



Business & Computing Examinations (BCE)

LONDON (UK)

BCE Code of Practice

Strategic Purpose

The Code of Practice is based upon the recognition that the quality of BCE qualifications assessment together with the integrity of candidate results is dependent on a partnership between the BCE and Centres.

We have a mandate to “*assure the quality and suitability of processes and standards to assess candidate examinations*”.

The responsibilities defined in the Code of Practice are based on the policies and procedures that BCE has approved for qualifications development and assessment management, Centre procedures and the integrity of both BCE and Approved Centre activities.

The Chief Executive Officer is accountable for ensuring that BCE policies and procedures, the consequential responsibilities of BCE and Centre processes and their integrity, are managed fairly, ethically and consistently.

BCE policies and procedures specify the responsibilities that centres, through the Centre Head/Principal, fulfil the requirement of learner learning in BCE Qualifications and assurance of the integrity assessment monitoring/investigating for which the Centre staff are responsible.

*The following **shared responsibility** principles underpin the Code of Practice:*

Centres, other education providers, and BCE are partners in managing the procedures for assuring the integrity of BCE assessment.

Ethical standards and accountability

Procedures for assuring the integrity of BCE assessment are fair, ethical, open to scrutiny, managed and administered with the highest standards.

Comparability

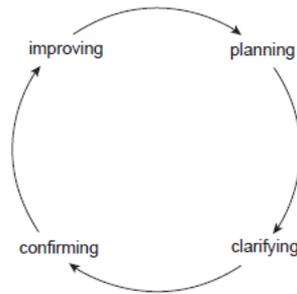
BCE assessment maximise the consistent application of standards to all learner assessment across all places of learning.

Functionality, manageability and fitness for purpose

Procedures for the integrity of BCE assessment are operationally manageable and are cost effective for centres, other education providers, and BCE.

Quality Assurance Process Cycle

BCE is ultimately responsible and accountable for the quality and integrity of assessment and reporting of candidate achievements. BCE through its oversight and direct involvement in qualification development and assessment management, provide centres with procedures and other assistance to support the quality assurance processes. BCE recognises that this quality is achieved through cooperation and understanding between BCE and Centres. We have organised quality assurance processes into a four-phase cycle: **planning, clarifying, confirming, and improving.**



Planning

BCE

In the planning phase, procedures, resources, delivery strategy for all functional units are devised to enable BCE set out its vision and strategy for shaping qualifications development, assessment management, operational management and supervision of Approved Centres.

Centre

In the planning phase, teaching, learning, and assessment opportunities are devised to enable learners to demonstrate their learning against all aspects and levels of the performance standards. Tutors prepare a teaching and learning programme and develop a learning and teaching strategy plan. BCE prepares for assessment provisions.

Clarifying

In the clarifying phase, both Centres and BCE personnel gain an understanding of the performance standards/objectives and how to apply them consistently.

Confirming

In the confirming phase, the performance standards are applied consistently both at Centres and BCE.

BCE uses the following methods among others;

- BCE qualifications development process
- BCE assessment management process
- Policies
- General Condition of Recognition
- Internal Operations/Processes
- Planning policy
- Strategic plan

Centres use the following methods among others;

- Centre Assessment Policy
- Centre Complaints Management
- Learning Resources & Learning Environment
- Teaching & Learning Strategy
- Supporting Robust and Fair Assessment
- BCE Assessment Procedures
- Approved Centre Management Principles
- Supervision and enforcement strategies

The consistent application of the performance standards occurs through the marking exam scripts and coursework, and grading determination panel processes.

Improving

In the improving phase both Centres and BCE quality assurance processes are monitored and analysed to develop improvement strategies. BCE uses;

- data and feedback from Centres to improve procedures
- operational management and evaluation workpapers
- annual reviews
- functional unit analysis
- risk management / contingency plan logs
- Board of Advisor recommendations
- Auditor recommendations
- Chief Examinations Officer and External Verifier reports
- Complaints tracking sheet

BCE advise centres to design methods which enable them to monitor and review each phase of their own quality assurance processes. Quality assurance processes may vary from one centre to another, depending on the number of tutors of each unit, the number of units offered at the centre, and the structures within the centre.

BCE and Centres' Strategic Intent

- Principles and Practices for Assessment
- Quality Assurance of Qualifications
- Provision of High-Quality Assessment Processes
- Shared Roles and Responsibilities
- Commitment to Code of Practice in Action

Principles and Practices for Assessment

1. Ensure procedures, strategies and systems (in compliance with legislation and regulation)
2. Outline management and administrative systems
3. Ensure assessment instruments are: a) effective b) fit for purpose c) reliable d) valid e) fair f) transparent
4. Engage in staff development and training
5. Outline enquiries, customer charter, complaints management and appeals' procedures

Quality Assurance of Qualifications

[see Quality Assurance of Qualifications section of Quality Assurance Policy]

Provision of High-Quality Assessment Processes

[see BCE Assessment Management Principles D015f/g section of Operational Management & Evaluation Workpapers]

Shared Roles and Responsibilities of BCE and Approved Centres

In an effort to help these stakeholder bodies understand what is involved in supporting assessment operations, we have broken down the basic roles and responsibilities to provide a more focused and value-added service by both BCE and Approved Centres.

Both BCE and Approved Centres have an obligation to maintain the integrity of BCE qualifications and assessments.

BCE Responsibilities

BCE, through the Chief Executive, fulfils the following responsibilities for BCE qualification development, assessment management and their integrity.

- a. Secure standards by setting clear requirements for our qualification development/assessment management design, delivery and award of BCE qualifications.
- b. Protect learners, candidates and Centres by making sure all are treated fairly.
- c. Promote efficiency within the qualifications and assessment sector.

- BCE recognises the importance of candidate learning demonstrated in fair and acceptable environment that are accredited, monitored, and quality assured by regulatory agencies, institutions, local authorities, and other organisations.
- Provides assessment that are commensurate with the nature, scope and complexity of the BCE Qualification Level.
- Develops, maintains and continually reviews BCE qualifications development and assessment management in collaboration with industry skill requirements and technology.
- Builds strategic alliances with key organisations to promote entrance into work placements and progression routes to further education.

BCE Assessment

- Provide the policy framework for learning, assessment management and design.
- Ensure each unit defines the learning requirements, assessment types and performance standards against which candidates provide evidence of their learning.
- Provide policies and procedures that assure the fairness, quality and integrity of BCE assessment and that they occur in an ethical manner, including the Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration policy, supervision and enforcement, verification and authentication of learners' work policies and procedures and Ethical Conduct.
- Provide support materials that develop tutors' understanding of learning and assessment design.
- Provide professional development programmes in assessment.
- Provide procedures for monitoring centre invigilation process.
- Report candidates' results with Distinction, Merit, Pass and Fail in accordance to the actual exam mark for each unit.

BCE Assessment Integrity

Planning

- Prepare, publish, and provide advice for the preparation of learning and assessment management plans.
- Provide exemplars of learning and assessment plans and candidate manuals to assist tutors to appreciate both the range of evidence possible and the standard.
- Provide exemplars of assessment tasks.
- Advise centres on teaching and learning strategy, assessment procedures, examination regulations and centre internal assessments as stated BCE policies, procedures and other documents.

Clarifying

- Collect and publish good practice in assessment tasks, learning and assessment plans, and sampling of assessed candidate work.
- Prepare and publish procedures for the integrity assessment.
- Provide strategies for standards clarification.

Confirming

- Manage the marks of examination scripts and coursework.
- Manage verification of sampled examination scripts and coursework.
- Manage the standardisation to ensure performance standards are applied consistently across centres.
- Monitor the authenticity of candidates' material submitted for assessment and appropriately intervening where necessary.
- Analyse the statistical relationship between Centre marked statistics and different assessor group assessment components to identify where unexpected or anomalous data can be explained or resolved to ensure the integrity of each component.

- Manage candidate or other sources that may launch a grievance over management of the procedures of assuring the integrity of BCE assessment.
- Manage any appeal a candidate may have about BCE assessment results and confirms that grievances are handled according to BCE's policies and procedures.

Improving

- Facilitate communication between BCE and the Centres about BCE assessment and quality assurance.
- Prepare and distribute to each centre assessment results and exam report feedback that enables the centre to analyse and interpret their candidates' results and to use the data and feedback to strengthen the use of performance standards in their teaching.
- Use the outcome of each year's assessment cycle to analyse and improve its procedures for assuring the integrity of BCE assessment and to apply these improvements to the next cycle.

BCE Roles and Responsibilities

1. Report candidate assessment results as per our policies.
2. Produce result slips showing each unit assessment % mark.
3. Produce each Centre Examination Report to help centres advice candidates on future examinations or those re-sitting.
4. Keep Contingency and Risk Management logs to help in learning from past occurrences/incidents.
5. Maintain complaints management logs and review them annually.
6. Act on completed questionnaires from centres and learners and also on Exam Invigilation comments.
7. Ensure sanctions apply to centres and candidates involved in malpractice and centres that fail to attend mandatory annual training sessions. Ensure Centres who violets the integrity of assessment will be dealt with according to our Sanctions Policy.
8. Ensure centre training sessions cater for both centre staff and tutors.
9. Produce (i) a published Exam Time Table (ii) distributed internal Assessment Calendar.
10. Provide each centre with the Accreditation Handbook.
11. Publish all important information on BCE website, including:
 - a. BCE Policies
 - b. Accreditation Handbook
 - c. Procedures and other documents
 - d. Forms
 - e. a marquee on home page highlighting changes/current issues
12. Ensure all BCE assessment are externally assessed
13. Receive feedback from centres and take into consideration recommendations
14. Keep a databank of question to enable swift reaction in the event assessment questions being breached.
15. Ensure BCE retains candidate scripts and coursework for a reasonable period to allow for the possibilities of enquiries on results or appeal.
16. Analyse qualitative and quantitative evidence

