**Policy for Blended and Remote Learning**

**(Further Education)**

| **Policy Owner** | **Department** |
| --- | --- |
| FE Central | FE Central |
| **Version Number** | **Date drafted/Date of review** |
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| **Date Equality Impact Assessed** | **Has Prevent been considered**  **(see Policies Guidance if unsure)** |
|  |  |
| **Reviewed and Approved by**  **(see Policies Guidance for approval process)** | **Date** |
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| **Access (tick as appropriate)** | |
| Public access (website)  And/Or  Internal access (MyWi) | Staff and Student access  Or  Staff access only |

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# Policy Overview and Scope

Writtle University College’s Blended and Remote Learning Policy require procedures and processes to be monitored on a routine basis to ensure all external requirements are met and to provide a practical mechanism for assessing progress and identifying areas where further improvements are necessary.

This policy is based on the Pearson BTEC guidance for distance learning and blended learning approaches during the COVID-19 period. There may be additional guidelines or regulations which an individual awarding body may issue.

**Policy Context**

To provide the Head of Quality (FE) and Academic Staff with a framework for implementing both a blended and remote learning delivery in a way that ensures there is a formal approach to education that creates an integrated learning environment. This would include both face-to-face and online teaching giving learners a more diverse and engaging learning experience.

WUC’s aims are:

* To provide all students and apprentices with a full, flexible and high-quality curriculum within a COVID-19 safe environment.
* To present a transparent framework that is well planned and prioritises the safety and mental health of students, apprentices, and staff.
* To ensure all awarding body adaptations to assessment are understood by the teaching team and that the team consider these adaptations in order to allow students to achieve the best outcomes possible for them.

To achieve the above, the academic team seek to provide a flexible curriculum model within a flexible framework.

Both Blended and Remote delivery at WUC reflects the same principles as education delivered face to face. The college has the same high expectations of delivery regardless of the mode of delivery. The online platforms supported by the college are Smart Assessor for Apprenticeship provision and Moodle, Microsoft Teams with other Microsoft products including outlook for all provision types.

The college promotes high professional standards and the very best practices in relation to all elements of safeguarding associated with remote learning. Digital poverty and mental health amongst students remains a concern. To mitigate disadvantage experienced by some students the college has changed the access arrangements in line with government guidance re COVID-19; some students, therefore, will be allowed access to the campus in order to access both IT and staff support.

The college continues to support and develop teaching staff in their development of remote and blended learning and education.

# Policy and Procedure

**1. Lines of Responsibility:**

The Head of Centre has overall responsibility for ensuring that both blended and remote learning delivery meets the guidelines set by the awarding organisation and to ensure the assessment methodology is valid and does not disadvantage any group or individual learners.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Quality (FE) and Academic Staff to comply with this policy and to report immediately to their line manager any problems or concerns.

Curriculum Team Leaders are responsible for complying with this policy and to report immediately to their line manager any problems or concerns. Curriculum Team Leaders are required to maintain an up to date knowledge of assessment requirements for required subjects via liaising with the relevant awarding body and attending training where appropriate.

**2. Implementation**

The Centre will ensure:

* That teaching/delivery/assessment staff are timetabled to support remote learning. Staff from the learning support team will continue to support learners both during their ‘teams’ online learning lessons as well as offer remote 1:1 support as is necessary.
* That there is a process to manage feedback on assignments, questions are constructively answered, and feedback is provided in a timely manner. Students are required to submit completed work to their tutor either by using ‘Teams’, Moodle, Google docs or via college email addresses.
* that the setting of assignments is undertaken either in the face-to-face sessions prior to the blended learning sessions, or that assignments are clearly discussed during the blended/remote learning sessions and documents are upload to either ‘Teams’ or Moodle platforms. Tutors will make sure that set deadlines are clear, and students are all aware of the deadlines set.
* That when learners submit work, measures are taken to ensure the work is authentic and has been completed by the learner. Work will be authenticated by the learner upon completion. Coursework will be completed both remotely and when allowed to do so related to COVID-19 restrictions, during face to face sessions. Tutors will be able to confirm the work is completed by the student. Controlled assessments will be carried out during the face to face sessions if they are provided.
* All work completed and submitted by the student will be stored securely either digitally or in a secure place within the college.

**Blended & Remote Education for 16-19 study programme students**

16-19 study programme students will remain on their curriculum, programme including English, mathematics, tutorial (personal development) and work experience, industry placement or work-related learning. If a full lockdown is implemented nationally or locally all learning will be provided remotely. The English and mathematics GCSE and functional skills curriculum will be taught remotely as it was during 2020-2021.

Work experience is a core part of the study programme. Some awarding bodies require the need for students to complete a minimum amount of work placement hours to successfully achieve their qualification. The curriculum staff will review the requirements set out by the awarding bodies regularly. Related to the governments ongoing guidance re COVID-19 alternative methods to access enrichment activities will be explored including online cross college activity, curriculum-based video links with external speakers and virtual tours of facilities. All enrichment activities are carefully planned, and risk assessed.

**Remote education for Adult student’s**

Remote learning is delivered to adult students using Microsoft Teams. The development of practical skills that can only be achieved via face-to-face learning with specialist equipment will be rescheduled to a point when it is safe to do so. The implementation plan will be adapted to ensure that no student is disadvantaged and is able to make at least the progress expected of them. All adult students have full access to college resources.

**Remote education for Apprentices.**

The same work-based tutors will support and assess ‘on the job’ learning and assessment in liaison with the workplace when it is considered safe to do so by the employers. Apprentices access all aspects of their apprenticeship via Smart Assessor. Remote learning is also accessed via Microsoft Teams. Apprentices continue to engage in ‘off the job’ learning using a blended learning model. The development of practical skills that are required for occupational competence and that can only be achieved via face-to-face learning with specialist equipment will be rescheduled to a point when it is safe to do so. The delivery plan will be adapted to ensure that no apprentice is disadvantaged. All apprentices have full access to college resources.

**4. Tutor and Student guidance when undertaking blended and/or remote learning**

Safeguarding will be clearly explained to students regularly at the start of blended/remote learning sessions. See Appendix 1 & 2

Standard delivery practice is that teaching staff are face to face or on-line to the group/s that they are timetabled to teach in accordance with the timetable.

In a full lockdown situation, practical learning will either be replaced by theoretical learning or will be adapted using a ‘demonstrate and do’ model.

WUC expects all assessment activity to continue whilst ensuring that COVID 19 safety guidelines are always followed. Where necessary assessment practices may be adapted or delayed in line with Awarding Body guidelines. WUC expects students and apprentices to submit work for assessment electronically via Microsoft Teams, college email accounts, OneDrive or Smart Assessor. Teaching staff will assess the work and provide feedback as well as outcomes via the same platform. WUC recognises that contact with students and apprentices is not just about learning it is about supporting them through this challenging period. There will be some variation between curriculum areas informed by the subject expertise of teaching staff who know the students and apprentices the best.

The effective use of blended and/or remote learning can help make courses more accessible and engaging.  Use of technology can provide greater flexibility and choice.  Accessible course material can provide learners with additional needs, disabilities or other responsibilities (eg. caring/work related), the ability to study at a time and in a way that better meets their needs.  Ensuring the use of an inclusive approach to planning and delivery reduces the need for individual adjustments, but it is acknowledged that there may be cases where this still may be required.  In these cases, the Learning Support team are able to advise and are able to consider putting in place additional support.

**Expectations of students**

Expectations of students engaging in remote learning are the same as face-to-face learning and are outlined in the students’ code of conduct and on appendix 2 in this policy. Specific expectations relating to remote learning are that students:

* Attend and engage in all remote learning sessions as per their timetable,
* Keep in contact with their teacher and personal tutor and attend tutorials,
* Engage and complete all learning materials and activities set by teaching staff,
* Check college emails, Teams and pro Portal to keep up to date with all communication from college and your teaching staff.
* Students are to report any absence in the same way as they would for face-to-face learning

This policy supersedes any other policy and procedural guidelines, which may be in other existing University College documents. Writtle University College may amend this policy from time to time and any such amendments will be notified via the website, through Writtle Weekly or by email.

If this information is difficult to access, read or understand, it can be provided in another format, for example in large print, or by someone talking it through with you.

# Version Control

| Version Number | Purpose/Amendment | Date |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1.0 | Confirmation of policy | 18/02/21 |
|  |  |  |

**Appendix 1**

**Writtle College video conferencing – Staff guide**

**Do:**

* 1:1 tutorials should be conducted either with the camera on or off. The use of cameras must be confirmed with the student at the start of each session. All calls should be recorded and only shared in exceptional circumstances such as where safeguarding concerns were raised. **If at any time you feel uncomfortable during a 1:1 call, with something done or said, you should end the call as soon as possible and report any concerns to your line manager and / or safeguarding.**
* Encourage students to maintain an awareness of employability skills in how they conduct themselves in on line sessions
* Conduct yourself in a professional manner throughout calls with colleagues or students - you remain an employee of Writtle College throughout the call.
* Conduct video calls/live lessons to learners or colleagues from a desk or other appropriate location. If you do work from your bedroom, you MUST blur your background.
* Remind students that all calls/videos may be recorded - this is to safeguard both parties and wouldn’t routinely be shared. Ask students to keep their cameras on unless there is a direct need for the cameras to be turned off.
* Make sure you use your college email account and communicate with students via their Writtle accounts. Make sure any phone calls are made from a blocked number so teachers' personal contact details are not visible.
* Be punctual and courteous. Language must be professional and appropriate. Introduce yourself and take note of other attendees’ so you can address them by name. Turn your phone to silent. Treat this just like you would a face to face meeting with a student, colleague or other adult.
* Test your audio and/or video before a scheduled call.
* Try to record all live classes/ tutorials so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed. Make sure students are aware that the session may be recorded as a safeguarding matter.
* Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may interfere with other family activity.
* Look at your screen, pay attention to others and when speaking make sure to look at your camera.
* Use the ‘blur background option’ to hide any background if needed.
* Check what you can see when you first log in as this is what others will see.
* Mute your microphone when not needing to talk to avoid any background noise.
* On completion of the on-line conversation, consider posting your comments/questions in the *Team Chat* window.

**Don’t:**

* Conduct a video call if it would be improper for a face-to-face meeting.
* Multi-task; your audience will be aware.
* Shout; the other participants will tell you if they cannot hear.
* Click your pen, tap on your desk or anything else annoying or distracting.
* Eat or drink, other than water / tea / coffee
* Position yourself away from where your children, spouse, or pets are.
* Leave multiple applications open during the call as it may affect the quality.
* Wear stripes or heavy patterns creating pixilation of images.

Useful further guidance

www.tes.com/news/coronavirus-10-safeguarding-rules-teachers-home

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/news/2020/march/undertaking-remote-teaching-safely/

**Appendix 2**

**Writtle University College Video Conferencing – Student Guide**

**Do:**

* Have an awareness of employability skills in how to conduct yourself during on live sessions; conduct yourself in a professional manner at all times.
* Unless asked not to**, always turn on your video** function during both live and recorded lessons. **Calls/videos will usually be recorded** - this is to safeguard both you and your tutors. If you are unhappy/ or have concerns regarding the recording of any session please speak to your tutor about this.
* Video calls, if they are needed, should be undertaken from an appropriate location. If you can only work from your bedroom, you should try to blur your background.
* 1:1 tutorials should be conducted via a call rather than a video link. If **at any time you feel uncomfortable with something done or said, you should end the call as soon as possible and report any concerns to another member of your course team or the Head of Department.** 1:1 tutorial calls will normally be recorded. These recordings will only be shared in exceptional circumstances.
* Make sure you only use your college email account during on line sessions. Do not share your log in details with anyone else.
* Be punctual and courteous. Language must be professional and appropriate. Turn your phone to silent. Treat this just like you would a face to face meeting with your tutor or as if you are in a real classroom situation.
* Live classes will be kept to a reasonable length of time, in order that the streaming doesn’t interfere with other family activity.
* Pay attention to others and when speaking. Make sure not to shout over someone else. Use the raised hand icon on teams to request to speak. If everyone speaks at the same time nothing will be understood. If you have been asked by your tutor to use your camera during the live session, remember to look at your camera.
* When you need to use your camera and are asked to do this by your tutor, check what you can see when you first log in as this is what others will see.
* Mute your microphone when not needing to talk to avoid any background noise

**Don’t:**

* Use your camera or video facility if not asked to do so.
* Share your log in details with anyone else, and do not ask others’ not part of the lesson to attend.
* Multi-task; your tutor will be aware.
* Shout; the other participants will tell you if they cannot hear.
* Click your pen, tap on your desk or anything else annoying or distracting.
* Eat or drink, other than water / tea / coffee
* Position yourself away from where your brothers, sisters, parents, pets etc. are visible.
* Leave multiple applications open on computers/laptops/tablets during the call as it may affect the quality.
* Wear stripes or heavy patterns creating pixilation of images.

*Useful further guidance*

*www.tes.com/news/coronavirus-10-safeguarding-rules-teachers-home*

*https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/news/2020/march/undertaking-remote-teaching-safely/*