It is a pleasure to have you on board with us and we wish you well in your studies.

West London College of Business & Management Sciences (WLCBMS) has always strived to achieve excellence in the delivery of HE courses. After a decade of on-campus provision we have decided to embark on distance learning provision, not just in the UK but around the World. The decision has been taken to broaden our education provision and cater for the needs of those who cannot benefit from our on-campus courses. This means that we are committed to our goal of trying to reach all those who are on the quest of quality education - combining appropriate communication technologies and knowledge media with personal tuition and counselling. We feel that it is our duty to make sure that you can learn effectively and enjoyably.

WLCBMS takes its obligations to each of its students very seriously. You have registered for a WLCBMS Higher National programme with particular personal goals in mind, and our staff are committed to helping you achieve those goals successfully.

The purpose of this handbook is to describe the procedures and policies that play an essential part in sustaining an effective relationship between WLCBMS and its students. These policies make explicit the expectations on both sides. I advise you to familiarise yourself with the contents page and to read any sections that are of interest to you. The handbook should then be kept for more detailed consultation as particular issues arise. Most of the questions you have about WLCBMS practices will be answered in these pages.

I trust that you will find your association with WLCBMS a stimulating and rewarding experience.

Principal
Welcome to the programme, you have joined one of our six intakes: February, May, August, September, November and December. Our aim is to provide you with the opportunity to establish a firm foundation for a successful career in your chosen discipline.

You will be studying alongside students from a variety of backgrounds. Though you are expected to invest time and effort into your studies you should also take every opportunity to have fun and enjoyment. We hope that you will find your learning experience to be productive, enjoyable and successful.

Introduction

This student handbook is geared towards students wishing to complete a Higher Certificate in Business (HNC/HND) and are looking to progress onto a relevant degree or move directly into employment.

The handbook sets out the structure of the programme. It includes the units that will be covered. Each unit sets out the required outcomes and content and includes advice regarding appropriate delivery and assessment methods. The guidance contains further details of the teaching, learning, assessment and quality assurance of these qualifications.

A key progression path for BTEC Higher National Certificate learners is to the second or third year of a degree or honours degree programme, depending on the match of the BTEC Higher National units to the degree programme in question.

About Edexcel

Edexcel Limited is one of the leading examining and awarding bodies in the UK and throughout the world. It incorporates all the qualifications previously awarded under the Edexcel and BTEC brands. Edexcel provides a wide range of qualifications including general (academic), vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers.

Through a network of UK and overseas offices, Edexcel accredited centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.
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1.1 ABOUT US

Founded in 2005, West London College of Business & Management Sciences is situated in the heart of West London. The College is delivering quality education and training to meet the challenges of a new era.

Students are provided with opportunities to find the way to their field of interest. Students are facilitated to participate, arrange and organize debates, group discussion, sports and other activities.

WLCBMS is offering courses to meet the challenges of an increasingly diverse student base and demanding workplace, which caters for all the needs of home and overseas students. WLCBMS courses cater for students in the areas of Business Management, Computing, Health & Social Care, Law and English Language.

We provide high quality globally recognized educational programmes in a modern dynamic environment delivered by a highly qualified and experienced team of professionals. Based on knowledge and experience, the courses are presented using a variety of teaching methods and strategies. Our aim is to establish strong academic foundations, achieve outstanding examination results and develop independent attitude for taking advantage of life's opportunities.

1.2 KEY CONTACTS

Student Support Team:

Mike Thomas
Anil Batra
Tel: +44 (0)20 8897 2656
support@wlcb.co.uk
Anam Javed
Student Support Manager
Tel: +44 (0)20 8897 2656
anam@wlcb.co.uk
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Programmes Manager
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Registrar
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khan@wlcb.co.uk
Dr. M. Natt
Director Studies
Tel: +44 (0)20 8897 2656
m.natt@wlcb.co.uk
Dr Muhammad Javed Iqbal
Principal
Tel: +44 (0)20 8897 2656
admin@wlcb.co.uk

1.3 KEY SUPPORT ROLES

Student Support Team

The WLCBMS Student Support Team is here to support you throughout your studies and will make regular contact with you to ensure you are progressing well with your studies.

Your student support team will be able to help you with any pastoral and administrative query relating to your studies.

At the start of the intake the student support team will support you with working through the induction module. After completion of your induction, they will assist you with completing a personal study plan and will identify any additional support that may be required to help you progress through your studies. They will also assist you with your studies by emailing you reminders of upcoming deadlines.

Tutors

Each module you study has a dedicated module tutor. All tutors appointed are senior academics and subject specialists. They will help you by facilitating your academic progress and to this end they will set tasks and activities in appropriate discussion areas of ULearn.

The primary means of support will be delivered online through ULearn where tutors may also provide support by other means for example, via email.

The tutoring process is viewed as an essential aspect of development and support for students. It is informally based and designed to encourage two-way communication, either peer-to-peer or student-to-tutor.

Your unit tutors will provide you with academic advice and guidance, and answer your questions of an academic nature. For all other queries you are encouraged to contact your student support team at support@wlcb.co.uk.

Head of Student Support

The head of student support is responsible for overseeing the work of the student support team.

Programme Leader

The programme leader has overall responsibility for the structure and delivery of the programme.
2.0 LEARNING SUPPORT

2.1 INDUCTION

Before you commence study on the programme you are required to undertake an induction unit that contains all the information you need to get you started on your study. The aim of the induction is for you to:

- Get to know staff and fellow students
- Gain a comprehensive understanding of your programme of study
- Access a range of resources to support your study
- Ask questions relating to any aspect of the learning experience
- Become acquainted with WLCBMS procedures and policies

If you join the induction unit before the formal start date, there will be a number of tasks already available for you to work through. You will be given access to your declaration on the date of intake. A reminder notice will be posted on Ulearn on this date.

2.2 LEARNING MATERIALS

You will access your entire core learning material for the programme via Ulearn. The unit’s learning materials are designed to facilitate your learning and to allow you to achieve the learning outcome of each unit. This material is interactive and contains practical activities, which have been designed to enable you to apply theoretical principles and frameworks.

Try to use your own background when completing the activities and draw the best ideas and solution you can from your own experience. To get the best out of your own learning experience you are encouraged to discuss your ideas with other students or your colleagues; this will make learning much more stimulating. Remember, if in doubt, or if you have any questions about the units or how to study, just ask your tutor.

If you wish to purchase your own textbooks, suggested reading is included within each unit descriptor.

WLCBMS aims to provide a copy of the core text of each unit, although students should be aware that the availability of books in electronic form is subject to publishers’ permissions. In the event that the core textbook cannot be provided in ebook format, you are advised to just buy a hard copy.

2.3 ULEARN

Ulearn is an online facility designed to enhance your learning experience and help you through studies. It provides access to:

- Your unit learning materials
- Discussion forums
- News forums
- Group learning space
- My learning space
- Assessment area
- Online electronic resources
- Programme information
- Email/messaging facility
- Links to rules and regulations

You will find a detailed explanation of the key functions of Ulearn and how to use them during your induction. The site will be updated with new and relevant information as it becomes available. Tutors may make announcements or add notes to relevant sections or engage with you in discussion forums.

There is also a page for your own personal profile and photos. You are encouraged to add information about yourself, as other students may find this interesting.

Ulearn will be our principal way of communicating with students registered on the programme so it is essential that you visit Ulearn on a regular basis.

2.4 HOW WILL STUDENTS SUPPORT EACH OTHER THROUGH THE PROGRAMME?

We believe success on the programme will be enhanced through the development of a supportive learning community. We will achieve this through facilitated online discussions on Ulearn where you will have the opportunity to undertake group tasks with other students.
How to access Ulearn

You can access Ulearn from WLCBMS’s homepage: http://www.wlcb.co.uk

1. Click on the student Login link and select Ulearn.
2. Enter your user name and password and click ‘Login’.
3. Select the relevant Unit from the “My Units” menu.
4. Alternatively you can access the Ulearn site directly by entering the following web address in your web browser: www.ulearn.wlcb.co.uk
3.0 STAFF/STUDENT OBLIGATIONS

3.1 LEARNING CONTRACT

By embarking on this programme of study, you confirm your commitment to WLCBMS’s Learning Contract. (See Appendix 1).

This learning contract is a ‘partnership’ between you, the student, and WLCBMS as your learning provider to help you understand the roles and responsibilities of each party during the learning process.

As you read through the Learning Contract, you will note that there is a specific regulation about plagiarism. This describes the penalties that apply when students cheat in written assessments or present someone else’s material for assessment as if it were their own (this is called plagiarism). In order to avoid plagiarism it is imperative you reference your work appropriately.

Very few students commit such offences, but WLCBMS believes that it is important that all students understand why academic honesty is a matter of such concern and why such severe penalties are imposed. Please see Section 5 of this handbook for further information.

Your tutor will provide learning support and advice to learners in the following manner.

- Providing a welcome forum post at the start of the unit.
- Providing responses to your email, wherever possible within 2 working days (Monday – Friday).
- Initiating tasks and discussions via the unit discussion forum on Ulearn.
- Moderating discussion boards and inputting as required.
- Live online chat sessions, where appropriate.
- Monitoring student participation and progress.

3.2 STUDENT REPRESENTATION

Student representation is a mechanism that helps WLCBMS ensure that the student voice is fully represented in decision-making. Representation provides opportunities for students to feed directly into not only programme related developments, but also the wider activities of WLCBMS. Becoming a Student Representative is not only a great opportunity to make a positive difference to your learning experience and that of your fellow students, but it is also great for your CV.

