



Business & Computing Examinations (BCE)

LONDON (UK)

BCE Assessment Procedures

It is important that our Assessment Policy is consistent to all centers and applied across all qualifications. However, the assessment panel has the discretion to make rulings in special cases or exceptional circumstances.

Procedures to be followed are:

1. **Providing adequate time for examination dates.** Exam dates, including exam fees, coursework deadlines should be scheduled well in advanced. Exam fee deadlines should leave enough time for Programme Development Manager to prepare and check printed exam questions and enable exam papers to be sent on time.
2. **Submission of tasks.** It must be made clear to candidates what format is required (i.e. electronic) and also acceptance deadline. Learners should sign when they submit coursework.
3. **Learners who hand in coursework late.** To maintain standards, no coursework should be accepted after deadline, however, sometimes exceptions apply (see reasonable adjustments policy).
4. **Procedures to be followed when dealing with malpractice.** The following contain what constitutes malpractice, including plagiarism, and how Centres and BCE staff will act should they become aware of any form of malpractice brought to their attention.

Malpractice is any activity undertaken by a learner that allows them to gain an unfair advantage over others. It includes, but not limited to:

- Copying someone else's work in part or in whole, and presenting it as their own
- Using material directly from books, student manuals, journals, CDs or the internet without reference to the source
- Building on the ideas of another person without reference to the source
- Buying, stealing or borrowing another person's work and presenting it as their own
- Submitting work to which another person such as a parent, tutor or subject expert has contributed substantially
- Paying someone to write or prepare material
- Breaching examination rules
- Contriving false explanations to explain work not handed in by the due date
- Assisting another candidate to engage in malpractice

[For more information, see Malpractice and Maladministration Policy]

If the malpractice is proven zero-mark should be considered for the task.

5. **Strategies taken to ensure authenticity of learner responses to tasks completed outside class time.** These include:
 - Providing advice to learners on what constitutes malpractice and how to avoid it
 - Thoroughly briefing all learners in relation to the requirements of each task
 - Allocating class time to the planning of a response to a task
 - Requiring that learners maintain a process diary or journal to show how their response or project was developed
 - Incorporating learner oral presentations on the progress of their work
 - Communicating clearly to candidates the extent of tutor, other expert or outside involvement permitted in the development of the work.
6. **Guidelines for maintaining secure records of all marked assessments.** Marks for each individual assessment are recorded and updated to a database system. Procedures exist for protection of data in the event of fire, theft or other misadventure. These procedures include having a centrally-filed electronic copy of the marks and duplicates stored off-site.
7. **Procedures for dealing with learners not studying at centres.** BCE qualifications can be class-based or distance learning. However, those undertaking distance learning have to use an Approved Centre to sit for their assessments and should adhere to BCE exam fee deadline dates

8. **Procedures for dealing with learners who want to finish their qualification quicker than centre stated duration.** This is left to centres to make their own decisions. However, minimum recommended hours should be fulfilled.
9. **Procedures for monitoring satisfactory completion of a qualification.** Centres have responsibility to make sure learners meet the assessment requirements in a qualification. A learner will be considered to have satisfactorily completed a qualification if, in the Centre Head's view, there is sufficient evidence that the learner has:
- Followed the qualification developed and endorsed by BCE
 - Applied themselves with diligence and sustained effort to the set tasks and experiences provided in the qualification by the Centre
 - Achieved all of the qualification outcomes

BCE policy also require centres to produces plan of work and email registers once a month to BCE.

While BCE does not stipulate attendance requirements, Centre Heads may determine that, as a result of absence, the qualification completion criteria may not be met. Clearly, absences should be regarded seriously by Centre Heads who must give learners early warning of the consequences of such absences.

10. **Procedures for conducting reviews of final examination marks and appeals to BCE.** Disputes typically arise over marks awarded sometimes. BCE reduces the possibility of disputes arising by:
- Providing clear instructions and expectations for each assessment
 - Providing clear criteria for marking
 - Administering a task simultaneously to all centres studying the same qualification
 - By communicating the assessment guidelines of both written assessments and coursework
 - Checking that examinations questions and coursework conforms with the learning outcomes

BCE has a committee to settle exam or centre disputes. The committee is careful constituted and ensures that evidence from all affected parties is heard. Learners should be aware of the grounds for such an appeal, and the closing date for submissions. (see Appeals Policy for more information)

11. **Procedures for conducting centre reviews of BCE examinations and the assessment process.** Centres need to be aware that every year, a seminar is held to assess weaknesses or obstacles in the assessment process. It is important for centres to attend mandatory training. Centres are also required to submit Centre Annual Report.
12. **Communicating the policy – how BCE make learners and centres aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding assessment.** All BCE policies are published on the website. This is designed to assist everybody understand their responsibilities in relation to the BCE examinations.
13. **Evaluating policies – who monitors and reviews the assessment programs.** BCE has a Review Panel that convenes to evaluate polices, procedures and lines of communication at least once a year and when ever need arises. BCE also has Quality Assurance which monitors BCE Centre Programs and provide advice where required. The Assessment Panel conducts Standardisation meetings before each BCE Assessment window.
14. **What are the features of quality assessment tasks.** The following list assist centres to ensure that the tasks they design promote learning as well as obtaining accurate measures of learner achievement. Assessment tasks should:
- Focus on learning outcomes
 - Give learners the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and assist their learning
 - Be valid and reliable, measuring what the task purports to assess, and providing accurate information on each candidate's achievement

Feedback and reporting on candidate progress and achievement should be:

- Meaningful and constructive, designed to assist candidates to improve their performance
- Linked to the specific learning outcomes and marking criteria addressed by the task
- Provided in a timely manner

For

- BCE Assurance Services and Standards;

- BCE Quality Control;
 - BCE Quality Management;
 - BCE Qualification and Performance Specification Criteria;
 - Assessment Quality Assurance Policy.
- see Accreditation Handbook sections 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 6.4 respectively.

15. **How will the qualification outline components given in curriculum documents be incorporated into the final written exam and coursework.** Examination questions are set based on intended learning outcome and assessment criteria components. Each qualification has a set of Student Manuals Centres can obtain from BCE for a small fee. Each qualification also has a set of recommended text books centres can buy from any bookshop. It is up to the centres to determine various ways of checking tutors plan for their work and learners are given exercises and assignments relating to the learning outcomes.

There should be a balance between the assessment of knowledge and understanding outcomes and qualification content, and skills outcomes and qualification content.

16. **Procedures in place to ensure that the qualification assessment components given in the specification are adhered to in the summative exam.** BCE has an Assessment Panel to oversee such matters. The responsible assessment staff have to meet and discuss each exam paper before publication.

Also, for each qualification, there are recommended BCE Student Manuals used in setting examinations which centres should use as cross-reference manual.

17. **Learner's rights and responsibilities.** In relation to BCE examinations, candidates have the right to:

- Be informed of the examination policies
- Receive clear guidelines relating to the requirements of each examination and coursework
- Receive meaningful feedback from the tutor that assists them to review their work
- Access to all relevant information from BCE website easily. The website is very simplified (lots of text and less graphics for easy download even to those using basic internet speeds).

Learners have a responsibility to:

- Follow the examination requirements set by BCE
- Complete all coursework on time
- Avoid behaviour which could be considered cheating, including plagiarism, and ensure that all assessment work is your own and contains acknowledgement of the contribution of others

Why does honesty matter to BCE

BCE examinations are well-respected and widely recognised educational credentials, used by many learners to help them gain employment and access further education. Cheating is absolutely unacceptable, as it undermines the integrity of the qualification. It distorts legitimate measures of a learner's achievements, leading to inaccurate reporting and disadvantages to other learners.

Why do learners cheat and what are the consequences?

Some learners cheat because they are under pressure. They can be under pressure because they have not organised their time and feel they have to take shortcuts to meet the examination requirements. Others are under pressure because they are trying to achieve unrealistic academic goals. Some cheat because they don't understand the seriousness of what they are doing and tell themselves it does not matter. Some learners cheat accidentally because they do not understand plagiarism.

Cheating in examinations has serious consequences. Learners receive zero marks for their examinations. Once the Centre finds out a candidate cheated, they are not allowed to accept coursework from those involved. Apart from anything else, if a candidate is caught cheating, they are likely to lose the trust and respect of their fellow learners.

BCE treats cheating in written examinations and coursework very seriously and take measures to deal with candidates who are caught. Depending on the circumstances of the case, one or more of the following apply:

- Zero marks will be awarded for part or all of the examination
- Candidates may be suspended and may not be allowed to sit for further BCE examinations for a given period.

[For more information, see BCE Malpractice/Maladministration Policy]