Qualitative evidence

- a. copies of question papers
- b. examiners reports
- c. archive candidate scripts and course work (for a period of 1 year)
- d. performance descriptions
- e. marking guidelines

Quantitative evidence

- a. statistical analysis
- b. comparable numbers between current and previous year

- c. information on centres
17. Issue examination results as per stated period in our policy, including:
 - (i) maintaining a record of all certificates and replacement certificates issued
 - (ii) meet any dates or timescales in respect of marking examinations and issuing certificates
18. Ensure all candidate assessment scripts and coursework are moderated by External Verifiers before result slips and certificates are printed.
19. Fulfil our responsibility in catering for learners with particular requirements as follows:
 - a. train centres on Reasonable Adjustment, and Special Consideration and Access Arrangement
 - b. ensure our policy on Reasonable Adjustment entails:
 - (i) permanent (long-term) disability or medical condition
 - (ii) temporary (long-term) disability or medical condition
 - (iii) illness or unforeseen incidents
 - (iv) where first language is not English
20. Maintain a monitoring and reporting mechanism on centres including allegations of malpractice.
21. Ensure procedures are in place for dealing with malpractice allegations relating to learners, centre staff and all those involved in BCE assessment
22. Ensure arrangements are in place for enquiries about results and for appeals.
23. Ensure Centres have the following arrangements:
 - a. delivery of BCE qualification in accordance with Equalities law
 - b. complaints handling procedures or appeal process for learners
 - c. robust formative assessment procedures
 - d. withdrawal (voluntary or not) process from BCE qualifications and reasonable steps to protect interest of learners
 - e. contingency plans/risk log and incident report mechanisms

Centre Integrity

Planning

- Develop learning and teaching strategies for each unit taught at the centre according to the unit outline.
- Implement feedback on learning and teaching strategies.
- Provide an addendum (as appropriate) to the learning and teaching strategies as learners' learning needs emerge during the teaching of a unit.

Clarifying

- Develop centre procedures to maintain a consistent approach to assessing learners' evidence of learning through the use of performance standards.
- Develop centre procedures to assure the fairness, quality and integrity in formative assessment and to ensure they occur in an ethical manner, e.g. ensuring authenticity of learner homework material, or granting learners special consideration to learners in distress.
- Support relevant tutors' participation in standards clarifying activities.
- Develop centre procedures that strengthen the consistent understanding and application of performance standards.

Confirming

- Ensure the quality of internal assessment practices within the centre.
- Ensure learner material submitted are subject to scrutiny and centre has procedures for verifying the authenticity of learner work.
- Support tutors' participation in moderation and internal assessment activities.
- Submit authorised candidate exam requests list on time.

- Ensure relevant required information is conveyed accurately to BCE including learner registers and end of topic questions.
- Ensure regular monitoring of tutors and staff including performance reviews are incorporated in centre accountability framework.
- In the first instance address any learner or parent grievances with the processes and practices associated with assuring the integrity of centre's operations.

Improving

- Analyse the results of the centre's learners to identify where assistance and support may be provided in the centre's learning and teaching strategy.
- Use the outcomes of each year's assessment cycle to analyse and improve its procedures for assuring the integrity of both centre formative and BCE summative assessments.

BCE Approved Centre Terms & Conditions

[see Form CMF002]

Commitment to Code of Practice in Action

Both BCE and Centres should demonstrate their commitment to the Code of Practice in the following ways:

BCE Candidate enrolments

The Centre Head/Principal's registration of learners qualification enrolments at the start of each intake and BCE's acceptance of these enrolments are taken to signify each organisation's commitment to the Code of Practice.

Centre submission of exam candidate assessment details

The Centre Head/Principal's submission of candidate exam number request sheets to BCE in preparation of each exam period will then be followed by an invoice from BCE affirming the total number of candidates expected to sit for examinations in accordance with the BCE's invoicing and pricing policies and procedures. Once BCE receives candidate examination fees should make a commitment to serve them in accordance with policies and standards.

Grievance Protocols

The BCE Chief Executive and the Centre Head/Principal act according to the protocols for dealing with grievances candidates/learners may raise about the conduct of assessments or services as they apply to their respective organisations.

Appeals Protocol

The BCE Chief Executive and Centre Head/Principal act according to the protocol for dealing with appeals which candidates/learners may make against the decision about a grievance.

Investigation Protocols

The BCE Chief Executive and the Centre Head/Principal act according to the protocols whereby each investigates any significant departure from their policies and procedures for assuring integrity.

As stated at the outset, the purpose of the Code of Practice is to serve as a guide to the professional conduct responsibilities of both BCE and Centres.

The Code is intended to serve as an educational function: to inform and remind those involved in educational assessment, of their obligations to uphold the integrity of the manner in which assessments are developed, used, evaluated, and marketed. Moreover, it is expected that the Code will stimulate thoughtful discussion of what constitutes professionally responsible assessment practice at all levels.