Blended Learning Policy 2020-21

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1. Introduction

1.1 The College has a positive policy of equality and diversity and strives to support students where ever possible. Teaching and learning strategies, including the use of blended learning, will be tailored to the needs of students and their study programmes.

1.2 The principles and processes set out in this policy are intended to facilitate access to and participation in education, and to ensure a high quality, reliable and inclusive learning experience for all learners taking part in programmes which include blended delivery.

1.3 The College will make every effort to ensure that students are given every opportunity to access online content in order to study, provided it can ensure its safeguarding commitment to the whole college community.

2. Purpose of the Policy

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the College's operating principles and processes which apply to the development, delivery and monitoring of programmes of study leading to an award, wholly or in part, delivered through blended learning.

3. Aims of the Policy

3.1 To ensure that blended learning delivery meets the guidelines set by awarding organisations.

3.2 To ensure that assessment methodology is valid, reliable and does not disadvantage any group or individual learners.

3.3 To prepare students for the needs of today and their future working lives where the curriculum and/or their employment require them to learn how to locate, retrieve and exchange information using a variety of technologies.

4. Scope of Policy

4.1 This policy applies to all students irrespective of their method of application or enrolment or their type of study including those on further education, higher education and apprenticeship programmes, studying either full-time or part-time.

4.2 This policy supports the College in developing flexible learning opportunities in professional and continuing education programmes.

4.3 The College's Online Safety Policy sets out the College's approach and expectations with regards to online behaviour and session protocols.

5. Definitions

5.1 Blended learning is a formal approach to education that creates an integrated learning environment where face-to-face and online teaching and learning become complementary, with the purpose of giving learners a more diverse and engaging learning experience.

5.2 Distance learning is where learners are recruited and enrolled online and study independently using virtual learning environments – for example via online courses, postal resources and telephone/online support.

5.3 Online teaching and learning can be in the form of a live lesson (normally as per the timetable) where a teacher is present and delivers a full session online. The lesson will follow a similar structure to a classroom lesson with tutor delivery, student discussion, Q&A, assessment and feedback of learning.

5.4 Alternatively online teaching and learning can be in the form of independent study tasks, this does not involve students attending live face to face or online lessons as per their timetable. Examples of activities that could be conducted in their remote learning aspect of the course could include pre reading, research tasks, watching clips and answering questions, assignment work and small group work (without teacher present).

6. Principles

6.1 The College will:
- Ensure that teaching/delivery/assessment staff are timetabled to support blended learning when learners are working remotely;
- Ensure there is a process to manage feedback on assignments, questions are constructively answered, and feedback is provided in a timely manner;
- Ensure the setting of assignments is undertaken in face-to-face sessions and that deadlines are clear;

- Ensure that when learners submit work measures are taken to ensure the work is authentic and has been completed by the learner;
- Maintain and store securely all assessment and internal verification records in accordance with awarding body requirements.

7. Operating Principles

7.1 Teachers and learning support staff are timetabled to support blended learning when learners are working remotely

7.2 Feedback on assignments will be provided in a timely manner in accordance with the College's Assessment Policy.

7.3 The setting of assignments will be undertaken in face-to-face sessions and deadlines and submission format will be made clear to learners.

7.4 Staff will be required with support and training relevant to their needs.

7.5 Measures to prevent and detect any instances of malpractice which may arise due to the different delivery/assessment methods chosen will be implemented in accordance with the College's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

7.6 When learners submit work, evidence to ensure that the work is authentic and has been completed by the learner will be recorded. Learners are made aware of the need to ensure they avoid any forms of malpractice (for example plagiarism) and the consequences should they commit it during induction, as set out in the College's induction plan.

7.7 Where students are unable to access digital resources as a result of "digital poverty" the College will support the student in accessing relevant technologies and/or alternative resources tailored to their individual and course needs.

7.8 Teachers and managers should consult with awarding bodies directly for courses intended to be delivered as distance learning and/or distance assessment prior to delivery of such courses, e.g. online courses.

7.9 Except in exceptional circumstances, for example where a student or cohort is required to move to remote delivery for a period as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, blended delivery should not account for more than half of a learner's programme of study.

7.10 Students with identified additional needs will access online learning with support from the Learning Support Assistants. The Learning Support Assistants will join online lessons to offer support, in the same way as they support students in the classroom. Some students with additional needs will be able to access support in college.

7.11 The quality of blended learning delivery will be assessed and assured in accordance with the College's Quality Cycle.

8. Data Protection

8.1 The College will comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) by ensuring that personal data collected in relation to this policy is: -

- Collected and processed lawfully, fairly and transparently for only specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes. Further processing for archiving purposes in the public interest, research purposes or statistical purposes shall not be considered to be incompatible with the initial purposes.
- Adequate, updated and relevant and not excessive for the purposes it was collected.
- Processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures. Including not being transferred to a country outside the European Economic Area, unless that country has equivalent levels of protection for personal data.
- Kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed. Personal data may be stored for longer periods solely for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes subject to implementation of the appropriate technical and organisational measures required by the GDPR in order to safeguard the rights and freedoms of individuals.

9. Confidentiality

9.1 The Data Protection Act and GDPR are not only restrictions on disclosure of information about the College, they are bound by a common law duty of confidentiality. This duty prevents the College from releasing information about students, without their consent. This duty applies to manual records as well as information held on computers.

9.2 Information which must be treated as confidential includes the names and addresses of students and any other information about them which is not publicly known, i.e. "personal data". Accordingly, to ensure that the College does not breach its duty, no information, even if it only exists in printed form, should be disclosed unless all the relevant procedures have been followed.

10.   Related College Documents

10.1   Related College policies and procedures include:

- Maintaining Student Responsibility (Conduct) Policy and Procedures
- Maintaining Student Responsibility (Academic) Policy and Procedures
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Equality and Diversity Policy

- Data Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Teaching and Learning Strategy
- Assessment Policy

11.   Relevant Sources of Information

11.1   Useful websites include:

- Jisc – Guide to blended learning: https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/creating-blended-learning-content

Addendum: Collaborative Arrangements for BTEC progammes

All the above applies to the Pearson *'Southport College – King George V Collaborative Arrangement'* for Extended Diploma (QCF) Business and Sport as set out in the approved Collaborative Arrangement Application.