

ULSTER UNIVERSITY

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FORUM
23 JANUARY 2018

Agenda Item: 6

TITLE: AUDIT OF GCSE EVIDENCE FOR 2017 ENROLMENT

Paper No: CPF/18/03

SUMMARY:

To consider a paper on the outcomes from the audit of GCSE evidence for students enrolled on the 2017/18 academic year.

ACTION REQUIRED:

For consideration.

PARTNERSHIP MANAGERS, DECEMBER 2017

SUMMARY OF AUDIT OF GCSE EVIDENCE FOR 2017 ENROLMENTS

SPMs audited a sample of enrolment forms which had been received by the Collaborative Courses Unit from all colleges. No students were registered without some form of evidence attached to the form, and the aim of the audit was to establish the authenticity and appropriateness of the evidence submitted.

The University publishes a list of English and mathematics qualifications which are accepted as evidence of competence, and align with a grade C in GCSE¹. All candidates must present GCSE English grade C minimum (or University-approved equivalent), and many candidates must present GCSE mathematics, with a minimum of grades C or B depending on the course. The audit focused on the quality and the acceptability of the evidence attached.

Many candidates presented scanned Certificates or Certifying Statements of Results; where the College had verified their authenticity, and the scans were legible, this is acceptable and the best form of evidence. One College used highlighting to identify where the maths and English requirements were met; this is good practice as the evidence presented was frequently confusing. One College also verified statements from Schools.

However, in the main, at least one quarter of the forms the reviewers audited were problematic in terms of evidence, and would not have been accepted by the University. Provisional statements of results; letters from school secretaries/ college administrators; SIMS print outs; candidate statements of results; AQA reviews of marking; illegible scans; notifications of performance; college results letters for Ulster-validated courses: all were accepted from candidates but were deemed inappropriate as evidence by the reviewers. Many enrolment forms were ticked by presumed Course Directors as having documentary GCSE evidence attached, but were not signed or dated; and in some cases grades were manually changed on printouts.

The outcomes of the audit are as follows:

1. The University will describe the minimum data requirements for acceptable evidence to facilitate future admissions processing.
2. A new form will be required for each course, with evidence of approval from a Quality Manager to say the documentary evidence submitted for each candidate in a cohort is appropriate.

¹ <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/apply/entrance-requirements>

ACCEPTABLE EVIDENCE TO MEET GCSE REQUIREMENTS

The best evidence is actual completion Certificates (or Certifying Statements) of a learner's achievement.

Where it is not always possible to provide this, any evidence submitted must comply with minimum data requirements².

The **minimum** data fields that we require to be clearly visible on all submitted evidence are:

- Full name of the learner
- Qualification name
- Level /Grade achieved
- Date of achievement/award
- Awarding Organisation identifier (i.e. logo/web address)

There are *additional* requirements depending on the nature of the evidence.

Any form of evidence that states it is *provisional* will not be accepted as it does not constitute robust evidence of a learner's achievement. Provisional results can be subject to change, prior to final awards being made, and therefore cannot be relied upon as being accurate.

Any evidence that is submitted must be of good quality with all of the required data clearly visible.

If candidates wish to use evidence from SIMS, or similar based on ULIs/ ULNs, then, as a minimum, the following information will need to be clearly displayed on any evidence submitted:

- • Learner's full name
- • Qualification name
- • Examination Board name
- • Status of achievement i.e. certificate or unit
- • Grade/Result
- • Date of achievement/award date

In addition, SIMS reports/prints or candidate statements of results must be signed and dated by an appropriate representative from the school, such as an Examinations Officer or Head Teacher and have either the school stamp/logo included or be on school headed paper. If the evidence is missing for any of these requirements then the evidence will not be accepted.

Letters from Schools attesting to candidate's achievements must be submitted using a verification form.

² This guidance adapted from acecerts.co.uk/docs/AcceptableEvidenceGuidanceNotesSeptember2014V2.pdf



VERIFICATION OF QUALIFICATION

Section 1: to be completed by the applicant

Please complete this section and then ask the administrative authorities at your school/ institution to complete Section 2 below. We cannot accept this form alone as proof of your qualifications. Please also ensure that attached documentation meets all requirements for properly certified documents as shown at the end of this form.

Family name	
Given name(s)	
Course applied for at College	

Section 2: to be completed by the administrative authority of the candidate's previous school/ institution.

School/ Institution	
Qualification and Subject (please attach certified copy of the relevant qualification showing the achieved grades/ results)	
Final mark/ results	
Date qualification(s) obtained	
Signed	
Name	
Position	
Official email address	
Date	

Guidance for providing properly certified documents

1. Each page must be originally signed by your head teacher or other teacher from your school and we can only accept handwritten signatures.
2. The signatory must print his/her name.
3. The signatory must also include job title.
4. Each page must have the school/institution stamp.

➤ *The Exam Board*

**Exam Board
General Certificate
of Education**

JUNE 2012

This is to certify that

JOHN SMITH

SOUTH COLLEGE LONDON

obtained the grades indicated in the following subject(s):

ADVANCED LEVEL (TWO SUBJECTS)		caps CODE
GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS	GRADE A* (a)	999/1234/C
HISTORY	GRADE A (a)	888/4321/K

Original signature ⇨ Helen Bloggs

Printed name ⇨ HELEN BLOGGS

Title ⇨ HEAD TEACHER

Official stamp ⇨



Example of correctly certified document

Based on LSE verification of qualification form³

³ <http://www.lse.ac.uk/study-at-lse/Undergraduate/Assets/PDF/2013-LSE-UG-Verification-Form.pdf>



VERIFICATION OF GCSE EVIDENCE BY PARTNER QUALITY MANAGER

Please attach this cover sheet to each set of course enrolment forms at submission.

COURSE TITLE	
COURSE CODE(S)	
QUALITY MANAGER	
DATE OF COMPLETION	

I have verified and upheld the authenticity of the GCSE (or University-approved equivalent) evidence attached to each of the enrolment forms on the above-named course.

Signature:

Date: