

# **GFM Blended Learning Policy**

**(Written in response to delivering BTEC during COVID-19 using approved materials from Pearsons)**

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*To be greater and to aspire further*

Blended learning is a term which has gained prominence in education over the past decade and is once again in the spotlight due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Put simply, blended learning is typically a delivery method of education which combines face-to-face delivery with technology-powered online learning.

How education providers choose to combine these two elements will depend on a number of factors such as the level of study, student profile, infrastructure and course content. However, it has become generally accepted that optimised blended learning occurs when technology is used to consume content that aids developing knowledge and understanding, while face-to-face class time is used to open up more student engagement with the material, or to zone in on problem areas.

**Blended Learning** is defined by: 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.

**Distance Learning** as defined in our Distance Learning and Assessment Policy is as follows: Learners recruited and enrolled online and study independently using virtual learning environments - for example via online courses, posted resources, and telephone support. *Please note that prior approval is needed from Pearson prior to distance learning delivery.*

**Distance Assessment** is a method of assessment 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 may be difficult or impossible to operate. Our teaching guides provide support on this activity.

There are scenarios where distance assessment will not be possible and not appropriate where:

- Practical skills and/or interaction with individuals/equipment need to be demonstrated and assessed in person
- There are group work situations/units where collaboration with others is required
- There is a requirement for learners to be overseen in person by centre staff at a specific physical location, under controlled conditions, including observations of performance in SVQ/NVQ type competency-based qualifications and Pearson externally set and marked examinations and controlled tasks.

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In the above scenarios, you should consult our teaching guide for the qualification in question.

Where you decide to adopt distance assessment as part of a blended learning approach, we expect you to have carefully considered the points below so that you are able to confidently state 'Yes' in response to each point below:

- We have policies, processes and structures that reflect the blended learning and distance assessment models of assessment
- Teaching/delivery staff are timetabled to support blended learning when learners are working remotely
- We have a process to manage feedback on assignments, and questions are constructively supported, and feedback is provided in a timely manner, if not in the classroom environment
- The setting of assignments is undertaken in the face-to-face sessions and that deadlines are clear where possible
- We have provided staff training and implemented measures to prevent and detect any instances of malpractice which may arise due to the different delivery/assessment methods chosen
- When learners submit work, we can provide evidence to ensure that the work is authentic and has been completed by the learner
- Learners are fully aware of the need to ensure they avoid any forms of malpractice (for example plagiarism) and the consequences should they commit it.

### **Aims:**

1. To ensure that blended learning delivery meets the guidelines set by the awarding organisation.
2. To ensure that assessment methodology is valid, reliable and does not disadvantage any group or individual learners.

### **In order to do this the centre 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 the 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 Pearson Centre Agreement.

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**Reference:**

- This policy has been adapted from:  
<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/Support/Quality%20Assurance/BTEC-Distance-and-Blended-Learning-approaches-during-COVID-19-period.pdf>
- <https://www.pearson.com/uk/educators/fe-college-educators/btec-blog/2020/09/introducing-blended-learning-in-the-new-normal.html>