

Hartlepool Jobs and Skills Service



Examinations & Controlled Assessments Policy

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy sets out the key expectations and responsibilities for planning examinations and managing controlled assessments within Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service.

2. COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service is committed to maintaining and improving the quality of its provision through continuous improvement and quality assurance. Effective quality processes are rigorously implemented to foster a culture of continuous improvement in all facets of the Service.

This policy is underpinned by the Service values identified within the Community Hubs Strategy 2016-2026, the Annual Service Plan and the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework.

3. PURPOSE

The Examinations and Management of Controlled Assessments policy ensures that these activities are carried out fairly according to JCQ and Awarding Body Regulations.

Learners are at the heart of every Service initiative, reflected in the Service's vision, values and strategic priorities. The vision will support the expectations of Ofsted and wider sub-regional priorities such as the Tees Valley Combined Authority.

Vision: The Community Hubs in Hartlepool, together with our partners and the Voluntary and Community Sector, are aspirational and nurture opportunities through access to ideas, imagination and connection to support people to live the best lives they can.

Strategic Priorities:

- Health & Wellbeing
- Community
- Digital Inclusion
- Reading
- Diversity, Disability & Difference
- Jobs & Skills

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

Management Team

- Accountable for the safe and secure conduct of controlled assessments. Ensure assessments comply with JCQ Guidelines and Awarding Body Requirements.

- Map overall resource management requirements for the academic year for the timing of controlled assessments and ensure facilities are in place, such as rooms and IT Networks.
- Ensure an appropriate Appeals Policy is in place for the Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service.

Curriculum Team

- Decide on awarding body for a particular Qualification.
- Standardise the marking of internally assessed components.
- Ensure that individual Tutor/Assessors fully understand their responsibilities with regard to controlled assessment and the requirements of the awarding body's specification.
- Where appropriate, develop new assessment tasks or adapt sample awarding body assessment tasks to meet local circumstances in line with the awarding body's specification and control measures.

Tutor/Assessors

- Understand and comply with the general guidelines detailed within the JCQ publication *Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessments*.
- Understand and comply with the awarding body's specification for conducting controlled assessments, including any subject-specific instructions or additional information on the Awarding Body's Website.
- Supply to the Operations Team details of all unit codes for controlled assessments.
- Obtain confidential materials/tasks set by awarding bodies in sufficient time to prepare for the assessment(s) and ensure that such materials are stored securely at all times.
- Supervise assessments and undertake the tasks required under the regulations, only permitting assistance to candidates as the specification allows.
- Ensure that candidates and supervising tutors sign authentication forms on completion of an assessment.
- Mark internally assessed components using the mark scheme provided by the awarding body. Submit marks to the awarding body by the published deadline, keeping a record of the marks awarded.
- Retain the learner's work securely between assessment sessions (if more than one).
- Post-completion, retain candidates' work securely until the closing date for enquiries about results. If an enquiry is submitted, retain candidates' work securely until the outcome of the enquiry and any subsequent appeal has been conveyed to the centre.

Exams Staff

- For the start of the academic year, coordinate the schedule of controlled assessments.

- Ensure all staff involved have a calendar of events and a copy of the internal guide with step-by-step instructions for exam procedures.
- Where confidential materials are directly received by the exams team, to be responsible for the receipt, safe storage and safe transmission, whether in CD or hard copy format.
- Download and distribute mark sheets for use by Tutor/Assessors.
- In exceptional circumstances where controlled assessments cannot be conducted in the classroom, arrange suitable accommodation where controlled assessments can be carried out at the direction of the Management team.
- Ensure any virtual assessments are carried out using the guidelines set by the Awarding Body.
- Ensure access arrangements have been applied for
- Work with Tutor/Assessors to ensure requirements for staff are met
- Conduct a risk management process to identify potential risks and issues relating to implementing controlled assessments for exams or controlled assessments.

5. REVIEWS OF MARKING

Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service is committed to ensuring that whenever its staff marks a candidate's work, this is done fairly, consistently and per the awarding body's specification and subject-specific associated documents.

Learners' work will be marked by staff with appropriate knowledge, understanding and skill and trained in this activity. Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service is committed to ensuring that work produced by candidates is authenticated in line with the awarding body's requirements. Where a number of tutors are involved in marking candidates' work, internal moderation and standardisation will ensure consistency of marking.

Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service will:

- Ensure that candidates are informed of their centre-assessed marks so they may request a review of the centre's marking before marks are submitted to the awarding body.
- Inform candidates that they may request copies of material to assist them in considering whether to request a review of the centre's marking of the assessment.
- Having received a request for copies of materials, promptly make them available to the candidate.
- Provide candidates with sufficient time to allow them to review copies of materials and reach a decision. Requests for reviews of marking must be made in writing.
- Allow sufficient time for the review to be carried out, make any necessary changes to marks, and inform the candidate of the outcome before the awarding body's deadline.

- Ensure that the review of marking is carried out by an assessor who has appropriate competence, has had no previous involvement in the assessment of that candidate and has no personal interest in the review.
- Instruct the reviewer to ensure that the candidate's mark is consistent with the standard set by the centre.
- Inform the candidate in writing of the outcome of the review of the centre's marking.

The outcome of the review of the marking will be made known to the Service Manager and logged as a complaint. Upon request, a written record will be kept and made available to the awarding body. Should the review of the marking bring any irregularity in procedure to light, the awarding body will be informed immediately.

After candidates' work has been internally assessed, it is moderated by the awarding body to ensure consistency in marking between centres. The moderation process may lead to mark changes. This process is outside the control of Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service.

6. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Where access is difficult, whether for learners, staff or visitors, the Service will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate needs.

Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service seeks to ensure that learners have access to the correct information and advice on their selected qualification(s) in an accessible format and that the qualification(s) will meet their needs. All learners receive pre-course initial assessments and 1-2-1 Information, Advice and Guidance interviews to ensure that the course fully meets learner requirements and that the Service can meet the learning needs of the individual through additional and adaptive resources. This is documented through both learner support and wider classroom support for the Tutor/Assessor.

The recruitment of learners includes the centre assessing each potential learner and making justifiable and professional judgements about the learner's potential to complete the examinations/assessments and achieve the qualification(s). This is supported by the Initial Assessment Strategy to ensure standardisation of processes and is monitored by the Tutor Co-ordinators and Lead Officer – Skills.

The Service's assessment identifies, where appropriate, the support that will be made available to the learner to facilitate access to examinations/assessments based on documented evidence provided by the course tutor and subject manager throughout the course duration.

The Service recognises its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. This includes a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the Service the centre provides to disabled candidates. A separate Equality and Diversity (2017) policy details how the Service complies with the Equality Act 2010.

In the instance of a private candidate wishing to sit an accredited assessment, the Service will undertake the necessary and appropriate steps to gather an appropriate picture of need and demonstrate a normal way of working. All assessments will be completed in Victoria Buildings with the subject specialist.

The Service will comply with the obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements by:

- Ensuring that where a candidate with a learning difficulty requires an assessment of their needs, this is conducted by a qualified member of the delivery team as appointed by the Service Manager;
- Having a written process in place to check the qualifications of their assessors and that the assessment process is administered correctly;
- Assisting the awarding bodies in the discharge of their duty to make reasonable adjustments by requesting access arrangements, where required, in effectively implementing those arrangements once approved;
- Submitting any applications for access arrangements or reasonable adjustments in accordance with awarding body requirements and deadlines, ensuring that appropriate documentary evidence is held on file to substantiate such an arrangement and is open to inspection;
- Ensuring that for GCSE qualifications, a file is presented which contains for each application the downloaded approval for the respective arrangements, supporting evidence of need and a signed data protection notice;
- Submitting requests for modified papers in a timely manner in accordance with awarding body deadlines.

Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service will execute its responsibilities in full alignment with all JCQ requirements.

7. EXAMINATIONS CONTINGENCY PLAN

Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service recognises that examinations and assessments may be disrupted on rare occasions due to circumstances beyond their control. This Examination Contingency Plan is designed to ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of major disruption to the examination system affecting candidates across several awarding organisations.

The plan will be implemented in the event of major disruption to the system, such as widespread illness, travel disruption, bad weather or power failures. Any actions taken will be subject to the advice of the official agencies dealing with the specific circumstances, for example, the police, Environment Agency or Health Protection Agency.

Implementing the plan will safeguard the interests of candidates while maintaining the integrity of the examination system and safeguarding qualification standards.

The contingencies covered have been implemented on several occasions in response to localised issues in other centres. They would be applied on a larger scale in response to any widespread disruption at a national level.

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.

In the event of a local disruption, communication with tutors and learners will take place through the Examination Officer following an agreement with the Service Manager.

The Service has considered the following scenarios:

(I) Disruption of teaching time

If the Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service is closed, or candidates cannot attend for an extended period during normal teaching time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning, it is the responsibility of the Service to prepare learners, as usual, for examinations.

- In the case of modular courses, candidates should sit the examinations in the next available series.
- The Service will facilitate teaching and learning by an alternative method or location.

(ii) Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

If the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of examinations is disrupted:

- The Service will liaise with the awarding organisation to source alternative couriers to deliver hard copies.
- The Service will liaise with awarding organisations to provide the Service with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network.

(iii) Candidates unable to take examination due to critical personal situation

If candidates are unable to attend the examination to take examinations as normal, the Service will:

- Consider offering candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.
- Consider applying to the awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates who have met the minimum requirements. Candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control.

(iv) The Service is unable to open as normal during the examination period

Where the Service is unable to open the building in which the examination is planned:

- The Service may offer candidates an opportunity to sit the examination on another date;
- The Service may apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.

(v) Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

If due to large-scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked:

- The Service will liaise with the awarding organisations to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement
- The candidates may be required to retake affected assessments at subsequent assessment windows.

(vi) Centres are unable to distribute results as normal

If the Service is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates or to facilitate post-results services, it will contact the awarding body to consider the following options:

- Making arrangements to access results at an alternative site.
- Making arrangements to coordinate access to post-results services from an alternative site.

8. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE FOR EXAMINATIONS

When dealing with emergencies you **must** be aware of any instructions from relevant local or national agencies.

In an emergency such as a fire alarm or a bomb alert, the invigilator **must** take the following action:

- stop the candidates from writing;
- Collect the attendance register (in order to ensure all candidates are present) and evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority;
- Advise candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room. Candidates **must** be advised to close their answer booklet;
- ensure the candidates leave the room in silence;
- ensure candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room so that there is no discussion about the examination;

- make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted;
- allow the candidates the remainder of the working time set for the examination once it resumes;
- if there are only a few candidates, consider the possibility of taking the candidates (with question papers and scripts) to another place to finish the examination;
- Make a full report of the incident and of the action taken and send to the relevant awarding body.

9. GUIDELINES LINKED TO THIS POLICY

JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations Booklet
Appeals Policy
Equality and Diversity Policy