Find out how you can become a Student Representative in Section 6.7 of this Handbook.

Find out more about WLCBMS’s policy on Student Engagement in Section 6.6 of this Handbook.
BTEC Higher Nationals are designed to provide a specialist vocational programme, linked to professional body requirements and National Occupational Standards where appropriate, with a strong work related emphasis. The qualifications provide a thorough grounding in the key concepts and practical skills required in their sector and their national recognition by employers allows progression direct into employment.

BTEC Higher Nationals offer a strong emphasis on practical skills development alongside the development of requisite knowledge and understanding in their sector. Learners are attracted to this strong vocational programme of study that meets their individual progression needs whether this is into employment or to further study on degree or professional courses.

4.1 AIMS OF THE QUALIFICATION

This qualification meets the needs of the above rationale by:
- Equipping individuals with knowledge, understanding and skills for success in a range of administrative and management positions in business.
- Providing specialist routes of study which relate to individual professions within the business world in which learners are working or intend to seek employment.
- Enabling progression to an undergraduate degree or further professional qualification in business or a related area.
- Supporting individuals employed or entering employment in the business field.
- Developing the individuals ability in the business field through effective use and combination of the knowledge and skills gained in different parts of the programme.

Details of the programme structure can be found in the Programme and Module Handbook. You will also find details of each of your individual modules including the module aims, overview, learning outcomes and assessment details.

4.2 MAXIMUM PROGRAMME AND MODULE REGISTRATION TIMEFRAMES

Each Pearson programme has an expected completion time that is shown in the table below. Additionally, the programme regulations specify maximum and minimum periods of registration for each of their programmes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Total Credits</th>
<th>Expected Duration</th>
<th>Minimum Period of Registration</th>
<th>Maximum Period of Registration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HNC</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1.5 years</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HND</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note if you register for the HNC qualification and later decide to continue to complete the full HND, your maximum registration period of 4 years will apply from the date of your original registration on the HNC course.
5.0 STUDY AND ASSESSMENT

5.1 ACTIVATING YOUR UNITS

There are four module start dates during each calendar year: February, May, August and November. Access to modules will be given on the start date of each new study period as long as any prerequisites for those modules have been satisfied. You will be required to activate your module on Ulearn to begin studying.

In order to benefit from the full schedule of module activities, you should activate your module as soon as possible on or after the official module start date. You will have up to four weeks from the official module start date in which to activate your module. Please remember that if you miss this deadline you will have to wait to join the module at the next study period. Unfortunately no exceptions can be made to this rule.

It is normally expected that you activate and study 30 credits at a time. Each module (with the exception of projects) will normally have a credit value of 15 credits so this means you may study two modules at a time. Details of credit values for each module can be found in your Programme and Module Handbook.

The maximum number of credits you may have active at any one time is 60 credits. This is called the ‘active module credit limit’. The active module credit limit will include modules whose status is ‘attempted’ but not yet ‘completed’. Once a module’s status is ‘completed’ (i.e. you have passed your assessment and received your confirmed grade from the Examining Board) you will be able to release a further module (or modules) at the start of the next available study period.

5.2 ASSESSMENT

Once you activate a module at one of the official start points, you will be automatically registered to take your assessment(s) at the next scheduled assessment deadline. This will normally be around 10 weeks after the start date of the module.

A timetable of assessment dates can be found on your module page on Ulearn. Please check the assessment timetable before you activate your module to ensure that you will be able to meet the assessment deadline.

If you know of a reason why you will not be able to meet the assessment deadline, you are advised to delay the activation of your module until the next module start date. If you have already activated your module and find yourself in this position, please refer to the section on deferral.

Assessment briefs will normally be released on Ulearn at the start of the module.

The assessment briefs will contain the following information:
1. Module title, assessment title, submission date, word count.
2. Submission instructions
3. Learning outcomes that are being assessed.
4. Assessment brief/tasks detailing what the candidate needs to do
5. Student guidelines where applicable to assist you in your understanding of the exact requirements of the assessment.
6. Specific performance criteria mapped against the grading structure.

5.3 SUBMITTING YOUR ASSESSMENT

Your assessment brief will include instructions on how to submit your assessment. Normally, you will be required to submit your assessment electronically to the assessment submission area on your module page on Ulearn by following the submission link.

By submitting your assessment you will be agreeing to the Student Declaration, which confirms that the work you have submitted is your own original work. You will also be agreeing for your work to be scanned through WLCBMS’s plagiarism detection system. It is WLCBMS’s policy to scan all assessments through the Turnitin plagiarism detection system.

Before your assessment submission deadline, you are advised to upload a draft assessment to Ulearn. You will then be able to view the Originality Report generated by Turnitin, which will show any matches in your work to external sources that have not been correctly referenced. Please allow 24 hours for the Turnitin report to be generated by the system and to become available to you, particularly when you re-upload for a second time or more. To view your Turnitin originality report, click on the percentage ‘similarity index score’ which will appear next to your assessment once the report has been generated by the system.

If you experience difficulties uploading your work to Ulearn, you should contact the Student Support Team immediately.
5.0 STUDY AND ASSESSMENT (Continued)

5.4 HELP WITH REFERENCING AND AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

You must ensure that you carefully read the information on plagiarism provided within the Induction module on Ulearn and complete the declaration before commencing your first module.

You must also ensure you have read and understood WLCBMS’s Unfair Practice Policy (Section 6.5 of this Handbook).

Staff involved in the assessment process will use a range of techniques along with their academic judgement, knowledge and experience to assist them in the detection of unfair practice. One of the tools that WLCBMS utilises to help staff identify potential unfair practice is Turnitin. The Turnitin system allows your Tutor to check your work for improper citation, incorrect or inadequate referencing or potential plagiarism by comparing your work against its continuously updated databases. All assessments submitted for formal assessment will be scanned through the Turnitin software.

Before formal submission of your assignment to Ulearn, you can upload your draft assignment to Turnitin via the submission portal. This will enable you to view the draft originality report generated to Turnitin and thus you will have the opportunity to make corrections to your assignment before making your final submissions. You can find instructions on how to do this in section 5.10 below. In addition a guide is available on Ulearn to help you review your Turnitin originality report and identify any problem areas. It is essential for you to read this information before you start planning for your first assessment.

5.5 FAILURE TO SUBMIT

If you fail to submit your assessment, and have not been granted a deferral, you will automatically receive a refer grade. If you are entitled to reattempt the module (i.e. you have a referral opportunity), your next submission will be capped at a Pass. You will also be required to complete the new assessment for the new assessment period.

Please remember that the Turnitin report is just one of the sources of evidence that will be considered when investigating suspected cases of unfair practice. It is important to understand that a Turnitin originality report showing a match to an external source may be used as evidence during the investigation of suspected cases of unfair practice. However, an originality report that shows a low or even a 0% match cannot and will not be accepted as evidence that no unfair practice has taken place.

5.6 DEFERRING YOUR ASSESSMENT

The course is designed to be as flexible as possible, so you can study in your own time, and ensure it fits into your life pattern. If you decide that you are not able to submit your assessment at the scheduled deadline, you may have an opportunity to defer your assessment to the next available assessment period. Please note you may only defer your assessment once.

To arrange a deferral you must contact the Student Support Team no later than two weeks before your scheduled assessment date. Deferral deadline dates are published on the assessment timetable which can be found on Ulearn.

5.7 LEAVE OF ABSENCE

In exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the EAB (Examination & Assessment Board) you may apply for a ‘leave of absence’ of up to 12 calendar months during the maximum course registration timeframe. Requests must be due to serious, long-term circumstances affecting a minimum period of 6 months that were not known at the time of module release.

You will be required to provide full details of your exceptional circumstances along with supporting evidence.

It should be noted that an authorised leave of absence will not extend the maximum course registration period.

If you would like to apply for a leave of absence, please contact the Student Support team via support@wlcb.co.uk
5.8 NOTIFICATION OF ASSESSMENT GRADES

WLCBMS normally returns grades and feedback forms directly to students within six weeks from the official submission date. You will receive your provisional grade and comments from WLCBMS via email.

All grades are subject to ratification by a meeting of the Examination and Assessment Board. Grades are therefore provisional and subject to change until they have been confirmed by the Examination and Assessment Board and External examiner report.

The Examination and Assessment Board will consider and confirm students’ progress and final awards. They are a key part of the quality assurance process monitored by Pearson to ensure the effective standardisation of assessors and verification of assessor decisions.

5.9 REFERRED ASSESSMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSIONS

If you are referred in a module (i.e. you do not achieve a pass grade) you will have one further opportunity to be re-assessed in the module. You would normally be given the opportunity to re-work and re-submit the same paper unless otherwise stated on your assessment feedback. If you have already released your next module you would normally be required to wait until the following study period to retake the assessment.

If you fail your resubmission of the assessment, you may be permitted to re-study the module and be granted two further re-assessment opportunities. However please note that this is subject to the discretion of the Examination and Assessment Board.

If you have no further reassessment opportunities in a module you will be contacted by your student support co-ordinator to discuss your options.

The maximum grade that can be awarded for any re-assessment including re-taken modules is capped at a pass grade.

Please note that fees will apply for module re-takes, please contact the Student Support Team for details of the current fees.

As assessments change at every assessment period, please note that it is your responsibility to ensure you submit the correct paper. If in doubt, please contact the Student Support Team.

