Examination Policy and Procedures

Lead officer	**Rachael Crawford – Quality & Compliance Manager**
Author	**Rachael Crawford**
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Data Protection compliant	**Y**
Health and Safety compliant	**Y**

Examination Policy and Procedures

Examinations Policy

1. What this policy is about and why we need it

The purpose of this exam policy is to ensure the operation of a current and efficient examinations system and procedures that is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of learners whilst maintaining the security and integrity of all examination resources and compliance with Joint Qualifications Council (JCQ) and Awarding Organisations policies and regulations.

This policy and associated procedures apply to Acis Group and group of companies (including Riverside, CLIP, Skills Centre Plus and Abbey Access) learners, and it is expected that it will be applied within all our education delivery areas. This is referred to as 'The Group' throughout.

The Group must have in place the necessary systems and procedures to allow the provision of access arrangements, including reasonable adjustments.

These should reflect the needs of individual learners and must also ensure that assessment continues to enable a valid, reliable and consistent judgement to be made about achievement of learning outcomes against the stated assessment criteria.

2. Our policy is

The organisations under the Acis Group will ensure:

- Appropriate checks for identification to prevent impersonation.
- Every learner is given equal opportunities whilst undertaking summative assessments and examinations as part of their course.
- Conduction all summative examinations up to and including Level 3 under controlled conditions.
- The continuity plan and emergency procedures are in place for emergences during exams and assessments.
- And maintain the integrity and security of examinations to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Regulations for Further Education examinations
- Appeals and incidents of malpractice follow the procedures that are contained within this document in line with JCQ Regulations and /or relevant awarding body regulations
- Adherence to awarding body standards and practices.
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is consistent, appropriate and transparent.
- All assessment of work is carried out fairly and in keeping with the Awarding Organisations requirements.
- All learner's assessment work will be assessed fairly against the qualification standards and teachers involved will be fully trained.

- Internal assessments will be carried out fairly and according to Awarding Organisations instructions.
- Externally marked assessments, tests and exams will be according to the requirements of the Awarding Organisation.
- Reasonable adjustments are in place where appropriate.

This policy is underpinned by procedures.

Learners with learning difficulties
All learners should be offered baseline assessments in the specific area of study. In addition to this, reading, comprehension, writing, spelling, or cognitive processing, should also be offered.
The learner should not be given an unfair advantage; the learner's result must reflect their achievement in the assessment and not their potential ability.

3. When this policy and procedures will be reviewed

This Policy and related procedures will be reviewed fully every three years, with an annual check or before, if necessary, as a result of changes, contractual obligations, awarding body guidance or best practice.

4. How we will monitor this policy and procedures

The Educational Quality Team will monitor and review outcomes for all cases on a quarterly basis and when updates and changes are made to the Awarding Organisation's procedures.

5. Links to procedures, other documents and legislation and regulations

- Document Retention Schedule
- Fees Policy & Procedures
- Group Business Continuity Plan
- Group Data Protection Policy
- Group Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Group Feedback Policy (includes complaints)
- Group Health & Safety Policy
- Group Safeguarding Policy
- Teaching & Learning Policy

Examination Procedures

- Access to fair assessment
- Controlled assessment
- Emergency evacuation for exams
- Exam assessment appeals
- Exams contingency plan
- Exam & invigilation
- Learner identification
- Malpractice & maladministration
- Reasonable adjustments & special consideration
- Recognition of prior learning
- Use of Artificial Intelligence
- Use of a word processor for examinations

Legislation and Regulations

- Education Act 2011
- Education Reform Act 1988
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Inspection Framework (EIF)

6. Jargon Buster

Assessor malpractice: any deliberate action by a tutor/assessor/other staff member which has the potential to undermine the integrity of accredited qualifications.
Awarding Organisation - an examination board which sets examinations and awards qualifications.
Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCP) is a legal document that outlines the support a child or young person (up to age 25) with special educational needs (SEN) needs to succeed in education and prepare for adulthood. It describes their needs, sets out the support required, and details the outcomes they want to achieve.
Head of Education & Skills or their nominees: responsible for any investigation into allegations of malpractice.
Internal Quality Assessor: responsible for malpractice checks when internally verifying work.
Joint Council Code of Practice: for many of our awarding bodies for qualification delivery this is JCQ. Of which they set out minimum practice guidelines we MUST adhere to in all delivery.
Learner malpractice: any action by the learner which has the potential to undermine the integrity and validity of the assessment of the learner's work. For example, plagiarism, collusion, cheating, etc.
Maladministration: where protocols required by an awarding body are not correctly followed so that an incorrect claim is made. These instances would never involve a deliberate act of obtaining certificates (or other forms of accreditation) for learners who had not earned the right to receive them.
Minor acts of learner malpractice: handled by the tutor/assessor by, for example, refusal to accept work for marking and the learner being made aware of malpractice policy. Learner resubmits work in question.
Major acts of learner malpractice: extensive copying/plagiarism by learner; second or subsequent offence that is inappropriate for the tutor/assessor to deal with; destruction of another's work; falsification or fabrication of results or altering learners' work by tutor or other staff member.
Plagiarism: taking and using another's thoughts, writings, inventions, etc. as one's own. This includes using resources from the internet without citing the source.
Special Educational Needs (SEN) learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for a child to learn compared to their peers of the same age. These difficulties can affect a child's ability to understand, communicate, socialise, or manage their behaviour, and they may require extra support or different teaching methods. This could involve difficulties with reading, writing, math, or understanding concepts.
Tutor/Assessor: responsible for designing assessment opportunities which limit the opportunity for malpractice and for checking the validity of the learner's work.

Access to Fair Assessment Procedure

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Access to Fair Assessment Procedure Contents

1. What this procedure is about and why we need it

This procedure aims to identify Acis Group's requirements for Equality of Opportunity, Diversity and considerations for Special Access and Particular Assessment Requirements for learners.

It details Acis Group's commitment to Equality of Opportunity and Diversity in relation to the fair and equal process to skills level assessment of learners.

As training providers, we must have in place the necessary systems and procedures to allow the provision of access arrangements, including reasonable adjustments. These should reflect the needs of individual learners and must also ensure that assessment continues to enable a valid, reliable and consistent judgement to be made about achievement of learning outcomes against the stated assessment criteria.

2. Who does this procedure apply to?

This procedure is specifically focused on an element of our education delivery and we refer to our customers as learners throughout.

This procedure applies to the group of companies (including Riverside, CLIP, Skills Centre Plus and Abbey Access) learners, but it is expected that it will be applied within our education delivery areas. This is referred to as 'the Group' throughout.

The procedure applies to learners, our people, Board members, contractors, volunteers, and any other third-party organisations delivering services or working in partnership with us.

Learners are made aware of the existence of this procedure in appropriate courses and can request access to it.

All tutors and wider delivery teams are made aware of the contents and purpose of this procedure. This procedure is reviewed annually and may be revised in response to feedback from learners, tutors, and external organisations.

