ONLINE LEARNING POLICY

1.   Introduction

This policy covers any teaching and learning activity delivered by cHRysos HR using online learning including apprenticeships and other accredited or non-accredited programmes. In this policy, the term online learning is used to describe teaching and learning activities that take place using technology via web applications and a virtual classroom environment.

Online learning is normally part of a blended Learning programme where it is possible for learners to achieve specified learning outcomes and requirements of a programme or unit without attending the in person.

The key aims of this policy are to safeguard learners and cHRysos HR team members and enhance the learner experience.

The policy is underpinned by other policies in place within cHRysos HR, namely: Safeguarding and Prevent, Health, Safety and Welfare, Equal Opportunity, Harassment and Bullying, Data Protection, Use of IT.

2.   Quality Assurance

cHRysos HR has formal quality assurance practices in place to maintain and improve the quality, equity, and efficiency of the teaching, learning and assessment we provide. One of the principles of our QA practices is ensuring that learners studying via online learning have an experience which is, wherever practicable and possible, comparable with face-to-face delivery, supported by a shared understanding of the expectations and responsibilities of all parties involved.

Our blended learning programmes are validated in the same way as any other programme with consideration and ongoing monitoring given to:

- the management of the learning experience
- the suitability, security and reliability of the learning platform and software
- the skills, training, and continuous professional development of the cHRysos HR team
- support arrangements in place for learners
- contingency plans in case of technological failure or another incident or emergency

3.   Expectations on the cHRysos HR team and its learners

We view learning as a partnership between all members of the cHRysos HR team, individual learners, and employers, with a shared set of expectations.

cHRysos HR will ensure that learners are provided with:

- an online learning platform that is secure, reliable, and fit for purpose.
- online learning materials that are appropriate to the syllabus and level of the programme of study.
- an appropriate contingency plan, to be implemented in the event of failure of the technology.
- an induction to their programme and how to use the learning platform, including information about how to contact cHRysos HR team members, how to stay safe online, a schedule for the delivery of their programme of study and assessment, an explanation of the expectations placed upon them for their programme of study.
- information about the minimum technical requirements for the computer facilities required to access and use the online learning platforms.
- opportunities to give feedback on their experience of the programme.
- access to a programme handbook and policies relevant to their programme and their experience of studying with cHRysos HR.

- remote learner services support wherever possible and practicable, within normal working hours.
- Support where required for developing their IT skills.

Learners will ensure that they:

- have regular and reliable access to the internet with appropriate firewall protection and a computer that meets the minimum technical requirements specified by cHRysos HR (Appendix 1).
- have access to microphone and webcam facilities when attending online live workshop sessions.
- make their own arrangements for IT support to resolve technical failures relating to their internet Service Provider, firewall protection and their computer hardware and software. cHRysos HR can only answer queries or provide support for technical issues relating to login data, access to programme materials following login and corrupted learning materials.
- provide, on request, evidence of their identify for verification by cHRysos HR to prevent academic misconduct.
- engage with the learning materials and mode of delivery and actively participate in live online workshop sessions.
- conform to the schedule for programme delivery and assessment, attend scheduled live online workshop sessions or notify the tutor as soon as possible if they are not able to attend. Regular attendance at workshop sessions is a requirement of successful programme completion and repeated non-attendance may result in being asked to withdraw from the programme of study. Please consult our attendance policy for guidance if you are absent.
- monitor access to the learning materials and alert cHRysos HR if learning materials are corrupted or access is unavailable.
- take responsibility for developing their IT skills, where appropriate, so that they can follow instructions about how to use their computer to study and communicate, how to access and use online learning materials, and how to join and participate in online workshops using microphone and webcam facilities.
- regularly check the email account notified to cHRysos HR as a point of contact, for any essential communication about their programme of study.

cHRysos HR operates a 'cameras on' policy for both learners and cHRysos HR team members during live online workshop sessions.

Employers who have an apprentice studying with cHRysos HR will ensure that the apprentice has:

- access to the internet with appropriate firewall protection and a computer that meets the minimum technical requirements specified by cHRysos HR.
- access to microphone and webcam facilities when attending online live workshop sessions.
- access to IT support to resolve technical matters impacting on their ability to engage with online learning.
- support in being able to conform to the schedule for programme delivery and assessment and attending scheduled live online workshops.
- Support where required for developing their IT skills. Appendix 2 is a useful document for identifying any skills and knowledge gaps that may impact on accessing online learning.

4.   Safeguarding

Engagement with online learning including involvement in online forums and live online workshop sessions must not be used to:

- Promote terrorism, share unlawful material, or material that is indecent, offensive, threatening, or discriminatory, except during recognised research or teaching that is permitted under UK and international law.
- Harass, bully, harm or exploit any individual or attempt to radicalise any individual.

- Cause offence, concern or annoyance to others including posting or making inappropriate comments about learners, members of staff, associates, or the organisation. Genuine scholarly criticism and debate is acceptable.

If you are concerned about a safeguarding issue affecting yourself or others during use of online learning, you should report the matter through the cHRysos HR Safeguarding and Prevent policy and procedures.

Author	Sheila Moore
Position	Managing Director
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Signature	

APPENDIX 1

IT TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCESSING ONLINE LEARNING

TO USE MOODLE YOU NEED:

Operating system	PC with Pentium II 500 MHz and above, with XP operating system or better MAC Power PC,G3 233 MHz machines or better, with OS X latest version Both PCs and Macs should have a sound card with speakers or headphones
Internet connection	Broadband
Screen resolution	At least 800 x 600 (min. 1024x768 recommended)
Web browser	Preferably Chrome or Firefox The browser must be set to accept cookies and to show the newest version of a page. Pop-up blocker disabled
Software	Windows Media Player Microsoft Word or an equivalent word processor which can save documents in the format .doc or .docx. Access to an email service Adobe Reader may be required to open online material Adobe Flash Player
Security	Suitable anti-virus software

TO JOIN WORKSHOPS USING MICROSOFT TEAMS YOU NEED:

Attendees can join a meeting from anywhere, anytime using a compatible computer or mobile device.

Operating system	Microsoft Teams can be installed on PCs, Macs, and mobile devices, and can also be accessed via a web browser. 32-bit and 64-bit versions of Windows (8.1 or higher – Windows 10 recommended) ARM64 for Windows 10 on ARM Windows Server (2012 R2 or later) macOS 10.14 or higher (Latest version recommended) Linux (in .deb and .rpm formats) Chrome OS
Internet connection	When hosting a meeting using the Teams desktop client, your PC requires a dual-core 1.1Ghz or higher processer (4-core processor or better is recommended) and at least 4GB of RAM (Teams requires a dedicated 4GB of RAM over and above any other system requirements).
Web browser	Windows: Edge RS2 or later, or Chromium-based version, Firefox 87+, Chrome 72+ macOS: Safari 14+, Firefox 87+, Chrome 72+ Linux: Firefox 87+, Chrome 72+
Software	Meetings can be hosted or joined using the desktop client (Windows, macOS, Linux), browser client (Edge, Firefox, Chrome, Safari), and mobile apps (iOS, Android).
Hardware	Hardware requirements for Teams on a Windows PC requires 2-core processor. For higher video/screen share resolution and frame rate, a 4-core processor or better is recommended.

	Background video effects require Windows 10 or a processor with AVX2 instruction set.
	To fully participate in Teams meetings with audio and video, you will require speakers or headphones, a microphone, and a webcam. These devices may be built-in to your device, or you may be required to connect an external headset and camera. Teams should automatically detect any connected devices which can be selected in the audio and camera settings.
	When hosting a session, use a wired headset when possible. This will increase the audio quality, decrease the chance of echoes or audio distortion, and will be more reliable than a wireless headset. Bluetooth audio devices can increase latency, are prone to connection issues, and can run low on battery during a session.
Mobile device	Supported mobile platforms for Teams mobile apps are the following:
	Android: 8.0 or higher. Support is limited to the last four major versions of Android. When a new major version of Android is released, the new version and the previous three versions are officially supported.
	iOS: 12.0 or higher. Support is limited to the two most recent major versions of iOS. When a new major version of iOS is released, the new version of iOS and the previous version are officially supported.
Virtual backgrounds	Teams can allow you to conceal or blur your background, replacing it with an image or video. This can be customised during a meeting by opening the Teams **More actions** menu and selecting **Apply background effects**.
	Please note the quality of this feature can be impacted by your PC specifications. If your PC does not meet the requirements, you can still use the feature, but you may benefit from a green screen or neutral background for Teams to distinguish your image from the background.

Supporting technical notes

Internet Connection

Distance learning programmes and online learning all require extensive access to online resources. As such, a broadband connection of at least 1Mbps is recommended. Higher speed services would be advantageous due to the reduced load times for online resources. A dial up connection is not recommended.

Electronic submissions for assessment

These should be word-processed documents in Microsoft Word format (either .doc or .docx). Learners can submit assignments prepared using a Mac, running their preferred word processor and a standard web browser, as long as they submit work in one of these formats.

Computer Security and Disaster Recovery

Keeping your PC secure and ensuring coursework can be recovered in the event of a disaster is extremely important.

Computer and printer failure cannot be used as a reason to be granted an extended deadline for an assignment.

To try and ensure your PC is kept as secure as possible:

- Use strong virus protection, ensure it is kept up to date and run scans for viruses at least once a month.
- Use strong passwords with numbers and upper- and lower-case letters. Do not use common words or names. Do not use the same password for everything.
- Be aware when using your computer that most threats can be eliminated by taking care what links you click on in emails and online, being careful what email attachments you open, being careful where you browse on the internet, being careful what you say yes to when a dialogue box appears.
- Make sure the operating system and software are kept up to date using services such as Windows Update.
- Use a Firewall. Windows has a firewall built in which is more than adequate in most cases.

It is very important that you can recover your work in the event of a PC disaster, the following can help:

- Save your work regularly.
- Save your work in versions, especially large assignments to minimise loss of work in the event of a file corruption.
- Backup your work regularly – consider using an online service such as Dropbox or Microsoft OneDrive which is part of Office 365. You could also email assignment backups to yourself.
- Make sure you have your computer's recovery disk available in case it needs reinstalling because of failure.

APPENDIX 2:   IT SKILLS GUIDANCE FOR ONLINE LEARNING

1	USING WINDOWS	Yes	No
1.1	Login and understand the password procedures (if applicable)		
1.2	Run an application using Desktop or Start menu shortcuts or the programs Menu		
1.3	Run several programs simultaneously and switch between them (multi-tasking)		
1.4	Minimise, maximise, restore, move, resize and close windows		

2	WINDOWS APPLICATIONS - GENERAL	Yes	No
2.1	Create a new file		
2.2	Save, Save as, and open a file		
2.3	Save a file in different folders or different drives		
2.4	Print a file		
2.5	Cut, copy, and paste within a file, between files and applications		
2.6	Use the online help menu		

3	WORD PROCESSING (using Word)	Yes	No
3.1	Open a new blank document		
3.2	Save and edit documents		
3.3	Save in different formats, and earlier versions of word		
3.4	Use formatting techniques including headings, bold, underline, font sizes etc.		
3.5	Insert graphics (copy/paste/clip arts)		
3.6	Add headers and footers		
3.7	Use spell checker		
3.8	Insert tables		
3.9	Create publications using text boxes, Word Art		
3.10	Insert images/photographs		
3.11	Format text and using columns		

4	Internet	Yes	No
4.1a	Do you know what a URL is?		
4.1b	Do you know what a hyperlink is?		
4.1	Enter web addresses (URLs) to access sites directly		
4.2	Follow hyperlinks to access other pages and sites		
4.3	Copy text and graphics from the web		
4.4	Use one search engines e.g. Google		

4.5	Download multimedia files (music, video, images)		

5	POWERPOINT	Yes	No
5.1	Create and use a PowerPoint presentation		
5.2	Edit a PowerPoint presentation		
5.3	Save a PowerPoint presentation		

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