



Secure Acquisition and Storage of Assessment Materials Policy and Procedure

Responsibility for this policy: Head of Student Experience and Improvement

Date: August 2023

Review Date: August 2026

Equality Impact Assessment Date: 18-8-2023

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History of Changes

Version	Description of Change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Addition of reference to Risk Assessment document	J Stalker	28-5-18
1.2	Addition of section on GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) Compliance about Storage and Retention of Student Assessment Evidence	J Stalker	08-08-18
1.3	Updated to reflect change in job titles Addition of Inclusiveness statement	B Brownlee	18-8-2020
1.4	Increased emphasis on college ownership of student assessment material.	B Brownlee	30-8-2023

West Lothian College is an inclusive organisation and all policies, procedures, strategies, plans, provisions, criteria, functions, practices, and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services are assessed to consider the impact on staff and students covered by the Equalities Act 2010 by the completion of an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA). Protected characteristics are defined as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage, or civil partnership (in employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Please see end of this document for EIA.

Introduction

The security of assessment materials, including assessment instruments, exam question papers, scripts, and electronically stored evidence, is the responsibility of all academic staff. This is particularly important for assessment materials which are used for assessment in controlled conditions, for example closed -book assessments and HN (Higher National) Graded Unit exams.

External Assessment

Materials for external assessment are sent directly to the Examinations Officer and are stored under lock and key in the Information Systems safe and checked by the Chief Invigilator and the Examinations Officer. Completed candidate scripts are gathered up by the Chief Invigilator and the Examinations Officer or another authorised member of the Student Systems team and locked in the safe until being dispatched by courier to the awarding body for marking. Special assessment arrangements materials are received and checked by the Examinations Officer.

Internal Assessment

- 1 Requests for assessment instruments from the SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) Secure website must only be made to the Faculty Named Person, who is usually the relevant Learning and Skills Manager.
- 2 Requests can only be made by delivering lecturers or internal verifiers, to the Faculty Administrator, copying the Faculty Named Person. Requests from other staff members or those not following this process will not be serviced.
- 3 Assessment instruments downloaded from the SQA Secure website will be saved by the Faculty Administrator directly into the unit control file, under assessments. Assessments must not be emailed to anyone, either internally or externally of the college, however the Faculty Administrator will reply to the request email to state that this process has been completed.
- 4 The Faculty Administrator will log and monitor all requests for assessment materials on the Quality SQA Secure Download Monitor Log.
- 5 Access to assessment instruments is decided by the Faculty Named Person, who has knowledge of individual's rights of access, and staff should only have access to assessment instruments for units that they are or will be timetabled to teach.
- 6 When printed off, the assessment materials must be passed on securely. Printed assessment materials must always be stored securely in either locked cabinets or locked rooms with controlled access. They must not be left in public places (including unsupervised classrooms) or areas which are accessed by students or staff from outwith the teaching area.

- 7 If a lecturer/assessor is copying assessment materials themselves, they must not leave the photocopier unattended and must ensure that they remove all the assessment materials and copies if they need to move away from the copier.
- 8 Assessment materials which are delivered under controlled conditions must be supervised while in use and collected back in. Spare assessment instruments and materials past the evidence retention period must be either destroyed securely by shredding or stored securely again.
- 9 Students must be made aware that taking away assessments, copies or images of assessments which are delivered under controlled conditions is malpractice and could result in disciplinary action (*see Academic Malpractice Policy and Procedure*).
- 10 It is also malpractice for staff to give assessment materials, copies, or images of assessments to students out with the assessment process, without good reason or permission (*see Academic Malpractice Policy and Procedure*).
- 11 Student's assessment evidence must also be held and moved securely. This is necessary to protect the interests of students and the integrity of the assessment by ensuring that the evidence cannot be tampered with. This is particularly important if taking evidence out of college for marking or internal verification purposes. Staff are reminded that the materials are college property and to treat them with utmost care and attention to safe storage. If taken securely out of college for marking, materials must be returned to college as soon as possible as a matter of priority.
- 12 Any breaches of security of assessment must be reported immediately to the Head of Quality in order that the relevant awarding body can be notified.
- 13 All units must have a control file which should be stored electronically with access restricted to only staff delivering and assessing the unit.**
- 14 External Verifiers will need to be given secure access to electronic evidence during a visit.

Graded Unit Exams

- 1 Graded unit examination assessments are printed off by the authorised lecturer and passed to the Examinations Officer who organises room set up. The exam invigilator will collect all completed papers and return these to the Examinations Officer who stores these securely in the Information Systems safe until the authorised lecturer collects them for marking purposes.
- 2 Graded Unit assessment papers should be returned to the Information Systems Examinations Officer for shredding.
- 3 Graded unit assessment papers will be rotated on a minimum three-year cycle to prevent plagiarism.