5.10 MODULE GRADING STRUCTURE

Each successfully completed module will be graded as a pass, merit or distinction. A pass is awarded for the achievement of all outcomes against the specified assessment criteria. Merit and distinction grades are awarded for higher-level achievement.

To achieve a merit grade you will need to meet all of the requirements for a pass grade and achieve all of the merit grade descriptors. To achieve a distinction you will additionally need to meet all of the distinction grade descriptors.

The generic merit and distinction grade descriptors on the next page describe the learner’s performance over and above that for a pass grade.
5.0 STUDY AND ASSESSMENT (Continued)

5.11 MERIT DESCRIPTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MERIT DESCRIPTORS</th>
<th>EXEMPLAR INDICATIVE CHARACTERISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In order to achieve a <strong>merit</strong> the learner must:</td>
<td>The learner’s evidence shows for example:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Identify and apply strategies to find appropriate solutions | • Effective judgments have been made  
• Complex problems with more than one variable have been explored  
• An effective approach to study and research has been applied |
| Select/design and apply appropriate methods/techniques | • Relevant theories and techniques have been applied  
• A range of methods and techniques have been applied  
• A range of sources of information has been used  
• The selection of methods and techniques/sources has been justified  
• The design of methods/techniques has been justified  
• Complex information/data has been synthesised and processed  
• Appropriate learning methods/techniques have been applied |
| Present and communicate appropriate findings | • The appropriate structure and approach has been used  
• Coherent, logical development of principles/concepts for the intended audience  
• A range of methods of presentation have been used and technical language has been  
• Accurately used the communication has taken place in familiar and unfamiliar contexts |

5.12 DISTINCTION DESCRIPTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTINCTION DESCRIPTORS</th>
<th>EXEMPLAR INDICATIVE CHARACTERISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In order to achieve a <strong>distinction</strong> the learner must:</td>
<td>The learner’s evidence shows for example:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Use critical reflection to evaluate own work and justify valid conclusions | • Conclusions have been arrived at through synthesis of ideas and have been justified  
• The validity of results has been evaluated using defined criteria  
• Self-criticism of approach has taken place  
• Realistic improvements have been proposed against defined characteristics for success |
| Take responsibility for managing and organising activities | • Autonomy/independence has been demonstrated  
• Substantial activities, projects or investigations have been planned, managed and organised  
• Activities have been managed  
• The unforeseen has been accommodated  
• The importance of interdependence has been recognised and achieved |
| Demonstrate convergent/lateral/creative thinking | • Self-evaluation has taken place, ideas generated and decisions taken  
• Convergent and lateral thinking have been applied  
• Problems have been solved  
• Innovation and creative thought have been applied receptiveness to new ideas is evident  
• Effective thinking has taken place in unfamiliar contexts. |

WLCBMS DISTANCE LEARNING STUDENT HANDBOOK
5.13 CALCULATION OF QUALIFICATION GRADE

Once you have successfully completed all of your modules, the Examination and Assessment Board will calculate your overall qualification grade. You will be awarded an overall pass, merit or distinction based on your performance across modules using the rules detailed below.

**Pass Qualification Grade**

Students who achieve the minimum eligible credit value (120 credits for the HNC) will be awarded the qualification at pass grade.

**Qualification grades above pass grade**

Learners will be awarded a merit or distinction qualification grade by the aggregation of points gained through the successful achievement of individual modules. The graded section of the HNC is based on the learner’s best performance in modules at the level or above of the qualification to the value of 75 credits. The number of points available is dependent on the module grade achieved and the credit size of the module (as shown in the ‘Points available per credit at specified module grades’ table below).

The grade achieved in modules from an appropriate HNC may contribute to an HND grade. If a learner moves from HNC to HND then credits from both the HNC and HND can contribute to the best 75 credits of the overall HND grade.

**5.14 RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessment (leading to the award of credit) that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a module through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and so do not need to develop through a programme of learning.

RPL enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities using any valid assessment methodology. Provided that the assessment requirements of a given module or qualification have been met, the use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting a module, modules or a whole qualification. Evidence of learning must be valid and reliable and is subject to scrutiny and approval by the programme leader. Full guidance about Pearson’s policy on RPL can be found on the Pearson website (www.edexcel.com).

### Points available per credit at specified module grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POINTS PER CREDIT</th>
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<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merit</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Qualification Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>GRADE</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 74</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 - 149</td>
<td>Merit</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.0 POLICIES

6.1 ACADEMIC APPEALS
WLCBMS have established an appeals procedure for candidates wishing to appeal against an academic decision. Students should note that appeals against the academic judgement of examiners cannot be accepted. Please refer to the appeals policy on ULearn for full details of the appeals process.

