



## ACCREDITED QUALIFICATIONS POLICY

At VLC we believe that all our students should achieve qualifications. We are not a JCQ registered centre and, therefore, we partner with an exam centre to enter our students Tutors and Exams <https://www.tutorsandexams.uk>, to allow our pupils to sit GCSE and some Functional Skills exams on our own premises. We also recognise that GCSE's might not always suit the needs of *all* our students and as such, in line with our approach to a bespoke, individual and tailored curriculum for each student, there might be times where vocational qualifications might be more suited to the needs of the learner. To this end, we have partnered with National College of Further Education to deliver a range of different courses, such as some Functional Skills and Level 1 and 2 certificates in vocational subjects such as Cookery.

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### 1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### External Examinations

Headteacher - Responsibility for External Examinations - overall responsibility for the school to adhere to the policies and procedures of the exam centre (Tutors and Exams)

Head of SEND – Responsibility for accurate examination procedures in line with policies and procedures of the exam centre (Tutors and Exams)

Examinations Officer – administration of entries, relevant paperwork, organisation of examination session and examination dates, communication with the Tutors and Exams and the NCFE, collection and delivery of the examination papers under the procedures of Tutors and Exams. Ensuring that

VLC staff are fully trained as invigilators under the policies and procedures of the exam centre (Tutors and Exams).

### Functional Skills and Level 1 and 2 Certificate

Responsible Person – the Headteacher is responsible to NCFE and Tutors and Exams for making sure all controlled assessments are conducted in line with these Regulations.

Designated Person – the Headteacher must delegate a member of staff to be the Designated Person to lead on the administration of the assessments in line with these regulations and to support the administration of the assessments, which will be required for inspection purposes.

At VLC, the Principal appoints the Head of SEND and an Examinations Officer. These roles are distinct and separate.

## **2. ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS**

Such arrangements will be made through Tutors and Exams, in consultation with the school SENCO/relevant teaching assistants and the arrangement examinations will take place separately from the main exam room. Where a scribe or reader is deployed invigilators will be provided in accordance with JCQ regulations. All Teaching Assistants and internal invigilators will be trained in the examination procedures as set out by the JCQ through Tutors and Exams

## **3. REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR ACCREDITED COURSES AT VLC**

VLC ensures it has the correct administration in place for controlled assessment components for qualifications sat with both NCFE and Tutors and Exams.

The Regulations do not in any way affect VLC's responsibility for health, safety and safe working under current legislation and local government by-laws. These Regulations will ensure the integrity and security of the assessment are maintained at all times. Failure to comply with these Regulations will be addressed via the NCFE or Tutors and Exams Maladministration and Malpractice Policies.

### External Examinations

Theses will be administered in line with the policies and procedures of Tutors and Exams (please see appendix)

### **NCFE - Controlled Assessments**

The NCFE controlled assessments are assessments set by NCFE and Tutors and Exams and delivered by VLC internally. Controlled assessment is a form of internal assessment in which control levels are set for each stage of the assessment process:

- task setting
- task taking
- task marking

**Task setting: medium control:**

NCFE's Functional Skills controlled assessment tasks are set by NCFE following the requirements in the qualification and skills criteria.

**Task taking: high control:**

- NCFE's Functional Skills controlled assessments must be undertaken in controlled, supervised conditions
- Learners must be formally supervised at all times during their assessments. Preparatory work (where required by the task) may be completed with limited supervision. Details of supervision required will be given in the task instructions where relevant
- VLC will use the controlled assessment tasks set by NCFE, as well as the relevant assessment templates, when assessing learners
- If a resit is required, a **different** assessment must be attempted

**Task marking: medium control:**

- NCFE's Functional Skills controlled assessments allow VLC to mark the controlled assessment
- Assessments must be marked using the mark schemes provided by NCFE. Assessment decisions will be checked and confirmed by the VLC's Internal Quality Assurer and NCFE's External Quality Assurer
- The Assessor must record each assessment decision and the justification for the decision on the assessment front sheet

**Inspection/Observation of the Controlled Assessments**

NCFE reserves the right to carry out unannounced audit visits to confirm these Regulations are being adhered to and that VLC have policies and procedures in place for the delivery of NCFE controlled assessments.