- 4 Where Graded Unit evidence is submitted electronically, the evidence must be submitted and received securely. Students must be able to protect/lock their evidence before they submit it, and it must be stored securely in a restricted access file within the Faculty throughout the assessment process and until the assessment and verification processes are complete.

Storage and Retention of Student Assessment Evidence and GDPR Compliance

- 1 For the purposes of GDPR, 'student assessment evidence' will include any material, electronic or hard copy, that contains personal details and information relating to the student, or to individuals or a company, used in the production of that assessment evidence. All staff have previously been sent information on what personal details include.
- 2 Each Faculty must carry out a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to identify types of assessment evidence and steps that will be taken to minimise risks of non-compliance under GDPR.
- 3 Electronic student assessment evidence is college property and must be stored securely in a restricted access file within the Faculty throughout the assessment process and until the assessment, verification and resulting processes are complete. This file must also be accessible by other authorised staff, including the Learning and Skills Manager and/or Faculty Director. Staff also have responsibility to maintain awareness of and observe any additional requirements of awarding bodies to retain assessment evidence beyond the end of the delivery date.
- 4 Hard copy student assessment evidence is college property. It should be stored securely in an identified lockable storage space, and which has restricted access for authorised staff only, which must include the Learning and Skills Manager and/or Faculty Director.
- 5 Student assessment evidence, whether electronic or hard copy, should only be gathered, used, and retained as required by college and awarding body quality policy and procedure and according to identified timescales.
- 6 All staff are responsible for ensuring that student assessment evidence is stored securely while being processed for marking.
- 7 All staff are responsible for ensuring that marking takes place in a secure environment and that personal details and information are kept confidential.
- 8 Student assessment evidence, whether electronic or hard copy, should be disposed of securely when no longer required. This will normally be through shredding the material in a secure environment or deleting as appropriate.

Related Documentation

- Risk Assessment Secure Storage of Exam Materials (held by Quality team)
- Centre Self-Assessment Secure Storage Checklist (held by Quality team)
- DPIA Impact Assessment Storage and Retention of Student Assessment Evidence (held by Faculty)



Equality Impact Assessment

Before carrying out an EIA, you should familiarise yourself with the College's EIA Policy Statement and Guidance, along with further information and resources which are available on SharePoint.

EIA covers **strategies, policies, procedures, plans, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services**, but will be referred to hereinafter as 'policy/practice'.

Policy/Practice (name or brief description):	Secure Acquisition and Storage of Assessment Materials
Strategy/Policy includes Equalities Statement of Inclusiveness?	Yes
Reason for Equality Impact Assessment (choose from the following options):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed new policy/practice Proposed change to an existing policy/practice Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice Other (please give detail): 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice
Person responsible for the policy area or practice:	
Name:	Beth Brownlee
Job title:	Head of Student Experience and Improvement
An Equality Impact Assessment must be carried out if the policy/practice:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> affects operational or strategic functions of the College is relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' as set out in the Policy and Guidance) 	

Why the EIA is being carried out	Affects operational or strategic functions of the college
Equality Groups	
Relevant to the Policy/Practice, identify which of the undernoted equality groups are impacted upon:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Disability • race (including ethnicity and nationality) • religion or belief • sex • sexual orientation • gender reassignment • pregnancy and maternity • marriage or civil partnership 	No students are directly impacted by this policy and the intention is to ensure that integrity of student evidence is unquestionable at every stage

Record your assessment against the following statements:

Statement	Equality assessment
Detail the evidence of the needs of the identified equality groups and any gaps in information	None
Will application of this policy/practice lead to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups?	No
If yes, how will the policy/practice be changed to contribute to advancing equality of opportunity	N/A
State how this policy/practice will foster good relations:	Students can be confident that the integrity of their work is supported by college processes

Will the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups?	No
If yes, how will the policy/practice be changed to contribute to advancing equality of opportunity	
Which equality groups or communities have been consulted in the development and review of this policy/practice?	None

Equality Impact Assessment Outcome

Select one of the four options below to indicate how the development/review of the policy/practice will be progressed and state the rationale for the decision. (Delete the options that do not apply):

Option 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.	No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.
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Monitoring

When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?	August 2026, unless further amendment is driven by changes in external requirements
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Publication of EIA

Can this EIA be published in full, now? Please state Yes or No If No – please specify when it may be published or indicate restrictions that apply:	Yes
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Sign-off

EIA undertaken by	Quality Officer
Name:	Shelagh Fraser
Date:	30.08.2023

Accepted by person responsible for the policy/practice named above:	
Name:	Beth Brownlee
Date:	30.08.2023
Approved by Equalities Committee	
Date:	

Retain a copy of this form for your own records and send a copy to lbyrne@west-lothian.ac.uk