internal verification and any reasonable adjustments applied for the external verification visit, if applicable
  - Documents all IV activity including actions set for assessors

5.6 External Quality Assurance

- All non-examined assessment are subject to some form of external quality assurance. Centres are required to fully co-operate with requirements of monitoring activities and to complete any identified actions in a timely manner.

5.6.1. **AIM** - Centres are required to contribute Learner assessment data to AIM Standardisation events.

- All qualifications on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) are required to have monitoring as part of the CASS strategy.
- Further guidance is available in the current AIM Centre Handbook and External Quality Assurance guidance.

5.6.1. **AIM Quality Mark -** EQAs conduct quality assurance activities for newly approved centres and annual compliance monitoring.

5.6.1. **ASDAN/ASDAN PEQ -** submitted using the method specified by ASDAN, which may include electronic submission, postal submission or moderation visits.

5.6.1. **Open Awards -** EQAs conduct quality assurance activities for newly approved centres and ongoing compliance monitoring in accordance with the current Open Awards Centre Handbook and qualification requirements.

5.6.1. **AQA UAS -** coordinators must pass a quality assurance check by AQA, before they may process certificates. Spot checks on quality and compliance may occur throughout the contract period.

6. LEARNER REGISTRATION AND CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

- All Learners attending the Provision will be given a taster session prior to starting the placement and maybe offered additional visits.

- Background information is collecting from the individual's current or previous educational establishment, their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and any other professional reports.
- The Centre Manager will assess the proposed Learner's interests, skills, prior learning and learning needs to draw a picture of their overall ability level as part of the admission's process.
- If the Provision accepts the Learner, the information needed for enrolment is taken from their onboarding paperwork.
- The Centre Manager will verify learner ID to confirm age eligibility by cross-checking the qualification specification and any digital or marketing materials prior to enrolment. NB: Level 2 Award in Mentoring requires the learner to be over the age of 14. This will be crossed checked by the IQA.
- There are no entry requirements, registration or completion deadlines or for any of our certificated learning programmes.
- Where an awarding organisation specifies mandatory entry requirements, age restrictions or prerequisite qualifications, these will take precedence over the Provision's normal admissions process.

6.1. Entry Requirements for Qualification Registration

- As many of our learners do not come with previous qualifications, we use a range of AQA Unit Award Scheme certificates to assess suitability for a course of learning.
- Where a Learner has no GCSEs they may enroll onto Entry level 3 or Level 1 if the person conducting the interview feels this is a suitable study programme. The Learner must be able to commit to the minimum teaching hours as outlined in the specification, and the judgement will consider all learning the individual is doing as part of their provision
- For Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications, learners will start on AQA units and will show competency through this. If they are working at the correct level then they will be assessed to enroll onto the qualification. This will form the basis of our diagnostic testing. The larger the qualification, the more involved the diagnostic assessment may be i.e. an award may just need to show they can write at the desired level however a diploma may require more evidence.
- Where a Learner has 4 or more GCSEs grade 3 or above then they will be considered for a Level 2 qualification directly.
- Learners may progress directly from a Level 1 onto a Level 2 qualification in the same qualification pathway upon completion.
- Where Learners have 2 or more GCSEs at Level 2 in relevant subjects e.g. game design if they have 4 in mathematics, 4 in English and 4 in ICT, then they will go directly onto the Level 2. This will be assessed by an interview and a short written answer test.
- Learners enrolling onto Level 3 Award qualifications must show they are able to complete AQA units structured at a similar level or must show that they have relevant professional experience where required.
- Level 3 qualifications above the "award" level, learners must have 5 GCSEs 4 or above including mathematics and English.
- The Centre Manager may make a ruling to allow a Learner with special circumstances to enroll onto a course that appears above their level "on paper" e.g. with regards to their entry qualifications, if the Learner is able to show competency, is an adult Learner or if the Learner can demonstrate suitability for the course through professional experience or other portfolio-based work. In most cases, the associated AQA units will allow for this.
- Requests to transfer a learner between qualifications or awarding organisations will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the relevant awarding organisation's requirements.
- Functional Skills learners will be registered and entered for examinations in accordance with current Open Awards requirements.

6.2. Registration Timelines for Qualifications

- Learner registrations occur at the beginning of academic year in September, the start of spring term in January and the start of summer term May, unless otherwise agreed by the relevant awarding organisation.
- Learners who wish to join a qualification may do AQA related work to prepare for this but will start qualifications at one of the 3 registration timepoints.
- Learners will be registered with the relevant awarding organisation within the timescales specified by that awarding organisation and, wherever possible, within two months of commencing the qualification.
- If a Learner is completing a standardised qualification e.g. Level 2 Award in Mentoring, then their units will be preselected, previously verified and they will work through the standard structure of this course.
- If they are taking a more bespoke qualification e.g. Personal and Social Development made up of various units, the Learner must agree with their assessor which units will be taken. Those units are then compiled into task sheets/assessment workbooks by the assessor, which then goes through out internal verification process.
- Learners will then be enrolled on this course.
- In the instance where a Learner is unable to fully complete a larger programme of study e.g. a diploma and wants to claim for a smaller qualification i.e. a certificate, learners can email/discuss the situation directly with the Centre Manager. The Centre Manager will then make direct contact with awarding organisation to discuss. In this instance a learners enrolment date onto the new smaller qualification will need to be agreed between the centre and awarding organisation.
- Where registration deadlines have been missed, the Centre Manager will liaise with the relevant awarding organisation to determine whether late registration is permitted and document the outcome.