3. What learners can expect from us…

- We aim to ensure that all assessment of work is carried out fairly, are valid, reliable and in keeping with the Awarding Organisations requirements.
- All Learners assessment work will be assessed fairly against the qualification standards and teachers involved will be fully trained.
- Internal assessments will be carried out fairly and according to Awarding Organisations instructions.
- We have clear and consistent processes for setting, marking, grading and internal verification of assignments.
- Information about assessment will be explicit and accessible. Clear, accurate, consistent, and timely information on assessment tasks, assignments and procedures will be made available to learners, assessors, placement providers, employers, and external verifiers/examiners.
- Assessment recognises and respects equality and diversity. Inclusive and fair assessment will ensure that tasks and procedures do not disadvantage any group of individuals.
- Assessment is relevant to the programme aims and outcomes.
- The amount of assessed work is manageable. The scheduling of assignments and the amount of assessed work required provides a reliable and valid profile of achievements without overloading learners.
- Information about assessment will be explicit and accessible. Clear, accurate, consistent, and timely information on assessment tasks, assignments and procedures will be made available to learners, assessors, placement providers, employers, and external verifiers/examiners.
- Assessment is relevant to the programme aim and objectives.
- The amount of assessed work is manageable.
- The scheduling of assignments and the amount of assessed work required provides a reliable and valid profile of achievements without overloading learners.
- Formative and summative assessment is included in all programmes to ensure that the purposes of assessment are adequately addressed. Main programmes will also wish to include diagnostic assessment.
- Feedback is an integral part of the assessment process. Learners are entitled to feedback on all submitted assessment tasks. The nature, extent and timing of feedback should be clear in advance.
- Each programme includes a variety of assessment types to allow a range of learning outcomes to be appropriately assessed. In addition, varied assessment tasks support a range of learning styles and ensure that accessibility is planned for, and learners are supported.
- Externally marked assessments, tests and exams will be according to the requirements of the Awarding Organisation.
- Ensure that the Controlled Assessment task may be set by the awarding body, either fixed or with a degree of flexibility or choice for the tutor or learner or be set by the organisation under guidance by the awarding body.

4. Learners with learning difficulties

All learners should be offered baseline assessments in the specific area of study. In addition to this, reading, comprehension, writing, spelling, or cognitive processing, should also be offered.

The learner should not be given an unfair advantage; the learner's result must reflect their achievement in the assessment and not their potential ability.

5. Assessment Methods

A standardised minimal level of initial assessment will be undertaken with each learner at the start of the course.

The assessments for each unit/course will be planned in advance and the learners informed at the beginning of the course.

- on the programme outline
- by being given the assessment criteria

It is the responsibility of the tutor to identify and provide the support required by individual learners to achieve their potential, as far as possible, through the assessment tasks. In certain circumstances, additional support is provided according to the learner's Learning Support Plan.

Tutors will give and record interim assessments and regular feedback to learners during as well as at the end of the programme/unit.

Tutors will have an assessment plan and scheme of work for awards leading to a qualification.

Tutors assessing learner's work will work with the Internal Quality Assessor (IQA) to ensure that a suitable assessment strategy has been devised for the course, prior to delivery.

Designated individuals will internally assess learners' assessed work according to the requirements of the awarding body.
This involves:

- Facilitating standardisation meetings
- Ensuring learners are given adequate opportunities to achieve the required standards
- Ensuring that sampling of learner work is unbiased and representative
- Recording findings on the appropriate documentation
- Maintaining records of the internal quality assessor meetings
- Identifying development needs and opportunities
- Liaising with the External Quality Assessor (EQA) for the Awarding Body to arrange for timely accreditation of learner work.

We will seek to mark learners work as quickly as possible (normally within 4 weeks maximum) and strive to expedite external moderation to maximise the immediate sense of achievement by learners. We will have annual training on assessment.

New tutors will be mentored through this process and more formal in-house training provided when required.

We will action EQA feedback with respect to assessment and implement recommendations or action as quickly as possible.

All summaries of learners' marks and EQA reports will be centrally stored.

Meetings in the Quality Calendar will be:
- Standardisation meetings
- Meetings of course tutor and IQA prior to delivery where assessment is for accreditation purposes
- IQA with EQA as required by awarding body
- 1-to-1 meetings of IQA and tutor where areas for improvement are identified.

6. Procedures

The Group must consider any access arrangements that may be required before a learner is enrolled on to a qualification. An arrangement must not invalidate the learning outcomes or assessment criteria and where possible must reflect the learner's normal way of working within the training environment.

Access arrangements must be put in place before the learner begins any assessment. The Group must make sure access arrangements are suitable for the assessment before the learner starts working on it.

A learner must not receive marks for something somebody else has done.

External Quality Assurers from Awarding Organisation's must be able to sample the work of any learner selected for sampling at the learning centre.

Where an access arrangement has been put in place, the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) must ensure that records are kept for quality assurance purposes.

7. Tutor responsibilities

Tutors (anyone involved in the assessment of learners), must consult the Awarding Organisation's requirements for Access to Fair Assessment, and follow the specific guidance in their Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Procedure.

Tutors or anyone involved in the assessment of learners must communicate with the Group's Education Quality Team and ensure that any Access Arrangements and/or Reasonable Adjustments are passed onto the Exams team for approval and processing with the Awarding Organisation.

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Controlled Assessment Procedure

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Controlled Assessment Process Contents

1.0 Introduction

Controlled Assessment is defined as a compulsory piece of work which contributes a proportion of the final grade of a qualification such as a GCSE or Functional Skill for which there are specific conditions surrounding how the work must be completed. The specific requirements, outlined by awarding bodies, as to how Controlled Assessment must be administrated are intended to ensure that grades awarded to learners across centres are a fair and comparable measure of achievement. It is important that these requirements are enforced through the processes we have in place for implementing and monitoring Controlled Assessment. These processes and requirements will be outlined in this policy.

Ensure that the Controlled Assessment task may be set by the awarding body, either fixed or with a degree of flexibility or choice for the tutor or learner or be set by the organisation under guidance by the awarding body.

1.1 Who does this apply to

This plan applies to all examinations officer, Head of Centre and those involved in the coordination both delivery at teaching level and marking of examinations both Functional Skills and GCSE's,

2.0 Principles

1. The requirements of awarding bodies, both in general and relating to specific qualifications, must be enforced rigorously and consistently.
2. The approach to implementing Controlled Assessment should, within the restrictions specified by the awarding body, give all learners the opportunities they need to achieve their best.
3. No learners should be given an unfair advantage over other learners in the completion of Controlled Assessment tasks e.g. disproportionate levels of support, leniency over deadlines beyond what is allowed by our policy.
4. Learners should not be unduly disadvantaged by circumstances beyond their control and reasonable allowances should be made where appropriate e.g. long-term illness, special educational need.
5. The timing and arrangements for Controlled Assessment tasks should be such that excessive workload pressures for learners and team members are avoided.
6. The resources (including time) dedicated to Controlled Assessment tasks should be proportional to the value of the work in relation to the exam-based elements of the course.

3.0 Responsibilities and Authority

The Head of Centre will:

- Oversee the timing and arrangements for Controlled Assessment.
- Ensure that all tutors understand their roles and responsibilities in controlled assessment and are familiar with the requirements of the awarding body.
- Arrange for secure storage of candidates' work.
- Ensure support and marking practice is consistent across centres.
- Monitor and review the implementation of Controlled Assessment against the agreed policies.
- Investigate appeals and advise the Head of Service and Executive Leadership Team regarding evidence of malpractice.

Tutors, under the leadership of the Head of Centre will:

- Schedule Controlled Assessment tasks with reference to the academic calendar and other planned activities for the group.
- Ensure schemes of work incorporate Controlled Assessment appropriately.
- Organise the logistics of the Controlled Assessment, including access to resources, in line with the policy and awarding body requirements.
- Consult with the Head of Centre on additional arrangements which may be needed for candidates.
- Obtain task information from the awarding body and submit marks by the deadline set.
- Standardise marking.
- Provide parents and learners with the necessary information in an understandable format about the assessments.
- Brief learners about the task and the deadlines for submission.
- Brief learners about the procedures for Controlled Assessment and the conduct required of them.
- If necessary, remove or cover displays.
- Supervise the Controlled Assessment tasks as required during scheduled teaching periods, applying the specified level of control.
- Keep accurate records of attendance during the period of Controlled Assessment.
- Keep accurate records of work completed and submitted, marks awarded and support given to learners undertaken.
- Record any incidents during High level supervision tasks.
- Ensure deadlines are strictly enforced and department procedures for missed deadlines are followed.
- Ensure authentication forms are signed by candidates and the supervising tutor.
- Ensure records are kept of work submitted and that work is stored safely.
- Ensure learners entitled to additional time or special conditions receive this entitlement.
- Report any suspicion of academic malpractice immediately to the Head of Centre, with the appropriate evidence.
- Ensure the Controlled Assessment is carried out in accordance with the policy and the awarding body requirements.