6.2 MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES GUIDELINES
A claim for mitigating circumstances will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances. A successful claim for mitigating circumstances will normally be based on evidence of circumstances that satisfies the criteria below. Namely that the circumstances are: non-academic; unexpected; significantly disruptive; arising from matters beyond a student's control; likely to have affected the student's academic performance to an extent that is material.

In order to be admissible, evidence submitted in support of a claim for mitigating circumstances should satisfy as many as possible of the following criteria: the evidence should be objective (for example medical certificate, death certificate or evidence from a counsellor), verifiable, and relevant. Self-certification will not normally be admissible. The burden of proof is on the student to establish the claim and to submit supporting evidence.

Claims for mitigating circumstances will normally be limited to:
(a) serious personal illness which is not a permanent medical condition in the run-up to an assessment deadline or during an examination;
(b) acute personal or emotional trauma, e.g. acute anxiety or depression, family breakdown, breakdown of close personal relationship;
(c) the death or serious illness of a family member, or other person with whom the student had a close relationship, before the date of the assessment;
(d) significant and unplanned changes to employment circumstances or patterns of employment.
(e) traumatic event (e.g. being assaulted, or witnessing an accident or assault);
(f) Domestic upheaval (for example fire, burglary or eviction);
(g) impact of natural disaster, civil disruption or other major hazard.

A student may not claim extenuating circumstances on the grounds that:
(a) lack of preparation at an assessment event;
(b) s/he considers the marks given to be too low;
(c) s/he did not understand or was unaware of the programme regulations;
(d) s/he misread or missed the published assessment timetable.
(e) normal assessment stress or anxiety experienced running up to the assessment (unless corroborated by medical evidence as a chronic condition and undergoing treatment);
(f) non-serious domestic or personal disruptions (for example moving house, change of job, holidays, weddings, normal job pressure, failed travel arrangements);
(g) study related circumstances (equipment failure or lack of suitable equipment) including failure to have taken back up copies, bunching of deadlines, poor time management;
(h) uploaded wrong assessment.

The examples detailed in both lists are not exhaustive, and are intended only as a guide. In all cases, the Examination and Assessment Board has the ultimate authority to use its discretion, taking into account the full circumstances of a particular case.

Requests for consideration of mitigating circumstances should normally be submitted within 14 days of the date of the assessment affected. If you believe you have mitigating circumstances you should contact your Student Support Team and ask for a Mitigating Circumstances Application form. This should be completed and returned along with any supporting evidence.

6.3 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE
This procedure applies to:
Complaints arising from a student’s educational experience, other than disputes relating to assessment and examinations (see below);
• Complaints in respect of academic and/or administrative support or other services provided by WLCBMS
• Complaints regarding alleged harassment by staff of WLCBMS
• Complaints arising from alleged discrimination by staff of WLCBMS in relation to gender, race, disability, sexual orientation or otherwise.

This list is not exhaustive - complaints falling outside those listed above will be considered and investigated at the discretion of WLCBMS.

The investigation of formal complaints relating to matters which have occurred more than twelve months previously will be investigated at the discretion of WLCBMS.

This procedure does not apply to:
Candidates wishing to appeal against an academic decision – separate procedures exist for such appeals. Candidates should also note that appeals against the academic judgement of examiners cannot be accepted;
Disciplinary matters – these should be dealt with in accordance with separate procedures in place within the validated policy on ULearn for full details of the appeals process.
institution, though complaints will be accepted against the disciplinary procedure process and/or outcome.

Informal Processes

Wherever possible, WLCBMS would wish to see any complaint resolved as close as possible to its point of origin, and with a minimum of formality.

The complaint should be discussed with the person involved and if the matter is not resolved the student should proceed to Stage 1 of the formal process outlined below.

Formal Process-Stage 1

- The complaint should be put in writing to the Student Support Manager.
- A formal response will be provided and/or a meeting will be convened to discuss the issue. This will normally be within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint.
- If there is no resolution, the complaint will be copied to the Principal. A further meeting will be convened to discuss the issue normally within 5 working days.
- If there is no resolution of the complaint, the student has the right to make a formal complaint to Pearson

Formal Process-Stage 2

- The issue should be raised with Pearson through the Quality Standards Manager for Adult Learning and Employment.

Note: The student has the right to be accompanied by a union representative or other representative.

6.4 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Introduction

WLCBMS is committed to providing equal opportunities for staff, external contractors and students and will not tolerate any discriminatory behaviour with respect to any of the following:

- Colour
- Ethnic Origin
- Gender
- Creed
- Martial status
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Other

Aim

WLCBMS will continually develop strategies and procedures to tackle the varying forms of discrimination, which may occur. These will broadly fit into the following categories:

- Direct discrimination – where a person in not treated equally due to any of the categories listed above
- Indirect discrimination – where a requirement, situation or condition, which is applied for all groups, has an adverse effect on one or more groups.
- Harassment – where someone is subjected to unwanted conduct, i.e. unwelcome sexual attention or racial harassment.
- Victimisation – where someone is treated less favourable due to action taken against others.
- Segregation – where someone is segregated due to his or her beliefs, attitudes or opinions

Roles and responsibilities

It is the duty of all individuals and groups associated with WLCBMS to avoid discriminatory practices themselves to condone and discourage discriminatory practices from others.

WLCBMS will encourage those who wish to report instances of discrimination and provide a confidential process by which all discriminatory matters can be dealt with by means of the formal Grievance Procedures. A designated WLCBMS senior manager who will be responsible for equal opportunity monitoring and the point of contact for those who may wish to discuss any discriminatory practice informally in the first instance.

WLCBMS will take action against anyone who is in breach of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

Students

WLCBMS will offer equality for access to all its courses and will encourage the recruitment of students from the widest possible audience both nationally and internationally. WLCBMS will also offer flexibility of access to the curriculum by enabling students to enrol for both modules of programmes and full awards. This will be reinforced by:

- Marketing literature, which is produced for all courses.
- An admissions process, which is sensitive and supportive to the needs of all students, includes an enrolment process and provides for assessment of learning support for those students who may have special needs.
- The course review process will monitor the curriculum, student progress and achievement to ensure that equality of opportunity has taken place.
- All materials used for distance learning study and assessment will be subject to evaluation prior to issue to make sure that they do not contain anything which could be considered discriminatory or offensive! to individual students or groups.
6.5 UNFAIR PRACTICE

Attempting to or actually carrying out any malpractice activity is not permitted by Pearson. The following are examples of malpractice by learners; this list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by Pearson at its discretion:

• Plagiarism by copying and passing off, as the learner’s own, the whole or part(s) of another person’s work, including textbooks, articles, journals, artwork, images, words, computer generated work (including Internet sources), thoughts, inventions and/or discoveries whether published or not, with or without the originator’s permission and without appropriately acknowledging the source.

• Collusion by working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as individual learner work. Learners should not be discouraged from teamwork, as this is an essential key skill for many sectors and subject areas, but the use of minutes, allocating tasks, agreeing outcomes, etc are an essential part of teamwork and this must be made clear to the learners.

• Impersonation by pretending to be someone else in order to produce the work for another or arranging for another to take one’s place in an assessment/examination/test.

• Fabrication of results and/or evidence.

• Failing to abide by the instructions or advice of an assessor, a supervisor, an invigilator, or Pearson conditions in relation to the assessment/examination/test rules, regulations and security.

• Misuse of assessment/examination material.

• Introduction and/or use of unauthorised material contrary to the requirements of supervised assessment/examination/test conditions, for example: notes, study guides, personal organisers, calculators, dictionaries (when prohibited), personal stereos, mobile phones or other similar electronic devices.

• Obtaining, receiving, exchanging or passing on information which could be assessment/examination/test related (or the attempt to) by means of talking or written papers/notes during supervised assessment/examination/test conditions.

• Behaving in such a way as to undermine the integrity of the assessment/examination/test.

• The alteration of any results document, including certificates.

• Assisting learners in the production of work for assessment, where the support has the potential to influence the outcomes of assessment, for example where the assistance involves centre staff producing work for the learner.

• Any alleged incident of malpractice brought to the attention of WLCBMS will be fully investigated. Please refer to WLCBMS’s Unfair Practice policy on Ulearn for full details of the procedure for dealing with suspected cases of Unfair Practice.
6.6 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

WLCBMS is committed to ensuring that the student voice is fully represented in decision making. This occurs through both feedback and representative activities.

Feedback is achieved through completion of module and course surveys. The latter is an annual event but modules are reviewed after each delivery iteration. Information from these surveys is taken to Programmes Committee and Academic Committee. Students are also provided with contact details of named staff from WLCBMS' s Student Support Team who can deal with specific problems as and when they arise. Representation provides opportunities for students to feed into the wider activities of WLCBMS. It has to be recognised that the distributed nature of the student body is less conducive to conventional meetings and that therefore focused use is made of on-line communications to achieve the desired outcomes.

WLCBMS will comply with the requirement to have in place a Student Staff Liaison Committee and appointed student representatives in order to ensure that students have the opportunity for formal input into the management of the Courses. Students will receive details of the student representative process as part of their induction and in their Student Handbooks. The principles outlined by the University and set out below will be adhered to.

Purpose of Student Representatives

Student representatives will be required to:

• Provide a student voice at all levels of Course management;
• Voice problems suggestions or requests raised by members of the student body;
• Act as representatives on relevant course committees;
• Feed back to the student body on issues discussed during relevant meetings;
• Provide student involvement in the planning and development of Courses.