6.3. Claiming Of Qualifications

1. Upon completion of the course, the course leader / assessor will check through and collate all the evidence for the course. If units still need to go to the IQA then this will happen as a final stage.
2. The work will then be handed to the Centre Manager for a final check-through. The Centre Manager will check learning outcomes (which will be on each assessment) directly against the work that has been submitted.
3. Claims made will be checked against assessment records before this is submitted via the awarding organisation platform e.g. Quartz.
4. If all work is present and the assessment decision is correct, then units are claimed on the portal and submitted.
5. Where required, an EQA visit is called.
6. From submission, and having internally passed all of the criteria, the process of claiming the qualification will normally be submitted within four weeks, subject to any external quality assurance requirements.
7. If the EQA request units that we had not included in the IV sample, the work is internally verified to ensure it has undergone our quality assurance process. Even if the units that were internally verified are not requested, the original internal verification documents are included in the sample to show compliance.
8. The IQA will scan all certificates as part of the learner's record of achievement, before issuing the hard copy to the learner.
9. Work is archived and kept in individual Learner files on the OneDrive for a minimum of 3 years

6.4. Claiming Of Certificated Learning

1. Upon completion of the work, the tutor/assessor will check through and collate all the evidence for the course.
2. The work will then be handed to the IQA for full IV or spot check as per our internal verification policy.
3. The Centre Manager will register for the certificate via the awarding organisation online portal.
    a. All certificated learning can be claimed regularly throughout the year and are usually received within 2-4 weeks.
    b. Electronic certificates, where issued by the awarding organisation, will be downloaded from the awarding organisation's system and stored securely in the Learner's OneDrive folder.
    c. All paper certificates will be scanned as part of the learner's record of achievement, if no electronic copy is available, before issuing the hard copy.
        i. Some learners have a significant sensitivity to praise and may find it difficult to receive their certificate immediately. To support their needs, certificates are stored securely in the folder corresponding to the awarding organisation, filed in alphabetical order. Certificates remain in storage until they are requested by the learner or their parent/carer, or until the end of the placement.
        ii. All certificates are treated as confidential records and are stored and distributed in accordance with the Provision's Data Protection and GDPR Policy, ensuring both security and learner privacy.
4. Work is archived and kept in individual Learner files on the OneDrive for a minimum of 3 years

6.5 Withdrawal

1. Where a learner wishes to withdraw from a qualification, they must speak directly to their course assessor/course lead
2. An informal conversation will happen to discuss the implications of leaving and reasonable adjustments and support that can be offered.
    a. Where a Learner is under the age of 16 their legal parent/carer may need to be informed.
    b. Where Overworld AMP is contracted to provide education on behalf of the Learner's named school or Local Authority, then they will need to be included into the conversation.
3. If the learner has decided that they will be leaving, then this must be presented in writing e.g. email, to the Provision.
4. Where a Learner is withdrawn from the provision (see the Provision's *Exclusion Policy*) or where a learner drops contact, if we are unable to make contact within 90 days (with a minimum of two recorded written communications to the contact emails collected at enrollment) we will proceed with withdrawal.
5. Where a decision to withdraw is made, the Centre Manager will notify the relevant awarding organisation and complete any withdrawal process required by that organisation. This may be made as a phone call but will be followed up with written confirmation confirming the Learner's name and their run number.
6. Learners should expect for a withdrawal to be processed within 8 weeks of them raising this with their course tutor due to the process of contacting local authorities / other parties that may be involved however in the majority of cases this will be a much shorter timeline.
7. Written evidence of this process and communications will be stored in the individual Learner files on the OneDrive for a minimum of 3 years as meeting minutes, letters and/or PDFs of the email thread(s)
8. In the event that a Learner is withdrawing to move to a parallel qualification e.g. RPL for a smaller qualification then please see the RPL policy.

6.6. Inaccurate Registrations

1. Although Learners' registrations are checked through the onboarding process, in the event of an inaccurate registration or certification being recognised, the Learner must
    a. contact their course tutor and present in writing (via email or other suitable media) the inaccurate certificate along with the correct information.
    b. provide proof of the change e.g. ID or work / assessment decisions that have been signed off by the team
2. This will then be fed back to the Centre Manager who will contact the awarding organisation directly through our center contact (if different) to amend the issue
3. This situation will be recorded in the individual Learner files on the OneDrive for a minimum of 3 years as meeting minutes and/or PDFs of the email thread(s)
4. Where possible, the inaccurate certificate will be scanned and kept as evidence, but the original certificate will be destroyed.
    a. If the original certificate was destroyed, the Centre Manager will check the certificate claim and Learner registration details before proceeding to contact the awarding organisation to ensure that the inaccuracy was there.
    b. If the inaccuracy is not present the Learner may need to pay for a re-print of certificate depending on the circumstances. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

7. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING PROCEDURE

- This procedure allows learners to demonstrate knowledge, skills and competencies gained through previous learning or experience to claim recognition, credit transfer or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), where permitted by the relevant awarding organisation. It should be read alongside Section.

7.1 Different Prior Learning to Specification

- Learners who have previously evidenced skills matching the unit's learning outcomes can discuss this with the Centre Manager before enrolling in the course, ideally during the Provision's admissions process.
- Formal applications for RPL or credit transfer, must be submitted to the Centre Manager and must include all relevant documentation to support this, such as the following:
    - Transcript of pervious study
    - Credits achieved with certificate
    - Marks for previous assessed criteria
    - A syllabus for assessed work
    - Proof of assessed work
    - References from the institution where prior learning took place
    - Complete mapping process on RPL form
    - Continuous Professional Development
    - Performance management feedback
    - Learner reflective account
- Evidence, which may be accepted as RPL:
    - Learners have successfully completed the assessment criteria for a whole, or part, of a unit within a qualification being studied at the Provision.
    - Learners have evidence of recent prior education, which meets the assessment criteria of the programme they are currently enrolled on.

- Printed certification from the awarding organisation, if possible, with a unit break down and a copy of the relevant spec to show what criteria has been covered.
- authenticated witness statements, where permitted by the awarding organisation

- The Centre Manager will establish if the evidence is:
  - **valid** – the assessment requirements have been met
  - **current** - sufficiently recent to demonstrate continued competence, taking account of the subject area and the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation.
  - **reliable** - demonstrates sound competence and the assessor does not dispute grade
  - **authentic** – sole work of the learner (or as a team member where group work was permitted)
  - **sufficient** - be substantial enough to fully meet the requirements of the learning objective(s) or assessment criteria being considered or complemented by evidence gained through other suitable assessment method(s)
- Evaluations of a learner's prior knowledge, understanding, experience, skills, and accomplishments will be based on established unit standards. The assessment methods used for RPL should be just as thorough, demanding, and reliable as those used in other forms of assessment. This ensures that all evaluations are fair and consistent, maintaining high standards regardless of the method being used.
- The course lead/assessor will check the work against the learning outcomes and pass it to the IQA for further verification. If approved, the evidence will be sent to the awarding organisation via the Centre Manager for final approval and application of RPL.
- Once the process is completed, the outcome will be communicated back to the Learner verbally and by email.

7.2. Downgrading to a Smaller Qualification

- Learners wishing to downgrade from a larger qualification e.g. diploma to a certificate, must have a meeting with their assessor, which will be minuted by the assessor
- The learner and assessor will agree on the units to be continued, which will then be registered with the awarding organisation
- This involves a withdrawal and new enrolment on the system
- Written evidence of this process and communications will be stored in the individual Learner files on the OneDrive for a minimum of 3 years as meeting minutes, letters and/or PDFs of the email thread(s)
- Previously completed work will be treated as part of the new qualification and will not require formal RPL as it is claimed for the first time during the final portfolio submission.
- A note will explain any date mismatches during External Quality Assurance (EQA).

7.3. Upgrading to a Larger Qualification

- Learners wishing to upgrade from a smaller qualification e.g. certificate to a diploma must discuss this with their course lead/assessor.
- Learners must submit either the original qualification certificate with a breakdown of units or a full portfolio of previous work within 10 days of the request.
- Evidence must be submitted before official enrolment into the new qualification. The centre may source this internally if the Learner has previously studied with us.
- The evidence will be sent to the awarding organisation for official RPL application, see process below.

7.4. Limitations to AIM Qualifications

- **Certificated Learning and Equivalency**: A maximum of 70% of a qualification can be achieved through exemption or equivalency, with at least 30% gained through new learning. For single-unit qualifications, a maximum of 50% applies. Typically, 67% of credit within a qualification must be at the qualification level.

- **Access to HE Diplomas**: Up to 50% (30 credits) of a Diploma can be achieved through RPL, unless specified otherwise.

7.5 Circumstances When Prior Learning Will Not Be Recognised:

- Learning that is similar to the assessment but is taken at a lower level
- Prior learning that is more than 3 years old for Learning that is not related to technology. 2 years old learning related to technology, due to the speed of progression within the industry.
- Prior learning that did not achieve accreditation from the assessor or encountered issues
- Instances where Learners have completed the exact, full accreditation for the entirety of the course (this would bring in to question the value of the Learner re-learning and re-studying the same criteria)
    - In a situation where this is the case, Learners will be given the opportunity to state their reason for wanting to take the course e.g. the Provision's staffing, course content, industry relevance etc, but may be offered the ability to study the course without external accreditation (i.e. they would go through the learning process but would not be enrolled as a student with the awarding organisation).

7.6 The Process:

- Learners discuss course enrolment and potential RPL.
    - RPL, equivalencies and credit transfers are included in the rules of combination for a qualification, and centres must register learners against the appropriate and/or equivalency unit/units.
- Learners have 10 days to submit RPL evidence to Centre Manager either directly or via their assessor.
- The Centre Manager will
    - complete the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) credit transfer form, available to download from the awarding organisation at the point of learner registration before the learner starts the programme
    - email or submit the application using the awarding organisation's current online system where required.
        - The date of RPL validity (the date of the evidence for RPL) will be taken from the RPL application date.
    - let the Learner know of the outcome verbally and by email ASAP of receiving the notification from the awarding organisation.
        - The outcome of the application will be sent via email to the Centre Manager within 10 working days
    - Only enrol the Learner onto the appropriate course after the process has been completed
    - Securely retain the documentation in the Learner's File on OneDrive for at least 3 years after the Learner leaves the Provision.

7.7. Malpractice

- Failure of the Provision's staff to comply with the guidance regarding RPL and achievement set out by the awarding organisation, has the potential to constitute malpractice and may lead to the awarding organisation withholding the learner's result. Instances of malpractice will be dealt in accordance with the awarding organisation's policy. The member(s) of staff involved will also be subject to the Provision's disciplinary process.

7.8. Appeals

- Appeals relating to RPL decisions will be managed in accordance with the Provision's *Appeals Procedure* and, where appropriate, the relevant awarding organisation's appeals process.

7.9. Learner complaints

- If any learner is unhappy with how the Provision has dealt with their application for RPL and achievement and has exhausted our appeal's process, they must follow the awarding organisation's *Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy*.

8. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT PROCEDURE

- The Provision is committed to providing inclusive teaching, learning and assessment that enables all learners to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding without compromising the validity of qualifications or certificated learning.
- As a specialist SEND provision, assessment activities are routinely designed to be accessible and inclusive. Where further adjustments are required for an individual learner, these will be implemented in accordance with the relevant awarding organisation's requirements.
- This policy should be read alongside the *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* Policy and the relevant awarding organisation's Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Procedure.

8.1 Reasonable Adjustments

- The Provision will:
    - identify learners' support needs during the admissions and enrolment process;
    - consider information provided through Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), previous educational settings, professional reports and discussions with learners, parents or carers;
    - implement appropriate reasonable adjustments that enable learners to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding without compromising the validity of the assessment;
    - ensure any amended assessment materials are internally quality assured before use;
    - seek approval from the relevant awarding organisation where this is required by the qualification specification or awarding organisation guidance;
    - maintain appropriate records of reasonable adjustments and the rationale for their use.
- Reasonable adjustments may include, but are not limited to:
    - adapted assessment materials;
    - alternative methods of presenting assessment tasks;
    - assistive technology;
    - readers, scribes or practical assistants where permitted;
    - additional time;
    - supervised rest breaks;
    - alternative assessment locations;
    - writing frames, planning templates or other structured scaffolding where these form part of the approved assessment materials or an agreed reasonable adjustment and do not compromise the validity of the assessment;
    - other adjustments permitted by the relevant awarding organisation.
- Assessment adaptations that alter assessment materials or methods will be subject to Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) before being used with learners.
- The Provision will maintain appropriate records of all reasonable adjustments implemented for learners.
- Where prior approval from the awarding organisation is required, the appropriate application process will be followed before the assessment takes place.

8.2 Special Considerations

- Where a learner experiences temporary illness, injury or other unforeseen circumstances that are likely to affect their ability to complete an assessment, the Provision will consider whether special consideration is appropriate.
- Examples may include, but are not limited to:
    - serious illness or injury;
    - bereavement;
    - significant family or domestic circumstances;
    - acute mental health difficulties;
    - temporary flare-ups of medical conditions;
    - traumatic incidents or other exceptional circumstances.
    - Requests for special consideration should be made as soon as reasonably practicable by the learner, parent/carer or a member of staff.
- Where appropriate, supporting evidence may be requested.
- The Centre Manager, or a delegated member of staff, will consider each request on its individual merits and determine the most appropriate course of action in accordance with the relevant awarding organisation's requirements.
- Where approved, arrangements may include:
    - extending assessment deadlines;
    - rearranging assessment activities;
    - permitting alternative methods of evidence collection where permitted;
    - applying to the relevant awarding organisation where their approval is required.
- Learners will be informed of the outcome and any revised assessment arrangements as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Appropriate records will be maintained to demonstrate how decisions relating to special considerations have been made and implemented.
- Where an application for special consideration is required by the relevant awarding organisation, the Centre Manager will submit the appropriate application together with any supporting evidence within the published timescales.
- Where a learner disagrees with a decision, they may appeal in accordance with the Provision's Appeals Procedure.

9. DISTANCE LEARNING

- Some learners are unable to attend the Provision for all or part of their programme due to individual circumstances. Where appropriate, the Provision can deliver learning, assessment and learner support remotely.
- The Provision uses approved digital platforms, including Discord for real-time communication and OneDrive and Google Drive for the secure storage and sharing of learning materials, assessment evidence and feedback. Alternative platforms may be used where appropriate and approved by the Centre Manager. The specific platforms, communication arrangements and expectations for each programme will be detailed within the relevant Course Handbook.
- Distance learning will be delivered in accordance with the Provision's *Safeguarding, Young Person Protection, Online Safety, Data Protection and GDPR Policies*, and current government guidance on safeguarding in remote education.
- Tutors and assessors delivering distance learning will use appropriate methods to authenticate learner work and ensure assessment decisions are valid. Depending on the qualification and assessment requirements, these methods may include:

- live online teaching and assessment;
- screen sharing;
- observation of practical activities;
- professional discussion;
- questioning to confirm understanding; and
- review of learner work throughout the programme.

- Where the standard of submitted work is significantly inconsistent with a learner's demonstrated ability or there are concerns regarding authenticity, the work may be investigated in accordance with the Provision's *Malpractice and Maladministration procedure*. Learners may be required to complete an alternative assessment, undertake further assessment activities or provide additional evidence to demonstrate competence. Where malpractice is confirmed, action will be taken in accordance with the relevant awarding organisation's requirements and the Provision's disciplinary procedures.
- Learners undertaking distance learning should have access to:
  - a suitable computer or laptop capable of supporting the software required for their programme;
  - reliable internet access sufficient for live online sessions and submission of assessment evidence; and
  - appropriate audio and video equipment where required.
- Where appropriate and subject to availability, the Provision may provide equipment to support access to learning. This will be discussed during the referral and admissions process.
- Before enrolling on a distance learning programme, the Centre Manager will consider whether the learner has the digital literacy, reading and communication skills, motivation and level of independence necessary to complete the programme successfully. Where additional support is required, reasonable adjustments and appropriate support arrangements will be considered.
- Assessment evidence submitted remotely will be stored securely in accordance with the Provision's *Data Protection and GDPR Policy*. Learners may be required to confirm that submitted work is their own and participate in follow-up questioning or professional discussion where necessary to authenticate assessment evidence.

10. ADVICE AND FEEDBACK

- The Provision is committed to providing appropriate support to learners while ensuring that assessment evidence remains the learner's own work and accurately reflects their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Unless specifically prohibited by the relevant awarding organisation or qualification specification, the Centre Manager or Tutor/Assessor may:
  - provide general oral and written advice on how assessment requirements can be met;
  - provide writing frames, templates, paragraph headings, planning tools or other scaffolding where these form part of a learner's usual way of working or are provided as a reasonable adjustment;
  - allow learners to revise and redraft their work following general feedback;
  - provide clarification of assessment requirements without directing learners towards specific answers.
- Support provided must not compromise the validity of the assessment or result in the tutor or assessor completing the work on the learner's behalf.
- Where support goes beyond normal teaching and learning, or forms part of an agreed reasonable adjustment, this will be recorded and taken into account during assessment and internal quality assurance, where required.
- When marking work, the Tutor/Assessor will record assessment decisions clearly and, where appropriate, annotate how any agreed reasonable adjustments or additional support have been applied.

- The Centre Manager or Tutor/Assessor must not:
    - provide model answers or complete sections of work for learners;
    - provisionally assess work and then allow learners to revise it based on that assessment;
    - provide assistance that is explicitly prohibited by the relevant awarding organisation.
- Failure to comply with this policy or the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation may constitute malpractice and will be dealt with in accordance with the Provision's Malpractice and Maladministration Procedure.

11. NON-EXAMINATION ASSESSMENT

- Dedicated supervision or invigilation is not normally required.
- Learners do not need to be directly supervised at all times while completing non-examination assessments.
- The Centre Manager or Tutor/Assessor will ensure that:
    - learners understand the assessment requirements and what constitutes authentic work;
    - there is sufficient oversight of each learner to enable assessment evidence to be authenticated;
    - the work submitted for assessment is the learner's own;
    - work completed outside the Provision without direct supervision is only accepted where the Centre Manager or Tutor/Assessor is satisfied that it is authentic;
    - where learners work collaboratively, a record is maintained of each learner's individual contribution;
    - any reasonable adjustments provided do not compromise the validity of the assessment or the learner's ability to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and understanding independently.
- The Centre Manager or Tutor/Assessor will also:
    - ensure learners understand the importance of acknowledging and referencing sources appropriately;
    - provide guidance on referencing and the appropriate use of source material;
    - make learners aware that plagiarism, collusion, unauthorised assistance and the misuse of artificial intelligence (AI) or other technologies may constitute malpractice where they result in work that is not the learner's own;
    - use appropriate methods, including questioning, professional discussion, observation or review of draft work, where necessary to authenticate assessment evidence.

12. GROUP WORK

- Unless the relevant awarding organisation or qualification specification states otherwise, learners may collaborate when carrying out research, planning and preparatory activities.
- Where permitted, some learning activities and assessment tasks may be completed collaboratively.
- Where an assessment requires individual evidence, each learner must produce and submit their own work.
- Individual contributions to any collaborative activity must be clearly identified and capable of being authenticated by the Tutor/Assessor.
- Group work may contribute to learning and evidence gathering; however, assessment decisions will be based solely on each learner's individual achievement of the required learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- Group assessment will only be undertaken where it is expressly permitted by the relevant awarding organisation or qualification specification.

13. MARKING

- Centre Manager or Tutor/Assessor will mark work in accordance with the relevant awarding organisation's marking criteria.
- Annotation will be used on the learner's work or assessment documentation to provide evidence of how assessment decisions have been reached.
- The Provision will inform learners of internally assessed results before achievement claims are submitted to the relevant awarding organisation.
- Learners will be informed that internally assessed results may be subject to change following the relevant awarding organisation's quality assurance process.

14. MALPRACTICE AND MALADMINISTRATION PROCEDURE

- The Provision is committed to maintaining the integrity, validity and credibility of all qualifications and certificated learning. This procedure sets out how malpractice and maladministration will be prevented, identified, investigated and managed in accordance with the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation.
- All staff involved in the delivery, assessment, internal quality assurance and administration of qualifications are responsible for complying with this procedure.

14.1. Malpractice is any deliberate act, default or practice that compromises, or could compromise:

- the integrity of an assessment or qualification;
- the validity of assessment decisions;
- the security of assessment materials;
- the interests of learners; or
- public confidence in qualifications.

14.1.1. Centre malpractice may include, but is not limited to:

- failing to follow learner registration or certification procedures;
- breaching centre recognition or qualification approval requirements;
- falsifying records or certification claims;
- repeated failures in centre administration;
- failing to implement actions required by the awarding organisation;
- intentionally withholding information that may affect quality assurance;
- failing to maintain secure examination or assessment materials;
- loss or unauthorised disclosure of confidential assessment materials;
- permitting collusion or other assessment malpractice;
- failing to apply approved reasonable adjustments appropriately;
- submitting false information to obtain qualifications or certification;
- failing to notify the awarding organisation of reportable incidents where required.

14.1.2. Staff Malpractice may include, but is not limited to:

- completing assessment work on behalf of learners;
- providing inappropriate assistance during assessment;
- falsifying learner, assessment or IQA records;
- unauthorised copying or distribution of assessment materials;

- failing to follow qualification requirements;
- failing to conduct assessment or internal quality assurance appropriately;
- failing to identify plagiarism or authenticity concerns;
- discrimination, bias or unfair treatment;
- failing to maintain confidentiality;
- refusing access to awarding organisation representatives or regulators;
- sharing confidential qualification materials without authorisation;
- deliberately failing to comply with awarding organisation requirements.

14.1.3 Learner Malpractice may include, but is not limited to:

- plagiarism;
- collusion;
- personation;
- submitting another person's work as their own;
- submitting AI-generated work as their own;
- destroying or interfering with another learner's work;
- using unauthorised materials during an assessment;
- providing false information to obtain a qualification;
- attempting to gain an unfair advantage during assessment;
- threatening, intimidating or bullying others in relation to assessment.

14.2. Maladministration is any unintentional act, omission or failure to follow required procedures that results, or has the potential to result, in an adverse effect on learners, assessment or qualification delivery.

14.3. Preventing Malpractice

- The Provision will minimise the risk of malpractice and maladministration by:
  - ensuring staff receive appropriate induction and ongoing training;
  - maintaining effective Internal Quality Assurance arrangements;
  - authenticating learner assessment evidence;
  - implementing approved reasonable adjustments appropriately;
  - securely storing assessment materials;
  - maintaining accurate assessment and certification records;
  - monitoring assessment practice through observation and sampling;
  - promoting academic integrity and ethical use of AI;
  - reviewing policies regularly to ensure continued compliance with awarding organisation requirements.
- Staff are expected to report suspected malpractice or maladministration immediately through line management or the Provision's Whistleblowing Procedure.

14.4. Conflict of Interest

- All actual or potential conflicts of interest relating to qualification delivery, assessment or internal quality assurance will be declared, recorded and managed accordingly.
- Where required, the relevant awarding organisation will be informed.

14.5. Plagiarism and Artificial Intelligence

- Learners are expected to submit assessment evidence that accurately reflects their own knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Artificial intelligence tools may be used to support learning where permitted by the relevant qualification specification. However:
    - learners remain responsible for all submitted work;
    - AI must not replace the learner's own knowledge, understanding or decision-making;
    - AI-generated content must not be presented as original learner work;
    - tutors will provide guidance on the ethical and appropriate use of AI.

14.6. Authentication of Learner Evidence

- As learners work individually with Tutors/Assessors, assessment evidence will normally be submitted directly to the assessor and stored securely within the Provision's electronic systems.
- Before making an assessment decision, the Tutor/Assessor will satisfy themselves, using their professional judgement, that the assessment evidence is authentic.
- Authentication may include:
    - reviewing the learner's normal standard of work;
    - discussing the work with the learner;
    - professional discussion;
    - supplementary questioning;
    - reviewing drafts or previous versions;
    - requesting additional evidence;
    - using plagiarism or AI detection software where appropriate.
    - The Tutor/Assessor will confirm that, to the best of their professional judgement:
    - the evidence submitted is authentic;
    - any support provided was consistent with the learner's normal way of working and complied with the relevant awarding organisation's requirements; and
    - the assessment evidence accurately reflects the learner's own knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Where authenticity cannot be established, an assessment decision will not be made until the matter has been resolved.

14.7. Investigation of Allegations

- Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect malpractice or maladministration, the Centre Manager (or the CEO where the allegation concerns the Centre Manager) will investigate the matter fairly, promptly and impartially.
- The investigation will normally include:
    - Securing and reviewing all relevant evidence.
    - Informing the individual of the concerns and investigation process.
    - Providing an opportunity to respond to the allegation.
    - Considering all available evidence objectively.
    - Determining whether malpractice or maladministration has occurred.
    - Reporting the matter to the relevant awarding organisation where required.
    - Cooperating fully with any external investigation.
    - Implementing any actions required by the awarding organisation.
    - Informing affected individuals of the outcome where appropriate.

- Maintaining confidential records of the investigation in accordance with the Provision's Data Protection and GDPR Policy.

- Anonymous allegations will be considered where sufficient supporting evidence exists or where the seriousness of the allegation warrants investigation.

14.8. Outcomes

- Where malpractice or maladministration is substantiated, action will be fair, proportionate and consistent with the seriousness of the matter.

14.8.1. Learners

- Depending on the circumstances, outcomes may include:
  - guidance regarding academic integrity;
  - additional learning or support;
  - completion of alternative assessment evidence;
  - formal written warning;
  - invalidation of assessment evidence;
  - delayed or withheld certification where required;
  - withdrawal from a qualification or programme in the most serious cases.
  - When determining an outcome, the Provision will consider:
  - the learner's individual circumstances;
  - SEND and approved reasonable adjustments;
  - safeguarding considerations;
  - previous incidents;
  - awarding organisation requirements.

14.8.2. Staff

- Where staff malpractice or maladministration is substantiated, appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the *Employee Handbook* and *Disciplinary Procedure*. This may include:
  - additional supervision;
  - further training;
  - removal from assessment or IQA duties;
  - formal disciplinary action; or
  - dismissal where appropriate.
- The relevant awarding organisation will be informed where required.

14.9 Learner Rights

- Throughout any investigation, learners will:
  - be informed of the concerns and supporting evidence;
  - have the opportunity to respond before a decision is made;
  - receive reasonable adjustments where required;
  - be permitted to be accompanied by a parent, carer or advocate at formal meetings where appropriate;
  - be informed of their right to appeal in accordance with Section 15 of this policy.

15. APPEALS PROCEDURE

- The Provision is committed to ensuring that all learners are treated fairly, consistently and transparently. Learners have the right to appeal decisions relating to qualifications and certificated learning where they believe a decision has been made incorrectly or that published procedures have not been followed.
- Learners will not be disadvantaged or treated less favourably because they have exercised their right to appeal.
- Appeals may relate to, but are not limited to:
    - assessment decisions;
    - internal quality assurance (IQA) decisions;
    - Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) decisions;
    - reasonable adjustments;
    - special considerations;
    - malpractice or maladministration decisions;
    - qualification or certification decisions.
- Appeals should normally be submitted within **10 working days** of the decision being communicated to the learner. Appeals submitted outside this timescale may still be considered where there are exceptional circumstances.

15.1 Internal Appeals Process

- **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**
    - Where possible, learners should first discuss their concerns with their Tutor/assessor or the Centre Manager as soon as reasonably practicable after receiving the decision.
    - Many concerns can be resolved through discussion, clarification of assessment decisions or review of the assessment evidence.
    - Where appropriate, the assessor may review the assessment decision or seek advice from the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA).
- **Stage 2 – Formal Appeal**
    - If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the learner may submit a formal appeal to the Centre Manager.
    - Appeals may be submitted by email and should include:
        - the decision being appealed;
        - the reasons for the appeal;
        - any supporting evidence the learner wishes to be considered.
    - The Centre Manager will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within **five working days**.
    - The appeal will be investigated by an appropriately independent member of staff, normally the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA), who has not been directly involved in the original assessment decision wherever reasonably practicable.
    - The investigation may include:
        - reviewing assessment records and evidence;
        - speaking with the learner and relevant members of staff;
        - reviewing awarding organisation requirements and qualification specifications;
        - considering any additional evidence submitted.
    - The learner will normally receive a written outcome within **10 working days** of the appeal being acknowledged. Where additional time is required, the learner will be informed of the reason for the delay and provided with an updated timescale.
    - Where an appeal is upheld, the Provision will take appropriate action, which may include:

- reviewing the assessment decision;
- arranging reassessment where appropriate;
- amending learner records;
- reviewing assessment or internal quality assurance procedures to prevent recurrence.

15.2 External Appeals

- Where a learner remains dissatisfied following completion of the Provision's internal appeals process, they may appeal to the relevant awarding organisation where this is permitted under the awarding organisation's published procedures.
- The Provision will cooperate fully with any external appeal and will provide copies of relevant records, assessment evidence and correspondence as required by the awarding organisation.

15.3 Record Keeping

- The Provision will maintain records of all appeals, supporting evidence, correspondence, decisions and outcomes in accordance with the Provision's *Data Protection and GDPR Policy* and the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation.

16. OPEN AWARDS FUNCTIONAL SKILLS EXAMINATION PROCEDURE

- This procedure sets out how the Provision prepares for, conducts and manages externally assessed examinations, including Open Awards Functional Skills qualifications.
- The Provision will ensure that all examinations are conducted fairly, securely and in accordance with the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation.
- This procedure should be read alongside the Provision's *Qualifications, Certificated Learning and Examinations Policy*, *Malpractice and Maladministration Policy, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy*, and *Business Continuity Plan*.

16.1. Roles and Responsibilities

16.1.1. The Centre Manager is responsible for ensuring that:

- learners are entered for examinations correctly and within awarding organisation deadlines;
- confidential examination materials are stored securely;
- approved reasonable adjustments are implemented;
- suitably trained invigilators are appointed;
- examinations are conducted in accordance with awarding organisation requirements;
- completed examination materials are returned securely and within published timescales.

16.1.2. Invigilators are responsible for:

- maintaining the security and integrity of the examination;
- supervising learners throughout the assessment;
- following the instructions issued by the relevant awarding organisation;
- reporting any incidents, suspected malpractice or irregularities to the Centre Manager immediately.

16.2. Secure Storage of Examination Materials

- Confidential examination materials will be:
  - stored securely in a locked cabinet or safe with restricted access;
  - accessible only to authorised members of staff;

- opened only at the time specified by the awarding organisation;
- protected from unauthorised access at all times.

- Completed examination materials will be securely packaged and returned or uploaded in accordance with the awarding organisation's published requirements.

16.3. Preparing for the Examination

- Before the examination begins, the Centre Manager or designated invigilator will ensure that:
  - the examination room is quiet, safe and suitable for assessment;
  - seating arrangements comply with the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation;
  - only authorised materials and equipment are available;
  - approved reasonable adjustments are in place;
  - emergency evacuation arrangements are understood;
  - the correct examination materials have been issued.
- Learners will be reminded of the examination regulations before the assessment begins.

16.4. Learner Identification

- The identity of each learner will be verified before the examination commences.
- Where photographic identification is unavailable, identity may be confirmed by the Centre Manager or another authorised member of staff who knows the learner.

16.5. Conducting the Examination

- The invigilator will:
  - supervise learners throughout the examination;
  - ensure examination conditions are maintained;
  - provide time reminders where appropriate;
  - respond appropriately to emergencies or learner welfare concerns;
  - record any incidents or irregularities occurring during the examination.

- The invigilator will not:
  - explain or interpret examination questions;
  - provide guidance on answers;
  - comment on learner performance;
  - undertake duties that would compromise effective invigilation.

