



Examinations Policy

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1. The Policy Purpose

The purpose of this examinations policy is:

- to ensure the planning and management of examinations is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of all candidates
- to ensure the operation of an efficient examinations system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the centre's examination processes to read, understand and implement this policy.

The policy has been developed in line with the current Joint Council for Qualification (JCQ) regulations and guidelines which represents most Awarding Bodies. Changes to these regulations may conflict with the College's policy. In such cases the JCQ regulations will take precedence.

The examinations policy will be reviewed every two years by the College Management Group in conjunction with the College Examinations Manager.

2. Responsibilities

Lecturers are responsible for:

- ensuring their students are aware of the need to discuss access arrangement requirements with the Learning Support team as soon as possible after the start of the course
- informing students of the possibility of being assessed through the medium of Welsh and the need to contact the Examinations team

Learning Area managers are responsible, through their area structure, for ensuring that:

- the examinations office is informed of changes to subjects/specifications by the set deadline
- candidates are entered for all relevant assessments with the examinations office, by completing and signing the relevant examination entry forms.
- entries made by the examinations office are checked as required by course teams
- deadlines as set by the examinations office/awarding organisations are met.

The Learning Support Manager is responsible for:

- the testing and collation of evidence required by Awarding organisations to support candidates seeking access arrangements
- providing the examinations office with the necessary information to claim the specific access arrangements required

- providing scribes/readers when required for candidates sitting examinations
- the provision of additional support with spelling, reading, mathematics, dyslexia or essential skills, hearing impairment

Invigilator/invigilators are responsible for:

- the collection of examination papers and other relevant material from the examinations office before the start of the examination
- the supervision of the examination and adherence to JCQ guidelines
- the collection of all examination papers and other examination related materials, in the correct order, at the end of the examination and their safe return to the examinations office.

Candidates are responsible for:

- the completion, confirmation and signing of examination entry forms
- understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own
- reading, understanding and signing the college's Academic Misconduct Policy.

3. Qualifications Offered

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Deans of Faculty and Director of Skills and Business Development in conjunction with the Curriculum Planning Group and the Examinations Manager.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus for that year. If there has been a change of subject or specification from the previous year, the examinations office must be informed by subject heads no later than the 20th September each year.

4. Examination Series

Internal examinations and assessments are scheduled on demand and are the responsibility of the relevant lecturing/teaching staff.

Subject dependent, internal examinations are sometimes held under external examination conditions.

External examinations and assessments are scheduled throughout the academic year.

The College Management Group in conjunction with the Deans of Faculty, Director of Skills and Business Development, Curriculum Planning Group and the college Examinations Manager decides which examination series are offered at the centre.

On-demand assessments are to be scheduled in agreement with the examinations office, a minimum of 2 weeks must be given between candidate registration and the date of the examination

5. Timetable

Once confirmed, the examinations office will circulate the examination timetable for External examinations; this is done via e-mail and the college intranet.

6. Entries, Entry Details and Late Entries

Candidates are selected for their examination entries by the Heads of subject.

Candidates or parents/carers (in consultation with Deans of Faculty/Director of Skills and Business Development/LAMs) can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal.

The centre does not accept entries from external candidates.

The centre does not normally act as an examinations centre for other organisations.

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department via E-mail, and the college Intranet.

Late entries may be authorised by the Examinations office, any additional charges levied by the Awarding Organisation will be passed on to be charged to the candidate/relevant faculties.

Resit opportunities are governed by the college management team in line with the regulations of the Awarding Organisation

Re-sit decisions will be made in consultation with curriculum area, the Examinations office and the Candidate.

The fees associated with any resit are normally passed on to the candidate in line with the College Fees Policy which includes a contribution towards the administration costs of the exam.

7. Examination Fees

The first sitting of any external exam at Gower College Swansea is normally free of charge (for part time courses the course will normally include this fee).

There is no charge for changes of tier, withdrawals made by the proper procedures, or alterations arising from administrative processes, provided that these are made within the time allowed by the awarding organisations.

Fee reimbursements are sought from candidates who decide not to sit an examination after the late entry/withdrawal deadline/fail to sit an examination/do not meet the necessary coursework requirements.

The College will also provide enrolled students with one free resit of examinations within the academic year of study, where the student has previously failed that examination. This does not apply to fee paying students who will be required to pay for all resits.

Students who have passed an examination but wish to resit the examination to improve their pass grade must pay the resit fee.

For all additional resits, students must pay the College resit fees as prescribed by the exams department

There are no charges for resits for Essential Skills Wales confirmatory tests.

8. Records / Accreditation of Prior Learning (RPL / APL)

At times students will come into College, having already obtained components or full qualifications which are applicable to the Programme that they are enrolling on

Full Qualifications

Where a learner has a qualification that provides exemption from re-taking a particular qualification as part of their FT Programme or Apprenticeship framework, the learner will be expected to provide the proof, in terms on an official Examination Board certificate. In some circumstances College may wish the learner to work towards the next level of the qualification.

Components achieved elsewhere

Where a learner transfers into College to complete their qualification, having obtained some modules elsewhere, the relevant Examination Body centre transfer protocols will apply. This should be arranged as soon as possible with the Examination Department. Evidence should be provided by the learner in order for the transfer to take place.

For AS/A level learners, UCI and previous centre details will be required. For all Vocational learning, details of previous Registration and Centre will be required.

9. Duties Under the Equality Act

The centre will meet the disability provisions under the Equality Act 2010 by ensuring that the examinations centre is accessible and provides equality of candidate experience. This is the responsibility of the Head of Centre, Examinations Manager, Examinations officer and the Learning Support Manager.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability is usually considered cumulatively in terms of:

- identifying a physical or mental impairment;
- looking into adverse effects and assessing which are substantial;
- considering if substantial adverse effects are long term;
- judging the impact of long term adverse effects on normal day to day activities.

The College will also ensure, wherever possible, candidates are not disadvantaged in terms of the protected characteristics: disability, gender reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships.

The Learning Support Manager, or a designated deputy, will liaise with lecturers of candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an examination, and the date of that examination. The Learning Support Manager, or a designated deputy, will then inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates can be granted during the course and in the examination.

These special arrangements consider both physical and medical difficulties.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding organisations and recording them on the college's MIS system is the responsibility of the examinations office. This is dependent on receipt of the relevant paperwork from the Learning Support Manager, or a designated deputy.

Permission to provide access arrangements lies with the JCQ.

10. Welsh Language Assessment

Candidates are able to take their examinations through the medium of Welsh provided the facility is offered by the Awarding Organisation. The Examination Manager holds a list of those Awarding Organisations and qualifications for which this facility is available.

11. Support for candidates whose First Language is not English

Candidates, who first language is not English or Welsh, may be able to receive support in terms of bilingual dictionaries and/or extra time dependent on their status. This is governed by Awarding Body regulations.

12. Contingency Planning

Contingency planning for examinations and their administration is set out in the Colleges Disaster Recovery Plan. The key principles are set out below.

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 – college is closed for an extended period

Where there is disruption to teaching time and students 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.

Learners unable to take examinations because of a crisis

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). In such circumstances:

- 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, they will inform each awarding body with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible. As part of general planning for emergencies, the College will cover the impact on examinations. The Vice Principal, Corporate Services will decide whether it is safe for the College to open. The Vice Principal, Corporate Services will take advice, or follow instructions from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the College is able to open. In such circumstances the following will be considered:

- The College will open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible
- The College will use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public building, if possible)
- 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. The College will seek approval from awarding bodies before making their own arrangements for transportation.

The College will ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

Centre 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 College will contact awarding organisations about alternative options i.e.:

- 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 centres if this is possible.

Exams officer absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle

In the event of the examinations officer being absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle, in order to minimise risk to examination administration and avoid any adverse impact on students, the College will

- Refer to the Exam Entries / Exam Day Contingency Plan (as maintained by Examinations Manager)
- Consult with Awarding Bodies when necessary

13. Private Candidates

Managing private candidate's is the responsibility of the Examinations Manager.

14. Word Processors

Equipment that can be used in examinations is governed by Awarding Body regulations.

The College only provides the use of a word processor where this reflects the candidate's normal way of working within the College and is appropriate to the candidate's needs. A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

The College may consider the use of a word processor, for example, for a candidate with:

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly;
- a medical condition;
- a physical disability;
- a sensory impairment;
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand;
- poor handwriting.

This list is not exhaustive.

15. Managing Invigilators

Examination invigilators include External staff and Internal staff.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Examinations office.

Securing the necessary Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the HR Services Department.

DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid for by the centre.

Invigilators are timetabled, briefed and trained by the Examinations office.

16. Malpractice

The Examinations Manager is responsible for investigating and reporting incidents of suspected malpractice to the relevant awarding organisations.

17. Examination Days

The examinations office will book all examination rooms after liaison with other users and make the question papers, other examination stationery and materials available for the invigilator(s).

The Estates department is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms as per the schedule issued to them.

The lead invigilator will start all examinations in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

All candidates must bring photographic identification, which must be available on request for identification in accordance with the guidelines issued by relevant Awarding Bodies.

Subject staff may be present at the start of the examination to assist with identification of candidates but must not advise on which questions or sections are to be attempted. Subject staff must not have sight of the examination paper.

In practical examinations subject teachers may be on hand in case of any technical difficulties.

Examination papers must not be removed from the examination room. Papers will be available to subject heads 24 hours after the end of the examination session.

18. Candidates

The centre's published rules on acceptable behaviour and candidates' use of mobile phones and other electronic devices apply at all times.

Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates are expected to stay for the full examination time at the discretion of the examinations office or senior invigilator.

Note: Candidates may only leave the examination room for a genuine purpose and are required to return immediately to the examination room. They must be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. Failure to do so will result in the candidate being refused re-admission into the examination room.

The Examinations office is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on examination day or subsequently thereafter.

For clash candidates, the supervision of candidates, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight supervision is the responsibility of the Examinations office.

19. Clash Candidates

Clashes will have been identified prior to the examination and candidates will have been notified of any revised arrangement by means of the examination re-arrangement letter sent to candidates via royal mail. Candidates must sign and return the tear of slip to the examinations office to acknowledge their understanding and acceptance of the re-arrangement.

Clashes may involve the candidate remaining under supervision over lunch breaks, if this is the case, the candidate must bring a packed lunch with them.

The centre's published rules on behaviour and candidates' use of mobile phones and other electronic devices apply at all times.

Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Candidates are expected to stay for the full examination time at the discretion of the examinations office or the invigilator.

20. Special Consideration

Should a candidate be ill before an examination, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be taken ill during the examination itself or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an examination, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre, the examinations office, or the examination invigilator, to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within seven days following the examination date, for example by providing a letter from the candidate's doctor.

The examinations office will then apply on line to the relevant awarding organisation within seven days of the last examination in the series.

The decision to allow special consideration rests with the Awarding Organisation.

21. Controlled Assessment

Learning Area Managers are responsible for ensuring that course teams provide the examinations team with all controlled assessment material ready for dispatch, at the correct time. The examinations office will assist by keeping a record of each dispatch, including the recipient details and the date and time sent.

Marks for all controlled assessment work and estimated grades are provided to the examinations office by the subject heads by the deadlines set by the awarding organisation(s).

Appeals against controlled assessment decisions must be made to meet the deadlines of the Awarding Organisations

22. Appeals Against Controlled Assessments

The process for managing appeals against controlled assessments is detailed in the college's Assessment policy, available from the examinations office.

23. Results

Candidates will receive individual result slips on results days, or as soon as is reasonably practicable after they are received.

Results cannot be given over the telephone or via e-mail.

24. Enquiries About Results (EARs)

EARs may be requested by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking. The candidate's consent is required before any EAR is processed by the centre. The fee to cover the EAR must be submitted with the EAR request form (for a list of fees, refer to the Examinations office).

25. Access To Scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask the examinations office to request the return of exam papers - scripts (within the deadlines set by the Awarding Organisations). The candidate must submit the relevant fee along with the fully completed and signed request form to the examinations office.

Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation, or for teaching purposes. Before this request can be actioned the consent of candidates must be obtained. The examinations office will provide a pro-forma for centre staff to complete and request signed authorisation from the candidate(s). The request will not be processed without the candidate's written authorisation. The relevant faculty will be responsible for all fees incurred as a result of this request.

GCSE re-marks cannot be applied for once a script has been returned.

26. Certificates

Certificates are collected and signed for by the candidate, and must bring photo i.d. as proof of identity.

Certificates can be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, provided they have their own photo i.d. and a letter of authorisation from the candidate (signed, dated and containing the candidate's date of birth) to do so.

Certificates are held at the centre for one year after which time they are destroyed in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

27. The Welsh Language

Mae Coleg Gŵyr Abertawe yn ymrwymedig i hyrwyddo'r iaith Gymraeg, yn unol â Safonau'r Iaith Gymraeg a Mesur y Gymraeg (Cymru) 2011.

Gower College Swansea is committed to the promotion of the Welsh language, in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT RECORD - DETAILS AND GENERAL OVERVIEW

You should refer to your subject specification and the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessment.

Lecturer in Charge			
Subject			
Unit code & weighting			
Class ID (from register)			
Students with Access Arrangements			
Year of Submission			
Assessment Task <i>Must be current for year of submission</i>			
Awarding Body Set Task	Electronic file ☐ CD ☐ Printed form ☐	Word count	Time Limit
Centre set task			
Storage details of task assessment material and students' work			
Task taking Supervision <i>Please ✓</i>	FORMAL High Level of Control	INFORMAL Medium Level of Control	LIMITED Low Level of Control
Dates of controlled assessment sessions	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Exams Office notified			
Assessment in normal teaching room <i>Please ✓</i>			
Assessment in other room (name room) <i>Please ✓</i>	Room Booked	Room Booked	Room Booked

Appendix 1 – Controlled Assessment Documentation

Details	Please complete	✓ or n/a
Date of Assessment		
Name of Supervisor(s)		
List of attendees attached		
Names of students who have access arrangements		
Start time		
Finish time		
Duration		
Relevant display material removed/covered		
Details of permitted resources		
Computer/memory stick/mobile phones checked Electronic storage checked		
Presentation:- Written – Black Ink ☐ Word Processed ☐	Other:- Printouts/copies/charts/artefacts/photos/letters/videos/recordings or transcripts of interviews/witness statements from supervising lecturers to record what a candidate has demonstrated: <i>Details:</i>	
Consent form given to student for this assessment	If video/photographs/images are being used informed consent from parents/guardians MUST be obtained.	
Record of help and guidance attached, Student diaries completed		
Record of incidents attached		
Exams Office notified if any application(s) for Special Consideration required		
Candidate authentication forms completed		
Centre Declaration completed		
Deadline for submission to the Moderator		
Deadline for submission of marks to the Awarding Body.		

N.B. ALL CONTROLLED ASSESSMENTS MUST BE RETAINED SECURELY AT THE CENTRE UNTIL AFTER THE ENQUIRIES ABOUT RESULTS DEADLINE IN RESPECT OF THE SERIES OF SUBMISSION.