Principles for the Appointment and Role of Student Representative

WLCBMS has:

1. Published guidelines for the selection and appointment of student representatives (including provision for appointments to be made by the student body);
2. Published terms of office for student representatives including:
   a) Details of the duration of office and any payment and/or reimbursement of expenses;
   b) Duties of the role (a role description) including reference to required attendance at relevant meeting;
   c) Information on the benefits of being a student representative;
   d) Details of what training and/or induction a student representative should expect to receive.

Programmes Committee

The Programmes Committee provides an opportunity for staff and student representatives to meet together for discussion and consultation about validated schemes of study and other matters relating to the quality of students' academic experience will be held on a quarterly basis. This will be held on-line through a discussion forum. In some cases where appropriate multiple courses will be considered at the same time.

Composition

The Programmes Committee will include the student representative(s) and designated members of WLCBMS Academic/Administrative staff. All members will have the right to submit items for inclusion on the agenda and raise items for discussion. The Committee is chaired by Programmes Manager or a representative and full minutes should be kept of each meeting including a note on items requiring action.

Items for Discussion/Agenda

These will include, inter alia:

1. Discussion of matters raised by students, and matters on which WLCBMS wishes to seek student views;
2. The outcomes of student evaluation of schemes (via module evaluation forms) responses; and
3. Consideration of proposals for new schemes and any changes to current schemes.

Academic Committee

There will be one student representative on Academic Committee. Individuals nominated for this post must be existing student representatives from across WLCBMS's courses. Where there is more than one nomination he/she will be elected by the student body.
6.7 GUIDELINES FOR THE SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Why is student representation important?

Students are a key stakeholder in everything that WLCBMS does. Through student representation WLCBMS ensures that the student voice is heard when making decisions about the learning experience. Representation gives students the opportunity to share their opinion not only on their programme developments, but also the wider activities of WLCBMS.

The Role of the Student Representative

Student representatives are members of WLCBMS’s Course Committee which meets every four months to consider programme-related issues. The student representative’s role is to gather feedback from fellow students on what works well with the programme, areas for improvement and any concerns to be addressed. WLCBMS gives student representatives all the tools to collect this information effectively. Student representatives will then highlight and present key findings to WLCBMS’s Programmes Committee for consideration.

In addition to this, one student representative will also be made a member of WLCBMS’s Academic Committee and Quality Assurance Committee which again meets every four months to make decisions on a wide range of issues, such as new programmes, Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and also reviews WLCBMS’s provision to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

What are the benefits of becoming a student representative?

Becoming a student representative is an opportunity to gain valuable skills that look impressive on your CV, while networking and engaging with peers and academic tutors. That aside, becoming a student representative allows you to communicate the important views of your student community to senior members of staff at WLCBMS; ensuring your voices are heard and changes are made in the right places.

Making the student representative role a convenient and positive experience for you

The good news is that student representatives normally attend the meetings online. So location is not an issue and there is little inconvenience when participating. Being a student representative can also demonstrate your dedication to learning and ability to work with fellow students and bring their views to a new audience.

How student representatives are appointed

Representatives are elected to represent all students from a programme (or group of programmes). Any active student can nominate him/herself as a student representative for that programme when the election period has been announced.

The student support team will inform students every year when nominations are open and will include clear instructions on how nominations can be made and how the online voting system works.

How you can become part of this

To be considered for the role, you will need to respond to the call for nominations with a short statement about yourself, why you believe you will make a good student representative and why students should vote for you.

Voting will then be opened to the student body for a limited period of time using online survey mechanisms.

How you can contact your current student representative today

We encourage students to discuss with their student representative any ideas for improvement or feedback about their programme. You can do this by posting on the Student Feedback Forum which can be found on the Induction page, or by sending a direct message to your student representative through Ulearn.

We hope you can join the debate.

6.0 POLICIES
(Continued)
7.1 APPENDIX 1 - LEARNING CONTRACT

This learning agreement is a ‘partnership’ between you, the student, and WLCBMS. To help you understand the roles and responsibilities of each party during the learning process, please take the time to read this Learning Contract and to confirm you commitment to the contract to WLCBMS.

By embarking on this programme of study you agree to:

• Abide by WLCBMS rules and regulations
• Be responsible for your own learning
• Attend and participate in scheduled activities when required
• Utilise the tutoring system when required to do so via Ulearn
• Utilise the student support mechanisms whenever you need guidance or advice
• Retain copies of the assessment feedback sheets
• Submit your own work and not plagiarise the work of others

We WLCBMS, agree to:

• Give you advice and guidance regarding all aspects of your programme of study
• Provide you with the necessary learning and resource materials to enable you to undertake the learning process
• Give you regular feedback via the tutorial system regarding your progress on the course, including assessments
• Respond to queries normally within two working days
• Return grades and assessment feedback to students normally within six weeks of the official submission date
• Provide you with tutorial/learning support via Ulearn

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