Internal Verification Policy

<u>Purpose</u>

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

Oxford Knights College's assessment instruments are valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and consistent with the standards set by the relevant Awarding Body decisions made by assessors are accurate and consistent for the same qualification for all students and are applied fairly and consistently to meet awarding body requirements and national standards of achievement

<u>Scope</u>

This policy applies to all courses offered by Oxford Knights College (OKC) where assessment for certification credit rated by relevant Awarding Bodies is wholly or partly the responsibility of the College.

This policy covers the development of assessment instruments; the verification of evidence; the recording of accurate internal verification documents to meet the criteria set by all Awarding Bodies with whom the College works.

<u>Introduction</u>

Oxford Knights College will ensure that assessment criteria established by Awarding Bodies are met; that national standards are applied, and the integrity of the assessment process is quality assured using a robust verification process.

Verification is a crucial element in ensuring the quality of delivery and assessment of all courses. It ensures that all students that undertake the same qualification are assessed fairly and consistently to the specified standard set by the Awarding Body.

As verification requirements differ from Awarding Body to Awarding Body, this policy establishes clear guidelines on what the minimum approach should be. Any conditions or requirements that are in excess of this policy should be followed and verification records should be updated to reflect this.

<u>Conflict of Interest</u>

All staff are made aware of their responsibility to declare any potential conflict of interest relating to assessment. Any personal interest in the outcome of an assessment may pose a risk to the integrity of the assessment. Staff should refer to the Conflict of Interest Policy which proposes steps that must be taken and outlines when disclosures should be made to mitigate against this risk.

<u>Assessment Instruments</u>

The Internal Verifier (IV) is responsible for ensuring suitable assessment instruments are used. The IV should ensure that the chosen assessment instrument is valid, fair and practicable. A valid assessment is one that is designed to allow candidates to produce evidence to show that they have the required knowledge, understanding and skills for the qualification they are aiming for.

All assessment instruments must be internally Prior Verified against evidence requirements before being taken by students. Even when assessments are provided by the Awarding Body the IV must ensure that the assessments are Prior Verified and that all assessors have a common understanding of the standards required. The IV will usually meet with assessors to discuss planned assessments to

help minimise any difference in interpretation. Re-assessments must differentiate from the original or subsequent assessments.

On some occasions, the IV will use prior verification services offered by the Awarding Body (e.g., OKC/ATHE). These services provide feedback on proposed assessment instruments, giving the School confidence that the proposed assessment is fit for purpose.

Standardisation Exercises

When assessing the standard of student assignments, the assessors' judgements should be accurate and consistent across all assignments. Standardisation is an important part of ensuring the reliability of assessment decisions for all students. By conducting standardisation exercises, the School can identify any discrepancies that may exist between judgements made by assessors on students' evidence and implement remedial adjustments.

Prior to delivery relevant assessors and IV's for a unit should meet and discuss the marking criteria used for the assessments so that differences between interpretations can be discussed and agreement made about the criteria for marking. Prior to this meeting an example assessment can be used which the assessor's mark. The results can be discussed at the meeting to ensure that assessors are marking to the same standard. Amendments to the marking criteria can be made in the meeting and the IV will be responsible for recording the changes.

Standardisation exercises will continue throughout the assessment process, but prior to final marking. The IV will meet with the assessor(s) and select common pieces of work for marking by all assessors with subsequent discussion of any marks awarded. The IV will be responsible for recording any conclusions made during the meeting and disseminating any feedback to assessors.

Sampling Assessment Decisions and Candidate Evidence

The IV must select a sample of candidate evidence to check that each assessor is making consistent decisions in line with national standards. The IV will take a representative sample of the student's work and check to see if he/she agrees with the assessor's judgements. The sampling process should be on-going and not just loaded towards the end of the assessment process. This way, assessment judgements can be reviewed by the IV before summative decisions are made.

Candidate Evidence is sampled to ensure that:

- Assessment has been carried out in accordance with the unit specification;
- Everyone is assessing a particular unit to the same standards; and
- Assessors apply the standard consistently between candidates;
- Feedback is appropriate and provides sufficient guidance to the student as feedforward. The IV is solely responsible for making sure that the appropriate paperwork is complete. Candidate evidence will be stored securely as outlined in the Candidate Assessment Evidence Retention Policy.

The outcomes of internal verification will be fed back to the assessors and used to refine assessment.

All assessment that leads to certification must be sampled and signed off by the IV before results are sent to the Awarding Body. This will be done once the IV is satisfied with the assessment decisions, and once any corrective action has been taken. The IV sign off assessments by countersigning the assessor's form.

<u>Sampling Method</u>

 The sampling method used should ensure standardisation and should be conducted across:

Groups:

- Modes of delivery
- Assessors
- All assessment methods

The IV will be responsible for adopting a suitable method for determining a representative sample size. The IV will ensure that sampling should be sufficient to ensure consistency of assessment decisions across each qualification over time. All assessors and assessment methods should be included in the sample over time.

The IV will consider several key features when selecting a sample.

These are:

- first time delivery of a qualification or award
- new assessor
- range of levels of qualifications
- range of candidate groups
- mode of delivery (full/part time, online, multiple sites, partnership arrangement)
- age and gender of candidates
- achieved/not achieved
- revised assessment instruments
- previous issues or problems identified by internal or external verification
- cost and resource effectiveness

In the absence of any specifications from the Awarding Body, the number of candidates to be sampled will be the square root of the number enrolled plus one. This is illustrated in the following table:

Number of Students Minimum Sample Size

Five (5)

Where an Awarding Body stipulates a higher sampling requirement, this higher sampling requirement is met.

<u>Maintaining Assessment and Verification Records</u>

Oxford Knights College is committed to accurately recording internal verification activity and to secure storage of assessment and verification records to be made available to the External Verifier and to the OKC/ATHE when needed.

The records that are kept will include:

- validated assessment material
- reports of any meetings, including standardisation exercises

- records of observation of assessment
- checklists/marking schemes
- candidate records
- records of all sampling activity
- feedback to assessors

The IV will be responsible for collecting all the above assessment and verification records. The records will be stored and transported securely. They should be stored in either locked cabinets or locked rooms with controlled access. Electronic material will be held securely using e-portfolios or virtual learning environments. The above records will be made available to EVs and the OKC/ATHE upon request.

Post-Delivery Verification

Assessors and the Internal Verification team will meet at the end of the semester to discuss the assessment and IV activity during that semester. Any forward actions to improve practice in the next round of delivery will be recorded and disseminated to the relevant personnel before the next round of assessment.