

Distance assessment policy

1 Definition

Distance assessment is a method of assessment offered to learners working away from a centre with little or no face to face contact with tutors. Assessment is designed to be carried out remotely with materials being provided electronically. It offers access to assessment in situations/settings where traditional patterns may be difficult or impossible to operate.

2 Audience

2.1 The intended audience for this document is:

- Agored Cymru staff and trustees
- centre staff responsible for Curriculum Development and Quality Assurance
- Agored Cymru appointed External Verifiers
- key stakeholders involved in the development of provision
- Regulatory Authorities.

2.2 This policy applies to all:

- qualifications approved under the QCF
- Access to HE Diploma approved by QAA
- units included in the QALL pillar of the CQFW

3 Introduction

- 3.1 Learners undertaking distance assessment have the right to expect equal opportunities to success when compared with those learners attending a centre. This does not mean that procedures, facilities or timescales must be the same, but it does mean that no learner should be disadvantaged.
- 3.2 'Blended learning' programmes should be used for programmes of learning incorporating skills based assessment, to ensure that learners have adequate opportunities to practice skills prior to assessment and to demonstrate skills at assessment.
- 3.3 Distance assessment may be used for any OCN Wales qualification or unit, unless specifically excluded in the qualification specification.

4 Policy

4.1 OCN Wales is committed to ensuring that innovative, accessible and secure assessment practices are used to allow learners to demonstrate their achievement effectively.

4.2 OCN Wales will work with organisations in Wales to develop good practice in the use of secure and effective assessment techniques in distance learning provision.

4.3 OCN Wales will work with organisations in Wales to develop good practice in the verification processes applied to distance learning provision.

4.4 OCN Wales require that assessment used for distance learning provision is authentic, valid, reliable and appropriate for learners and ensures equality of opportunity for success between distance learners and all other learners undertaking the same learning.

4.5 OCN Wales will ensure that:

- recognised centres using distance assessment processes have a distance assessment policy in place
- support and guidance is available to recognised centres regarding distance assessment practice
- systems are in place within recognised centres to verify the authenticity of both the learners and the assessment evidence
- the same standard of quality assurance is applied to distance assessment provision as that which is required for learners assessed at the centre
- learners with special requirements are not advantaged or disadvantaged by the use of distance assessment
- effective and appropriate external verification processes are applied to distance assessed provision
- the use of distance assessment does not compromise standardisation processes
- the use of distance assessment is audited and monitored.

4.6 Recognised OCN Wales centres using distance learning will be required to:

- develop a distance assessment policy
- report plans to develop and use distance learning techniques with OCN Wales provision, to ensure that that necessary changes to quality assurance processes can be identified and implemented
- take responsibility for ensuring compliance with legal requirements, regulations and codes of practice (e.g. Data protection, Disability Discrimination, copyright, Health and Safety etc.) when using distance assessment for the internal assessment of a qualification and/or unit
- verify the authenticity of both learners and their assessment evidence, this may require one assessment from the qualification being undertaken in the presence of an invigilator
- ensure that the use of distance assessment does not reduce the validity of the assessment for the qualification
- ensure that support and guidance provided to distance assessment learners is comparable to that provided to learners assessed at the centre
- operate an effective internal quality assurance procedure that is applied to all assessments
- establish and maintain accurate and auditable data for verification and management purposes
- ensure the integrity and confidentiality of learner data is maintained
- operate an effective appeals procedure, with which learners are familiar and which is applied to all learners using OCN Wales products and services.

4.7 OCN Wales will review the policy annually and revise it as and when necessary in response to stakeholder feedback, changes in practice, requirements of the regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation. The review will ensure that procedures continue to be consistent with the regulatory criteria and are applied properly and fairly.

5 Useful links

Insert link to Access to Fair Assessment Policy

Insert link to Equality and Diversity Policy

Insert link to Retention of evidence Policy

Insert link to Malpractice policy and procedure

Insert link to Welsh Language Policy

Insert link to e-assessment policy

6 Policy responsibility and review

Policy author: Anne Lewis,
Approved by: QAC (insert date)
AHEC (insert date)

Review date:
Reviewed by: