



# ETC International College

## Distance Learning Policy

January 2022

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### 1.0 Scope and Purpose

- 1.1 This policy covers all educational provision where part or all of the content is delivered or assessed without the need for the student to be present in College.
- 1.2 Where practical skills are required to be demonstrated, students are expected to attend College to meet the requirements of these assessments.
- 1.3 To ensure all student learning and assessment meets and maintains quality standards and adheres to requirements by awarding bodies, where appropriate, regardless of the delivery format.
- 1.4 To ensure student support is available and communication is maintained.
- 1.5 To provide an experience, comparable, where possible, to students attending College on-site.
- 1.6 This policy, as a minimum, adheres to the Pearson and OTHM requirements for online learning and teaching.

### 2.0 Definitions

- 2.1 Pearson defines **Distance Learning (DL)** as:  
“a mode of delivering education and instruction, often on an individual basis, to learners who are not physically present in a traditional setting such as a classroom.”
- 2.2 Pearson defines **Distance Assessment** as:  
“a method of assessment delivered to learners away from a centre, with little or no face to face contact with tutors, where the assessment is designed to be carried out remotely. Distance Assessment enables learners to be assessed even if they are in situations/settings where traditional methods of assessment delivery may be difficult or impossible to operate.

- 2.3 Online Learning provides learning via online platforms as a temporary measure.
- 2.4 Blended learning uses delivery via online platforms as a supplement to face-to-face methods.

### 3.0 Responsibilities

- 3.1 It is ETC's responsibility to understand and follow any qualification and unit-specific requirements for delivery or assessment that are set out in the qualification specifications of the awarding body.
- 3.2 The Academic Board is responsible for overseeing the quality of course programmes and student experience across the FEHE department.
- 3.3 The Academic Board is responsible for ensuring quality and continuous improvement in teaching, learning and assessment practices
- 3.4 It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure DL adheres to the Equality Act 2010 and ETC's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy](#), overseen by the Head of FEHE.
- 3.5 The Lead Internal Verifier (**LIV**) is responsible for ensuring the student's assessment and achievement supports the certification claims for **BTEC** and that there is an accessible audit trail.
- 3.6 The Internal Lead Quality Assurer (**ILQA**) is responsible for ensuring the student's assessment and achievement supports the certification claims for **OTHM** and that there is an accessible audit trail.
- 3.7 The Assessment Board is responsible for verifying assessment grades.

### 4.0 Delivery Methods

- 4.1 Course content may be delivered or assessed in the following ways to students who are studying away from the College:
  - 4.1.1 Learners working from their computers at home.
  - 4.1.2 Lectures, seminars and tutorials delivered via an online learning platform, such as Zoom.
  - 4.1.3 Tutor marked assignments via Turnitin.
  - 4.1.4 E-portfolio
  - 4.1.5 Electronic chat forums and virtual forums.
- 4.2 Online learning materials will be provided to students.
- 4.3 Assessment is conducted in accordance with ETC's [Fair Assessment Policy](#).

### 5.0 Quality Assurance

- 5.1 It is expected that distance learning programmes and units are of equal quality to any other programme or unit leading to an award or credit.
- 5.2 As part of the internal approval process it must be demonstrated that the programme or unit meets the needs of the students and of the awarding body, offers sufficient learning resources and appropriately skilled staff are available to deliver content and support students. See Course Approval Form.
- 5.3 Approvals for all Pearson and OTHM programmes must be applied for and approved before the commencement of course delivery.
- 5.4 All programmes and units delivered via DL will have a course specification made available to students prior to application and all information shall be available in accordance with Consumer Protection Law. Information includes minimum technical requirements and computer facilities required to complete the programme, any additional requirements for admission and assessment criteria.
- 5.5 Delivery of programmes or units via DL must be managed, structured and delivered to provide the maximum possible benefit to students and provide a

comparable student experience, where possible, to that of on-site programmes. ETC's Quality Assurance Policy will be followed, where applicable.

- 5.6 ETC offers staff continued professional development, including training in using online platforms.
- 5.7 ETC's training and development department conduct observations for teachers delivering content online to ensure standards remain high.
- 5.8 Turnitin will be used for submitting assignments and minimising plagiarism and academic misconduct, allowing secure submission of work with the ability to confirm receipt.
- 5.9 ETC's [Reasonable Adjustments Policy](#) will also be followed for Distance Learners.
- 5.10 [Pearson's Distance Learning and Assessment Policy](#) and [OTHM Distance Learning Policy](#) will be followed for relevant courses.
- 5.11

## **6.0 Admissions for Distance Learning**

- 6.1 Refer to ETC's Admissions Policy and Procedures.
- 6.2 Applications should be submitted in the usual way.
- 6.3 Enrolment shall be conducted online for DL programmes.
- 6.4 Learners should only be recruited onto a distance learning course if they show the appropriate technical and communication skills and have the appropriate resources available to them to ensure they work independently and communicate effectively.
- 6.5 The identity of students on distance learning programmes will be verified using robust measures.
- 6.6 ETC may ask students for additional evidence in the admissions process for DL programmes, which may include:
  - 6.6.1 Evidence to show the student has sufficient funds for accommodation and travel to and from the UK relating to specific requirements, such as interview, assessment and induction.
  - 6.6.2 Evidence to show that the student has reliable access to the necessary technology required in order to successfully complete the programme.

## **7.0 Student Support and Communication**

- 7.1 All students are given an online induction to their course and sent a student handbook prior to the start of their programme. The student handbook includes links to ETC's policies and procedures.
- 7.2 Students are told who to contact if they have any difficulties and are advised of online safeguarding requirements.
- 7.3 During the course, teachers conduct one-to-one tutorials with students, enabling the student to provide feedback, discuss the students' progress; give advice on effective study skills and self-study options and set learning goals.
  - 7.3.1 Tutorials are conducted via the online learning platform, usually Zoom.
- 7.4 Support is available via email, phone and the online learning platform during College opening times.
- 7.5 Notices and communication are posted on the VLE.
- 7.6 Timetables are made easily accessible to students.
- 7.7 Turnitin provides a platform to give and receive feedback on formative and summative assessments and as a two-way communication and feedback forum between staff and students.

- 7.8 ETC will ensure staff and students have timely and effective technical support, should they need it.
  - 7.8.1 Technical issues is a standing agenda item on Academic Management meetings, the Academic Board and Board of Governor meetings.
  - 7.8.2 Members of the tech department are available via text at the start of lessons to respond to urgent issues.
  - 7.8.3 Contingency plans will be operated should the system / network fail.

### **8.0 Learning Platforms and Resources**

- 8.1 ETC will ensure the platforms and resources are suitable for the requirements of the course and the students' learning objectives and are secure, reliable, fit for purpose and have an appropriate availability and life expectancy.
- 8.2 Breakout rooms are used for class discussions, debates and group activities. Parental Permission is received by the parent or guardian for any students under the age of 18 to use breakout rooms, which are monitored by the teacher.
- 8.3 Learning resources, appropriate to the students' programme are uploaded to the VLE for students and staff to access.
- 8.4 ETC is signed up to Kortext to offer a range of texts online for staff and students.

### **9.0 Attendance**

- 9.1 Teachers complete the online attendance portal at the beginning of the class.
- 9.2 The DSL is advised of any absent students under the age of 18 to be chased up.
- 9.3 An Attendance Procedure is in place to issue warnings for low attendance, which also applies to content delivered online.

### **10.0 Teacher Feedback and Student Engagement**

- 10.1 Ensure there are opportunities for both staff and students to provide feedback on their learning and teaching experiences using online platforms.
- 10.2 End of Module and End of Year questionnaires are sent to all students in order to obtain feedback on all areas of their learning experience.
- 10.3 Students are offered 1:1 tutorial sessions with teachers, which enables student feedback.
- 10.4 ETC makes continuous improvements to online provision from feedback received from staff and students.

### **11.0 Safeguarding**

- 11.1 All staff and students should read, understand and adhere to the Code of Conducts for online lessons. These have been developed to provide a safe and relaxed learning environment for all.
- 11.2 An E-safeguarding risk assessment has been created to assess any risks that may arise in delivering content via online platforms and how these risks will be prevented, limited and controlled.

### **12.0 Well-being**

- 12.1 Staff are offered guidance and support during staff meetings to ensure they maintain their well-being whilst teaching in an online environment.
- 12.2 ETC has a Mental Health First Aid team, on hand for students and staff should they have concerns.
- 12.3 Posters are displayed around the College to show details of the Safeguarding, First Aid, Mental Health First Aid and Fire Warden teams and how to contact them.

**13.0 Data Protection**

- 13.1 All staff will be responsible for implementing ETC's [Data Protection and Privacy Policy](#) and [Document Retention and Secure Storage Policy](#)
- 13.2 Teachers will teach on-site, where possible and will ensure the confidentiality and integrity of their devices should 'working from home' be implemented.

**14.0 Associated Documents**

- [Pearson's Distance Learning Policy](#)
- [Attendance Policy](#)
- [Attendance Procedure](#)
- [Data Protection and Privacy Policy](#)
- [Document Retention and Secure Storage Policy](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy](#),
- [Fair Assessment Policy](#)
- [Adult Student Code of Conduct – Online Lessons](#)
- [Junior Student Code of Conduct – Online Lessons](#)
- [Quality Assurance Policy](#)
- [Reasonable Adjustments Policy](#)
- [Teacher Code of Conduct – Online Lessons](#)
- Self-evaluation against the Accreditation UK Code of practice for online ELT
- E-Safeguarding Risk Assessment

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