16.6. Learner Conduct

- Learners must:
  - follow the instructions of the invigilator;
  - work independently unless the assessment specifically permits otherwise;
  - use only authorised materials and equipment;
  - avoid any behaviour that may constitute malpractice.
- Mobile phones, smart watches and other unauthorised electronic devices must not be used during the examination unless expressly permitted by the relevant awarding organisation as part of an approved reasonable adjustment.
- Any suspected malpractice will be managed in accordance with Section 14 of this policy.

16.7. Late Arrivals

- Learners arriving late will be managed in accordance with the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation.
- Where permitted, late learners may complete the examination under appropriate supervision.
- Where an examination cannot be completed because of a late arrival, the learner will normally be entered for the next available assessment opportunity.

16.8. Emergencies

- Where an emergency occurs during an examination, the invigilator will:
    - ensure the safety of learners and staff;
    - maintain the security of examination materials wherever possible;
    - supervise learners throughout any interruption;
    - record the circumstances of the incident;
    - report the incident to the Centre Manager immediately.
- Where required, the relevant awarding organisation will be informed and advice sought regarding continuation or rescheduling of the examination.

16.9. Ending the Examination

- At the end of the examination, the invigilator will:
    - instruct learners to stop working;
    - collect all examination materials before learners leave the room;
    - confirm attendance records are complete;
    - ensure completed examination materials are securely stored until returned to the awarding organisation.
- Learners will not be informed of likely results or outcomes before official results are issued by the awarding organisation.

16.10. Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

- Approved reasonable adjustments will be implemented in accordance with the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations procedure and the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation.
- Where illness, injury or other unforeseen circumstances affect a learner immediately before or during an examination, the Centre Manager will consider whether an application for special consideration should be made in accordance with the relevant awarding organisation's requirements.

16.11. Malpractice

- Any suspected malpractice or maladministration occurring before, during or after an examination will be managed in accordance with the Malpractice and Maladministration Procedure.
- Where required, the relevant awarding organisation will be notified.

16.12. Records

- The Provision will maintain records relating to examinations, including:
    - learner entries;
    - attendance records;
    - approved reasonable adjustments;
    - special consideration applications;
    - examination incidents;
    - dispatch and receipt of examination materials;
    - malpractice investigations where applicable.
- Records will be retained in accordance with the Provision's *Data Protection and GDPR Policy* and the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation.

17. CONTINGENCY PLANNING

- The Provision will maintain a Business Continuity Plan to ensure that teaching, assessment, internal quality assurance and certification activities can continue, or be recovered as quickly as reasonably practicable, in the event of disruption.
- Where appropriate, teaching and learning may be delivered either in person or remotely using approved digital platforms.
- Learners may complete assessment activities at an alternative location where this is permitted by the relevant awarding organisation and appropriate arrangements are in place to authenticate the learner's work.
- Assessment evidence may be submitted in person, by post or electronically using approved methods.
- Where qualification specifications permit, there are no fixed deadlines or time constraints for the completion of portfolio-based assessments.
- The Provision will not voluntarily withdraw from centre recognition or cease delivery of a qualification while learners remain actively registered on that qualification or are nearing completion.
- If the Provision's centre recognition or qualification approval is withdrawn by the relevant awarding organisation, the Centre Manager and Senior Leadership Team will act in accordance with the Business Continuity Plan to protect the interests of learners and will liaise with the relevant awarding organisation throughout the withdrawal process.
    - The relevant awarding organisation may, where appropriate, award certification for achievement completed to date and/or facilitate the transfer of learners to another approved centre to enable them to continue their learning.

18. COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND WHISTLEBLOWING PROCEDURE

- The Provision is committed to maintaining high standards in the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of qualifications and certificated learning.
- Concerns relating to the quality of teaching, assessment, learner support or other aspects of the Provision's services should normally be raised in accordance with the *Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy*.
- Complaints relating to qualifications or certificated learning may include, but are not limited to:
    - assessment decisions where the Appeals Policy has been exhausted;
    - internal quality assurance decisions;
    - Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) decisions;
    - reasonable adjustment decisions;
    - special consideration decisions;
    - malpractice or maladministration investigations and outcomes;
    - qualification or certification decisions.
- Where a learner remains dissatisfied after completing the Provision's internal complaints or appeals process, they may refer the matter to the relevant awarding organisation in accordance with its published complaints procedure where appropriate.

18.1 Whistleblowing

- The Provision encourages learners, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders to raise genuine concerns where they believe malpractice, maladministration or other wrongdoing has occurred in relation to qualifications or certificated learning.
- Examples may include:
    - fraud or financial irregularities;
    - breaches of awarding organisation requirements;

- malpractice or maladministration relating to qualifications;
- falsification of assessment or certification records;
- conflicts of interest that have not been declared;
- safeguarding concerns (which should also be reported in accordance with the *Young Person Protection Policy*);
- attempts to conceal wrongdoing.

- Whistleblowing concerns may be raised with any member of the senior leadership team or directly with the relevant awarding organisation or other appropriate regulatory body where appropriate.
- The Provision will:
  - treat all whistleblowing concerns seriously;
  - investigate concerns fairly and impartially;
  - protect confidentiality wherever reasonably practicable;
  - ensure that no individual is subjected to detriment for raising a genuine concern in good faith.
- Individuals raising concerns should provide as much factual information as reasonably possible to assist any investigation. Additional information may be requested where necessary.
- Further guidance on whistleblowing is available from the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS), Protect and the relevant awarding organisation.