**Malpractice, Plagiarism and Maladministration**

If at any time during an assessment there is a violation of Regulations, the Test invigilators or Designated Person has the right to stop the assessment immediately. This decision must only be made in exceptional circumstances where malpractice is irrefutable. Once stopped, no allowance can be given retrospectively if the decision is deemed invalid.

If malpractice or maladministration occurs during an assessment, we will inform NCFE / Tutors and Exams immediately with a report of what occurred using the Notification of Malpractice form.

If any of these Regulations are breached by a learner, Assessor or other person(s) involved in the conduct of the assessment, then NCFE may declare the assessment void.

In the event of a suspected or actual breach of these Regulations by learners:

1. The work completed by the learner(s) concerned and any unauthorised materials (if applicable) must be confiscated from the learner(s) and given to the Designated Person.
2. All learners suspected of breaching these Regulations should be instructed to leave the room

- immediately, if appropriate to do so, causing the least amount of disruption to other learners.
3. The Assessor should report the incident to the Designated Person as soon as possible.
  4. NCFE / Tutors and Exams should be informed immediately of any irregularity via phone call or email.
  5. VLC will conduct its own investigation into the incident and report the incident and their findings to our Quality Assurance team using the NCFE Notification of Malpractice document on the NCFE website (QualHub).

We acknowledge that NCFE reserves the right to investigate each case of alleged or actual maladministration/malpractice committed by a learner, Assessor or other person(s) involved in the conduct of the assessment in order to establish all of the facts and circumstances surrounding the case. The investigation will be carried out in accordance with NCFE's Maladministration and Malpractice Policy.

### **Ownership of Assessment Material**

All assessment material remains the property of NCFE

### **Accessing and storing the Assessment Materials**

VLC operates with due regard to the NCFE guidelines when accessing and storing assessment materials.

Controlled assessment materials are made available digitally from the beginning of each academic year.

Controlled assessment materials, or any part of, must not be emailed as they are live assessment materials, and the content must be kept secure and confidential by all staff members.

VLC will use the NCFE Assessment Tracking Document to ensure there is reliable tracking of the use of the controlled assessments per Assessor and learner.

The Examinations Officer is responsible for:

- the security and integrity of the assessments and associated materials (e.g used/unused assessment materials, partially or fully completed learner work, assessment tracking documents and the assessment documentation) at all times. This includes both electronically saved and printed materials. Access to this storage must be restricted to authorised personnel only
- ensuring VLC uses assessments from the current bank of live assessments as accessed above, and that the centre's internal policy is followed in terms of choosing assessment topics and enforcing a rotation across assessments available throughout the academic session
- ensuring material **is not** downloaded and/or printed more than 6 weeks prior to the scheduled assessment date/s then, once printed, that material is placed in the secure storage. Speaking, Listening and Communicating at Entry 3 to Level 2 scenario, topic and aim

of the discussions can be accessed 2 teaching weeks prior to the assessment date but no earlier to allow for sufficient preparation time

- having a process in place whereby the Assessor(s) can notify the Designated Person that they have learners ready to sit the assessment, then making the assessment materials available from a secure location
- ensuring that when materials are requested by Assessors, they are printed and stored in a packet(s)/envelopes that can be securely sealed until the day of the assessment
- completing the centre tracking document to ensure assessments assigned to learners are accurately recorded, which will inform resits, as a learner cannot re-sit the same paper
- submitting, or supporting the Assessor to submit, any requests for contextualised materials
- managing the secure destruction of all unused assessment materials, both printed and electronic, once assessments have taken place. Assessments must be accessed and printed again if required by a different learner, for resit or for a different cohort
- ensuring that any unauthorised centre personnel do not have access to the assessment materials or completed learner work
- ensuring assessment material isn't tampered with
- immediately informing NCFE's Assessment Delivery team if the integrity or security of the controlled assessment materials is put at risk by theft, loss, damage, unauthorised disclosure, fire or any other circumstances

#### 4. APPEALS

VLC will make reference to and apply the guidelines as set out in the NCFE and JCQ Appeals Policies.

The purpose of an appeal is to ascertain if the NCFE/JCQ have applied the correct processes, procedures and policies in a fair and consistent way. The appeals procedure will not comprise of:

- a reassessment of external assessments
- a review of assessment decisions
- a review of the content of External Quality Assurance visit reports
- an External Quality Assurance visit
- a change to a decision/sanction imposed
- a change to the centre's approval status.

NCFE will accept appeals based on the:

- outcome of an enquiry about results and assessment decision
- outcome of an application for reasonable adjustments or special consideration
- outcome of a maladministration or malpractice investigation
- outcome of a decision to impose a sanction resulting from a malpractice or maladministration investigation
- outcome of a review of an appeal (stage 1) decision
- termination of product and/or centre approval status for maladministration or malpractice, or termination for breach of Centre Agreement.

An appeal application must be submitted within 30 working days of receiving the original decision (or 30 calendar days for T Levels), the outcome of an enquiry or the outcome of a review of an appeal (stage 1).

VLC can submit an appeal on behalf of a learner or a group of learners, with their explicit written permission. Learners and/or their parents or legal guardians are not permitted to submit an appeal directly to NCFE.

**Full details are available from the NCFE and JCQ websites.**

## 5. CONTINGENCY AND ADVERSE EFFECTS

The NCFE publication on *External Assessment Contingency Planning* offers guidance on the contingency planning centres must carry out in advance of any external assessment to mitigate the impact of any potential disruption, and the steps NCFE may consider to minimise impact on learners.

Within this guidance, examples of disruption to consider includes, but is not limited to:

- Criminal activity (for example, bomb threat or cyber-attack)
- Supply shortages (for example, transport issues)
- Significant damage to centre property (for example, fire)
- Severe weather (for example, flooding)
- Public health incidents (for example, flu pandemic)
- Incidents within the local community
- Serious injury to a learner or member of staff.

**See Appendix A for VLC Contingency Planning documents**

### **Conflict of Interest regarding Examinations/ Accredited Courses**

This section provides an overview on the measures that can be used to manage a member of staff who has a conflict of interest. VLC must inform our Exams Centre Partners – Tutors and Exams, Coventry and the relevant awarding body of:

- Any members of staff who are taking qualifications at their own centre which include internally assessed components/ units (remember that other centres should be approached first- entering staff at the centre at which they work should be seen as a last resort)
- Any members of staff who are teaching and preparing members of their own family (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (eg. son/daughter) for qualifications which include internally assessed components/ units.

The centre must maintain clear records of all instances where:

- Exams office staff have members of their family (which includes step-family, foster family

and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (e.g. son/daughter) being entered for examinations and assessments either at the centre itself or other centres;

- Centre staff are taking qualifications at their centre which do not include internally assessed components/ units;
- Centre staff are taking qualifications at other centres.
- A Trustee/Director/Governor has a conflict of interest with their role at VLC and NCFE/JCQ and their connections to any other organisation(s).The Governor who has declared the conflict of interest shall withdraw from parts of the meeting at which there is discussion of any arrangement or transaction affecting that other organisation or person. The Governor who has the conflict of interest shall not vote on any such matter and is not to be counted when considering whether a quorum of Governors is present at the meeting.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to ensure that all conflicts of interest are reported and managed effectively, in order to protect the integrity of the examinations/ assessments concerned. Where internally assessed components/units are involved, any conflicts must be reported to the exam board.

The Head of Centre must manage these conflicts and have records readily available for inspection, for example should a visiting (NCFE/JCQ/or other Exam Awarding Body) inspector request to see them.

## 6. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

The Equality Act 2010 requires awarding organisations to make Reasonable Adjustments to ensure a learner who has a disability as defined in the Act are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to learners with no disabilities. Assessment should be a fair test of a learners' knowledge and what they are able to do, however, for some learners, the usual format of assessment may not be suitable.

The provision for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments are made to ensure that learners receive recognition of their achievement so long as the equity, validity and reliability of the assessments can be assured. Such arrangements are neither concessions to make assessments easier for learners, nor advantages to benefit the learners.

VLC staff adhere to the regulations and time frames for applications as set by both the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) in partnership with Tutors and Exams and the NCFE policies to ensure that the students who are eligible for Exam Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments receive the appropriate provision according to their normal way of working with us to meet their SEN.

As required VLC staff compile evidence for applications, to meet the regulations such as:

- An EHC Plan
- Education Psychologist Report

- Other Clinical Professional Report
- Specialist Assessor Report
- SENDCo statement demonstrating context and normal way of working.
- Previous assessments and mock examination scripts completed by the individual students.

Where an application is made for Special Consideration or an Access Arrangement and Reasonable Adjustments, with either the JCQ through Tutors and Exams or the NCFE; students and their parents are involved in the discussion and sign a permission form for specialist assessment if needed and give their agreement on a data protection form.

The Headteacher must have records and evidence readily available for inspection, for example should a visiting (JCQ / or other Exam Awarding Body) inspector request to see them.

It is the responsibility of the SENCo and/or appropriately qualified assessor, with support from relevant delivery staff (i.e. teachers, tutors etc) to lead on the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments within their centre. Annual training is carried out in partnership with Tutors and Exams for all staff involved in delivery of examined and accredited courses. The SENCo and/or appropriate person ensures all support staff and exams personnel put in place the required Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments for all appropriate internal tests, mock external assessments, and external assessments.

Learners and their parents/carers are made aware and are fully involved in any decisions about Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments available and applied to the learners.

In the ***NCFE Guidance on Applying Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*** VLC staff will make reference to:

- The provided but non-exhaustive list of Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, along with practical advice and guidance on how each should be applied.
- The permissions tables within the guidance document when applying Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.
- Centre delegated adjustments which may be implemented by centres for both internal and external assessment components without prior notification to NCFE.
- The permissions table within the same document for details on whether prior notification to NCFE is required and/or supporting evidence of need is required within centre for inspection purposes.
- The regulation that any arrangements put in place must reflect a learner's normal way of working.
- The evidence requirements of individual learning needs or medical condition(s). That the evidence is current and reflects a learner's normal way of working.

NCFE Policy for Access Arrangements states:

*All supporting evidence of learner need must be retained by the centre. This must be made available to NCFE upon request for inspection purposes. Inspections may be completed remotely either by the NCFE Quality Assurance team, during a pre-arranged external quality assurance visit or unannounced assessment audit visit. Where a centre is storing Access Arrangements*



*documentation electronically, they must create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection.*

*On-site inspection visits will be completed by any of the following: External Quality Assurers, Assessment Audit Advisors, or other appropriate NCFE staff.*

*In the case of an appeal, you must ensure that evidence to support an Access Arrangement or Reasonable Adjustment is securely kept and produced upon request.*

*Learner personal data consent Prior to notifying NCFE of a learner's required Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments, centres must ensure the learner in question has provided their written and signed consent to their personal data being processed. This must be retained by a centre (for not less than 2 years) and must be available to NCFE upon request for inspection purposes. Please refer to the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments for further details on capturing and recording learner personal data consent.*

**Appeals:** *The 'NCFE will keep a record of all Access Arrangement and Reasonable Adjustment requests received and will contact centres to inspect learner evidence on an ongoing basis to ensure any Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments applied are valid. NCFE will decide when inspections will be completed and, in some cases, this may be after an external assessment has been completed by a learner requiring Access Arrangement and Reasonable adjustments. Supporting evidence of learner need must be made available to NCFE upon request for inspection purposes. Inspections may be completed remotely by the NCFE Quality Assurance team, during a prearranged external quality assurance visit or unannounced assessment audit visit. Following the inspection of learner evidence, NCFE holds the right to disqualify a learner from a previously completed assessment or cancel a learner certificate, if it is proven that Access Arrangement and Reasonable Adjustments were applied without valid supporting evidence of learner need. 4.7 Appeals If you or your learners do not believe we have applied this policy correctly in a fair and consistent way, you may submit an appeal in line with our Appeals Policy, which is available on the (NCFE) website.*

## **7. PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE ACT (WHISTLEBLOWING) – APPENDIX A**

In the case of a member of teaching staff, admin staff or an Invigilator suspecting any malpractice in examinations or assessments the JCQ guidance for Public Interest Disclosure Act (Whistleblowing) should be followed. This document is available on the VLC website in conjunction with the Examination Policy

## **8. LINKED POLICIES AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE OR ON REQUEST**

- Safeguarding
- Health and Safety
- Risk Assessments
- Data Protection

- Equality and Diversity
- SEND Policy and Information Report

## APPENDIX A:

### Contingency Planning

Situation	Considerations and possible mitigations
<b>Staffing emergencies</b> eg. Invigilator or T.A are unable to fulfil their duties in an external assessment	We have a wide, flexible team, consisting of trained teachers and trained TAs. All staff are JCQ invigilator trained. Staff who are part time can be contacted to assist if needed.
<b>Issues with the assessment room, site, or location</b> eg. assessment room unexpectedly unavailable	We have many rooms available to facilitate assessments. We also have two sister sites, each with suitable rooms. We also rent a local building should the need arise. Staff will ensure the validity and integrity of the exam, and keep to all JCQ procedures if alternative spaces are used. All changes and measures put in place will be recorded in line with JCQ guidelines. Where issues cannot be avoided, staff will prioritise learners whose progression would be limited should they be unable to complete the assessment.
<b>Medical emergencies during an external assessment</b> eg. learner takes ill immediately before or during the assessment	All staff are first aid trained, the Business Manager is responsible for health and safety of staff and students. If a student is ill, we will provide a different room and flex around the needs of learners to minimise disruption. Any unusual circumstances will be recorded for reporting and special consideration where appropriate.
<b>Severe weather conditions</b> eg. heavy snow or flooding which impacts learners and/or centre	Students who are late to the assessment due to severe weather conditions or issues with transport that are outside of their control, will be allowed entry to the assessment up to a certain time frame. Students and parents all keep in close communication with the office and any delays will be notified through the admin team.
<b>Public health incidents</b> eg. a flu pandemic	We have a full COVID-19 procedure in place, and this will remain in place until otherwise instructed by the DfE or PHE in any future pandemic threats.
<b>Centre closure</b>	The assessment will either be moved to an alternative site, staff

<p>eg. a localised threat or extreme circumstance which leaves the centre buildings inaccessible</p>	<p>will maintain all JCQ invigilator protocols when moving assessment material, alternatively the date will be altered in accordance to NCFE guidelines. External assessments will be calendared into the school term and various points, such as the Spring term and Summer term. All changes and measures taken will be recorded and reported to NCFE and JCQ in accordance with their regulations.</p>
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**NCFE Consideration Table**

	<p><b>Set date and time assessment</b></p>	<p><b>Windowed assessment</b></p>	<p><b>On demand assessment</b></p>
<p><b>Negligible disruption</b> Slight disruption that does not impact the assessment</p>	<p>Continue assessment as scheduled</p>	<p>Continue assessment as scheduled</p>	<p>Continue assessment as scheduled</p>
<p><b>Minor disruption</b> A slight disruption impacting a single or small group of learners</p>	<p>Consider a delay to the start time of the assessment by up to 30 mins.</p>	<p>Consider a delay to the centre scheduled session or rescheduling within the allowed assessment window.</p>	<p>Continue assessment as scheduled, with option to flex start time until learners arrive.</p>
<p><b>Moderate disruption</b> A modest disruption that impacts several learners or centres</p>	<p>Continue the assessment where possible. Consider a delay to the start time of the assessment, or if known in advance, consider an Assessment Variation Request. Learners may be eligible for a Special Consideration if the disruption is within scope.</p>	<p>Continue the assessment where possible. Consider rescheduling the centre scheduled session to later within the allowed assessment window. If this is not possible, consider an Assessment Variation Request. Learners may be eligible for a Special Consideration if the disruption is within scope.</p>	<p>Continue the assessment as scheduled, with flexibility to start time until learners arrive.</p>
<p><b>Major disruption</b></p>	<p>Continue the</p>	<p>Continue the</p>	<p>Consider cancelling</p>

<p>A regional disruption that impacts multiple learners and centres</p>	<p>assessment where possible. Consider a delay to the start time of the assessment, or if known in advance, consider an Assessment Variation Request. Learners may be eligible for a special consideration if the disruption is within scope. Look for further instruction from government, regulators and NCFE.</p>	<p>assessment where possible. Consider rescheduling the centre scheduled session to later within the allowed assessment window. If this is not possible consider a Assessment Variation Request. Learners may be eligible for a Special Consideration if the disruption is within scope. Look for further instruction from government, regulators and NCFE.</p>	<p>and rebooking assessments for a later date. Look for further instruction for government regulators and NCFE.</p>
<p><b>Severe disruption</b> Significant national disruption, impacting all learners and centres</p>	<p>Await further instruction from government, regulators and NCFE</p>	<p>Await further instruction from government, regulators and NCFE</p>	<p>Consider cancelling and rebooking assessments for a later date, and await further instruction from government, regulators and NCFE</p>