



# Exam Policy and Contingency Plan

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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

This policy has been written to ensure examinations are conducted appropriately within the JCQ regulations and that a consistent and effective approach in the event of major disruption to the examination system is maintained. The objectives are:

- to ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of candidates
- to ensure the operation of an efficient exam system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff
- to ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of major disruption to the examination system

## **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

This policy applies to all staff who are involved in the examinations process. It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the college's exam processes to read, understand and implement this policy.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Director of Faculty – Enterprise & Academic Studies**

- Overall responsibility for the campuses as exam centres for GCE, GCSE and WBQ.
- Responsibility for reporting all suspicious or actual incidents of malpractice (refer to the JCQ document '*Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments*').

### **Head of Quality**

- Overall responsibility for the campuses as exam centres for all Vocational Qualifications
- Responsibility for reporting all suspicious or actual incidents of malpractice (refer to individual awarding organisation regulations)

### **Exams Coordinator (EC)**

- Manages the administration of public and internal exams and analysis of exam results.
- Responsible for standardising and writing examination procedures and developing links with awarding bodies.
- Imports awarding organisation base data and sets up reference data in the college's MIS to facilitate college exam entries.
- Assists in improving award data quality in preparation for the Annual Performance Measures.
- Recruits, monitors and trains the Internal and External invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams.

### **Exams Officer (EO)**

- Advises the campus management, subject lecturers and other relevant support staff on annual exam timetables, entry and claims procedures as set by the various exam boards.
- Oversees the production and distribution to staff and candidates of an annual calendar for all exams in which candidates will be involved and communicates regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events.
- Ensures that candidates and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the exam timetable that will affect them.
- Consults with teaching staff to ensure that necessary coursework is completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
- Receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts.

- Processes access arrangements and assists the ALSCO in administering those that are granted.
- Makes applications for special consideration using the JCQ *Access arrangements and special considerations regulations* and '*Guidance relating to candidates who are eligible for adjustments in examinations*'
- Maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.
- Identifies and manages exam timetable clashes
- Accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges.
- Tracks despatch of coursework and stores returned coursework and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule.
- Arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards appeals/re-mark requests to the relevant member of staff.
- Maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.
- Invigilates exams as and when required

### **Head of School**

- Organisation of teaching and learning
- External validation of courses followed at post-16
- Provide guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exam entries or amendments to entries.
- Support post-results procedures as appropriate including special consideration processes.
- Ensure lecturers adhere to deadlines as set by the exams officer.
- Confirm and sign entries (in the absence of subject lecturers).
- Understand coursework regulations and sign a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own (in the absence of subject lecturers)
- Understand exam regulations

### **Subject Lecturers**

- Refer exam candidates to ALNCO for access arrangement assessment (as soon as possible after the start of the course).
- Submit candidate names to Exams staff for entry, registration and certification claims.
- Submit coursework marks to Awarding Organisation secure website by the deadline

### **ALN Manager and ALSCOs**

- Identify and test candidates' requirements for access arrangements.
- Prepare and submit to exams office evidence for inspection purposes
- Provide additional support where identified (spelling, reading, mathematics, dyslexia, hearing impairment, English for speakers of other languages and IT equipment) to help candidates achieve their course aims.

### **Invigilators**

- Keep up to date with knowledge of JCQ ICE rules and regulations and attend update training as required.
- Collect exam papers and other material from the exams office before the start of the exam.
- Proactively invigilate examinations and assessments
- Collect all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and their return to the exams office.
- Ensure all secure documents are returned to the exams officer after the exam.

### **Candidates**

- Confirm and signature of entries.

- Understand coursework regulations and sign a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.
- Understand exam regulations

### **MIS Team**

- Support for the input of data.
- Posting of exam papers.
- To invigilate examinations if required

### **DETAIL OF POLICY**

#### **Qualifications offered**

- The qualifications offered at this college are decided by the Director of Curriculum, Faculty Directors and Head of School.
- The main qualifications offered are A/AS levels, GCSE, BTEC, NVQ, Essential Skills, Apprenticeships, Foundation Degrees and various other VRQs.
- The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found on the college's web site. If there has been a change of syllabus from the previous year, the exams office must be informed by the 31st July of each academic year by the Head of Curriculum.

#### **Exam seasons, timetables and clashes**

- Internal exams, mock exams and assessments are scheduled at relevant times throughout the year.
- External exams are scheduled in January, May, June, November and on demand. The Examination Coordinator and Exams Team will organise and plan for all external/Internal exams under the direction of the Head of Information Services.
- Timetables are circulated and clashes dealt with on a series by series basis
- Exams for HE courses are set by the relevant Higher Education Institution

#### **Entries, entry details, late entries external candidates and resits**

- Candidates are selected and authorised for their exam entries by the Heads of School and subject lecturers
- A candidate cannot request a subject entry or withdrawal without authorisation from their subject lecturer.
- Learners will not normally be allowed to sit examinations outside the College's academic offer.
- External candidates are only accepted on a case by case basis. Application must be made in writing to the Head of Centre. Following consideration of the application, external candidates will be informed of the head of Centre's decision in writing.
- The college does not routinely act as an exam centre for other organisations. Exception will be made for university entrance exams eg BMAT, which will only be offered to Coleg Gwent learners and for professional exams eg ILEX where all candidates may be external.
- Candidates will be issued with their Statements of Entry, Instructions for Clash Candidates and Clash forms at least one month before the beginning of the exam season. These will be posted to the candidate's home.
- The exams team will accept withdrawals, amendments and changes to entries and registrations up to the specific deadline set by the examination office.
- Late entries must be authorised by the subject lecturer.
- Candidates may re-sit units on payment of the relevant fee as detailed in the College Fee Policy and by submitting the re-sit form before the agreed deadline. It is the candidate's responsibility to double check entry codes before submission.
- Resit decisions must be made in consultation with subject lecturers and Heads of School.

## Exam Fees

- Normal registration and exam fees are paid by the college.
- The college reserves the right not to enter candidates for exams due to poor attendance or other relevant reason.
- Fees for examinations for university entrance are paid by the learner. Learners who experience financial difficulty in paying exam fees should contact the Head of School in the first instance.
- Late entry or amendment fees are paid by either the learner or the department depending on whoever is responsible for the need to make a change.
- Re-sit fees are paid by the candidates except in exceptional circumstances.

## Equality Legislation

- Learners may require alternative examination arrangements for equality reasons as defined by the Equality Act 2010. These include:
  - Learners with a specific learning difficulty, physical disability, mental health or other medical condition that is likely to affect performance in an examination.
  - Learners with a temporary condition or illness which may be of a short duration e.g. a sprained wrist of the writing hand, or it may last for much or all of the learner's course e.g. upper limb disorder, pregnant/breastfeeding.
  - Any learner from a particular religious background that may find there is a clash between a religious festival and an exam date and they may wish to explore whether it is possible to have adjustments made.

## Access Arrangement

- Exam access arrangements allow learners who are unable to sit formal examinations under usual exam conditions as a result of a disability or other conditions, to have the same opportunities through differing ways to demonstrate their skills and abilities, as other learners. This is by minimising the impact of the learner's disability or other conditions on performance in assessment through adjustments to the exam arrangements, to enable learners to demonstrate their knowledge and competence without changing the demands or validity of the assessment. An access arrangement which meets the needs of a learner with disabilities constitutes a 'reasonable adjustment'.
- The Equality Act 2010 requires that reasonable adjustments are applied to reduce or remove the effects of a 'substantial disadvantage' for learners with disabilities' in an assessment.
- An adjustment may not be deemed reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the integrity (any adjustment or provision should not give a disabled learner an unfair advantage) or security of the assessment.
- Learners are encouraged to disclose their disability during application, enrolment and at any on-going point during the course.
- On disclosure learners are referred to the cross-college Learning Support team who will submit the necessary paperwork to the exams office for learners with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an exam. The Exams office can then inform invigilators of special arrangements that individual candidates may be granted in the exam.
- Making special arrangements and submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the exam's office.
- The exams office will attempt to meet the need of all candidates with manageable medical conditions.
- For more guidance please see refer to the JCQ access arrangements document. [Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration](#)

## **Managing invigilators and exam days**

- External and Internal invigilators will be used for the majority of exams.
- The recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Head of Information Services.
- New external invigilators are responsible for securing the necessary DBS clearance. DBS paperwork must be submitted to the HR department.
- DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the invigilator.
- Invigilators are trained, timetabled and briefed by the exams office.
- The number of invigilators allocated to each examination will be decided by the Examinations Office.
- The Head Information Services, together with exams office staff will allocate all exam rooms after liaison with other users.
- The exam officers will ensure the question papers, other exam stationary and materials are available for invigilators.
- The examinations office and caretaking staff are responsible for setting up allocated rooms.
- The Invigilators will conduct all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines and other specific awarding organisation regulations where applicable.
- Only senior members of the teaching staff may be present at the start of the exam to note learner absences, identify candidates and instil discipline but they must not look at the exam paper or offer any advice to candidates.
- Question papers must not be read by subject teachers or removed from the exam room. Papers may only be collected by teaching staff from the exams office 24 hours after the timetabled exam.

## **Exam Contingency Plan**

- The priority when implementing contingencies will be to maintain three principles:
- Delivering assessments to published timetables
- Delivering results to published timetables
- Complying with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards.

The national examination timetable applies to GCSEs, AS levels, A-levels.

## **Disruption of teaching time – centre is closed for an extended period**

- Where there is disruption to teaching time and learners miss teaching and learning, the college will ensure learners are prepared, as usual, for examinations.
- In the case of modular courses, the college may advise learners to sit examinations in the next available series.
- The college will have plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning.
- Alternative accommodation options would be explored such as moving provision to other college campuses or an external location such as leisure centres, conference centres, local schools etc
- Appropriate transport arrangements would be put in place.
- In such instances, details would be communicated to college staff and learners via the College's website, text messaging facilities, email and social media platforms.

## **Learners unable to take examinations because of a crisis - college remains open**

- In the event of learners being unable to attend the college to take examinations as normal, the college will liaise with learners to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations. JCQ guidance on alternative site arrangements can be accessed through the JCQ website.
- Exam staff would complete the Alternative Site documentation and submit to relevant awarding body if appropriate.

- The college will offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series
- The college will apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates **where they have met the minimum requirements**. JCQ guidance on special consideration can be accessed through the JCQ website.

### **College unable to open as normal during the examination period**

- If the college is unable to open as normal for examinations, exam staff will inform each awarding body with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible. Alternative Site documentation completed and submitted to the Awarding Organisations as appropriate.
- As part of general planning for emergencies, the college will cover the impact on examinations.
- The Principal will decide whether it is safe for the college to open. The Estates Director will take advice or follow instructions from relevant local or national agencies when recommending to the Principal whether the college is able to open. The college will open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible.
- The college will use alternative venues e.g. other college campuses, local schools, leisure centres etc in agreement with relevant awarding organisations.
- Details of the alternative venue/s would be communicated to all members of staff including invigilators and learners via the college web site, text messaging, e-mail and telephone.
- The college will offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.
- The college will apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements

### **Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts**

- If there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts the college will seek advice from awarding organisations and collection agency regarding collection.
- College will seek approval from awarding bodies before making their own arrangements for transportation.
- College will ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

### **College unable to distribute results as normal**

- If the college is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post results services, the EC or EOs will contact awarding organisations about alternative options.
- The College will make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site
- The college will make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site.
- The college will share facilities with other college campuses or local schools if this is possible.

### **Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle**

- In the event of a period of extended absence of a member of the teaching staff, the HoS for the curriculum area would arrange teaching cover from within the staff team, the wider staffing establishment at the College or through an agency.
- New staff providing cover would be briefed as part of their induction process on arrangements for assessment and examinations.
- Their practice in terms of assessments would be monitored by an experienced member of the teaching team or HoS

### **Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)**

- The Exams Team is structured with an Examination Coordinator and an Exam Officer team at each campus. The team is overseen by the Head of Information Services.
- In a period of extended absence, the EC would take responsibility for carrying out the duties of the EO and would work in consultation with the HoIS. Appropriate back-filling of responsibilities would then be decided upon by the HoIS.
- All members of the team regularly receive training from Awarding Bodies and colleagues involved in the administration of key processes and are trained on how to carry out processes and who to contact if unsure.

### **Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence**

- New invigilators undergo a period of shadowing, following appointment. They are only allowed to work independently once they and the EOs are happy that processes and procedures are understood and that invigilators are competent.
- The College retains a pool of approximately 30 external invigilators, the majority of whom are able to travel between campuses.
- Within the wider College staff, colleagues are required to assist during main exam sessions (mainly GCSE English and Maths and some A-Levels) and are trained by the EC and the Qualifications Wales Liaison Officer with regard to their responsibilities and duties.
- Minor absence issues (such as an invigilator calling in sick) are covered by a member of the exams team or attempts are made to contact another invigilator from the pool.

### **ALNCO extended absence at key points in the exam cycle**

- This role is carried out by the college's specialist assessor team.
- In the event of their extended absence the ALN Manager (their line manager) would assign responsibilities temporarily to members of the wider Support Team as required.
- A suitably qualified external specialist assessor with an established relationship with the college may also be required to carry out access arrangement assessments and this would be decided upon by the Manager of Additional Learning Needs.

### **Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice**

- The College is a large organisation with a number of campuses and rooming resources.
- The many exams are accommodated within standard size classrooms/IT suites.
- Exams team works closely with the College's timetabling team in order to utilise rooms effectively and at short notice.
- Large spaces exist within each campus (sports hall, performance areas, etc.) where standard teaching can be suspended so that large exams can be held.
- Local resources such as the town hall offices etc. can be used if the accommodation on-campus did not meet the demand.

### **Failure of IT systems**

- The college endeavours to minimise any IT disruption for onscreen exams.
- Campus IT staff are informed by Exams Officers when onscreen exams are scheduled and are therefore prioritised if system failure occurs.
- Preventative maintenance is routinely carried out by IT staff.
- Where such failure impacted on scheduled exams, steps would be taken to reschedule these exams where possible.
- If this is not possible, options to sit these exams 'offline' or at another campus or local provider would be investigated by Exams Officers in co-ordination with the awarding body.

## Candidates and Clash Candidates

- Candidates are required to provide their photographic learner ID to enable the invigilator to verify their identity. In cases where it is impossible to identify a candidate due to the wearing of religious clothing, such as a veil, the candidate should be approached by a female member of staff and taken to a private room where they are politely asked to remove their veil for identification purposes. Once identification has been established, the candidate should replace the veil and proceed under escort to the exams room. The candidate would then sit the exam as normal.
- JCQ rules on candidates' use of mobile phones and all electronic devices apply at all times.
- Unauthorised material is not allowed in the exam room.
- Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the college accepts no liability for their loss or damage.
- Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
- Candidates must stay under supervision for the full length of the exam if under 1 hour. For examinations lasting more than 1-hour candidates must be supervised until 1 hour after the awarding body's published start time for that examination.
- An attempt will be made to contact any candidate who is not present at the start of the exam. A record will be kept of all candidate absentees.
- The supervision of escorts for clash candidates, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight supervision is the responsibility of the Head of Information Services and the exams staff

## Special Consideration

- It is in the best interests of learners, centre staff and centres that wherever possible, learners' complete assessments under the appropriate conditions within the normal centre environment. However, in every exam series, there are occasions where a learner is fully prepared to take the assessment but is unavoidably absent through illness or other exceptional circumstances.
- Where a learner is, for reasons outside of their control, unable to sit an assessment, the Head of School should first consider whether it is possible for the learner to enter for the assessment in a subsequent series. Where this is not possible, or would disadvantage the learner, the candidate may apply for special consideration.
- When submitting the application for special consideration the candidate should explain why they were unable to sit the assessment and the Head of School will need to state why entering for the assessment in a subsequent would disadvantage the learner
- Special consideration can also be applied in cases where a learner who has taken an assessment has been disadvantaged by the impact of illness, bereavement or other personal circumstance. Where appropriate, the board may apply a small percentage uplift (this is called a tariff) to the mark awarded to the learner to reflect the potential disadvantage. Applications can only be accepted where sufficient evidence is provided. The application should be supported by medical or other evidence where appropriate. Further information about the special consideration process can be found in the JCQ Guide to the Special Consideration Process.

## Internal Assessment Coursework

- Candidates who have to prepare coursework should do so by the required date. The subject teacher should collate and submit the coursework to the examination office by the appropriate deadline.
- The exams office will ensure that coursework is despatched at the correct time.

- Keeping a record of what has been sent, when and to whom is the responsibility of the exams office.
- Marks for all internally assessed work are entered onto the relevant area by subject lecturers.
- In the preparation of coursework, candidates must abide by JCQ Guidelines. Specifically, they must not;
- Submit work which is not their own
- Lend work to other candidates or allow their work to be copied
- Allow other candidates access to, or the use of, their own source material or assist others in the production of coursework
- Include work copied directly from books, the internet or other sources without acknowledgement or attribution
- Submit work typed or word-processed by a third person without acknowledgement
- Any incident of malpractice by candidates or members of college staff must be immediately reported to the Faculty Director. Malpractice will be dealt with under the JCQ Guidelines '*Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments*'
- The management of Controlled Assessments is covered under a separate policy.
- NB – The college does not accept work for the WBQ Challenges unless it has been completed by the learner during their studies with us. Work completed at a previous organisation must be marked and claimed by them. The college will then use the result from the organisation to cash-in and claim the Skills Challenge Certificate and the Welsh Baccalaureate Diploma.

### **Appeals against Internal Assessment**

The college is obliged to publish a separate policy on this subject. Please see the College Complaints & Appeals Policy.

### **Results, Enquiries About Results (EARS) and Access to Scripts (ATS)**

- All individual candidate results will be distributed to learners either by electronic means such as via e-mail or collection in person at the exams office, through learners' subject lecturer groups or by post.
- Results may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, provided they have been authorised to do so by a signed letter and they carry proof of identification.
- Results that are not collected will be posted to candidates' home addresses. It is the learner's responsibility to inform the college of any change of address.
- Learners' results will be available on EBS Hub as soon as they are processed by the exam staff. **NB** GCE and GCSEs will not be published until the public release date has passed.
- HE Results are agreed at the relevant HEI Exam board. Learners are informed of their results following the relevant processes have been completed.

### **EARs (Enquiries about Results)**

- EARs for general qualifications may be requested by college staff (with the learner's consent) or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking.
- If a result is queried, the exams officer in conjunction with teaching staff and Head of School will investigate the feasibility of asking for a re-mark at the college's expense. If a candidate disagrees with the college's decision not to request a re-mark, the candidate has the right to appeal to the exams officer at least 5 working days before the published deadline of the EARs. The appeal will be reviewed by the Exam Officer and the Head of School and will be communicated by telephone and 1<sup>st</sup> class post within 24 hours of receipt. The decision will be final.
- The person/department who has requested the EAR is responsible for any fees incurred.

## **ATS (Access to scripts)**

- After the release of results for general qualifications, candidates may request the return of their script. There will be a charge for this service.
- College staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates must be obtained.

## **Certificates**

- Certificates may be collected from the Exams Office if previously arranged.
- Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, provided they have been authorised to do so by a signed letter and they carry proof of identification.
- The college will not send uncollected certificates in the post. Candidates will have several opportunities to collect these from the Exams Office.
- Certificates will be stored in the Exams office for 12 months, in line with JCQ regulations. After this, they will be archived.
- The college is not responsible for the loss or misplacement of certificates after they have been dispatched from the college.
- HE Certificates are posted directly to learners from the awarding HEI.

## COLEG GWENT CAMPUS INFORMATION

The National Centre Numbers for each campus by awarding organisation as of 01/09/2018 are:

CAMPUS	CENTRE NO	AWARDING BODY
Crosskeys	68329	WJEC, OCR, AQA EDEXCEL
	68375C	CGLI, PEARSON (VOC)
	WA042	ASDAN
	CKC617	CYQ (YMCA)
	121.003	CACHE/NCFE
	15406	HIGHFIELDS
	COO73CW	EAL EMTA
	9701185	IMI
	999	AGORED CYMRU
	12818	UAL
	114/001	VTCT
Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone	68339	WJEC, AQA, EDEXCEL
	0/68375D	CGLI, PEARSON (VOC)
	114/002	VTCT
	00121000	NCFE/CACHE
	999	AGORED CYMRU
	NOO33CP	EMTA
	15405	HIGHFIELD
City of Newport Campus	68365	WJEC, OCR, EDEXCEL, CILEX, ILM,
	68375E	CGLI, PEARSON (VOC)
	AH0344	AAT
	441	BIIAB
	121000	NCFE
	15407	HIGHFIELDS
	269	CITB
	SO116CT	EAL
	342	UAL
	60749	AIM
	0810758	IMI
	3704	ASDAN
	114/003	VTCT
	999	AGORED CYMRU
	ADMN0596	LIBF
	574	ABC
Torfaen Learning Zone	68375	WJEC (GCSE)
	0/68375A	CGLI, PEARSON (VOC)
	WA125	ASDAN
	15408	HIGHFIELDS
	00121000	NCFE/CACHE
	114/004	VTCT
	GTC040/001	YMCA/CYQ
	999	AGORED CYMRU
Usk	68389	WJEC, OCR, AQA, EDEXCEL
	68375B	CGLI, PEARSON (VOC)
	GTC400	CYQ
	999	AGORED CYMRU

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

ALSCO – Additional Learning Support Coordinator

AO – Awarding Organisation

ATS – Access to Scripts

BMAT - BioMedical Admissions Test

BTEC - Business and Technology Education Council

DBS – Disclosure and Barring Service

EA – Equality Act

EARs – Enquiries About Results

EC - Exam Coordinator

EO – Exam Officer

GCE – General Certificate of Education

GCSE – General Certificate of Secondary Education

HEI – Higher Education Institution

HoIS – Head of Information Services

HoS – Head of School

HR – Human Resources

ICE – Instruction for the Conduct of Examinations

ILEX – Institute of Legal Executives

IT – Information Technology

JCQ - Joint Council for Qualifications

MIS – Management Information System

NVQ – National Vocation Qualifications

VRQ – Vocationally Recognised Qualifications