4.0 Preparing for the Controlled Assessments

4.1 Accessing the Assessment Materials

Controlled assessment materials will be made available digitally from the beginning of each academic year.

Controlled assessments can then be accessed using the passwords. A declaration must be made up to six weeks before each assessment to inform all awarding organisations that an assessment is taking place for monitoring purposes.

Controlled assessment materials, or any part of, must not be emailed as they are live assessment materials, and the content must be kept secure and confidential by all staff members.

Tracking documentation must be used to ensure there is reliable tracking of the use of the controlled assessments per Assessor and learner.

It is essential that learners must not resit the same assessment.

Centres must ensure that across their learners and across the academic session, there is an even rotation across the available assessments as this will be verified via the external quality assurance process.

Controlled assessment tracking documents will be requested on external quality assurance visits. These may also be required to be submitted to awarding organisations for monitoring purposes.

4.2 Storing Assessment Materials

The Head of Centre and Exams officers are responsible for:

- the security and integrity of the assessments and associated materials (e.g. used/unused assessment materials, partially or fully completed learner work, assessment tracking documents and the assessment documentation) at all times. This includes both electronically saved and printed materials. Access to this storage must be restricted to authorised personnel only.

- ensuring the centre uses assessments from the current bank of live assessments as accessed above, and that the centre’s internal policy is followed in terms of choosing assessment topics and enforcing a rotation across assessments available throughout the academic session.

- ensuring material is not downloaded and/or printed more than 6 weeks prior to the scheduled assessment date/s then, once printed, that material is placed in the secure storage. Speaking, Listening and Communicating at Entry 3 to Level 2 topics can be accessed 2 weeks prior to the assessment date to allow for sufficient preparation time.

- having a process in place whereby the Assessor(s) can notify the Designated Person that they have learners ready to sit the assessment, then making the assessment materials available from a secure location.

- ensuring that when materials are requested by Assessors, they are printed and stored in a packet(s)/envelopes that can be securely sealed until the day of the assessment.

- completing the centre tracking document to ensure assessments assigned to learners are accurately recorded, which will inform resits, as a learner cannot re-sit the same paper.

- submitting, or supporting the Assessor to submit, any requests for contextualised materials.

- managing the secure destruction of all unused assessment materials, both printed and electronic, once assessments have taken place. Assessments must be accessed and printed again if required by a different learner, for resit or for a different cohort.

- passwords, which will only be available for assessments where there are active registrations against that actual product, e.g. if a centre is running Level 1 English only, they will only have access to Level 1 English assessments.

- ensuring that any unauthorised centre personnel do not have access to the assessment materials or completed learner work.

- ensuring assessment material isn't tampered with.

- immediately informing awarding organisations if the integrity or security of the controlled assessment materials is put at risk by theft, loss, damage, unauthorised disclosure, fire or any other circumstances.

Emergency Evacuation for Exams Procedure

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Emergency Evacuation for Exams Procedure Contents

1. What this Procedure is about and why we need it

This procedure details how we deal with an emergency evacuation of the exam room(s) by defining staff roles and responsibilities and confirming the emergency evacuation procedure.

2. The key aims of this document are to:

- Protect learners who are registered with us.
- Enable safe evacuation from the building during an examination.
- An emergency evacuation is required where it is unsafe for learners to remain in the exam room. This might include a fire in the exam room, the fire alarm sounding to warn of fire, bomb alert or other serious threat.
- In exceptional situations, where candidates might be severely disadvantaged or distressed by remaining in the exam room, the emergency evacuation procedure may also need to be followed. This might include situations where there is severe disruption in the exam room, serious illness of a candidate or invigilator or similarly serious incidents.

3. Who does this procedure apply to:

- This procedure is specifically focused on an element of our education delivery and we refer to our customers as learners throughout.

- This procedure applies to Acis Group and group of companies (including Riverside, CLIP, Skills Centre Plus and Abbey Access) learners, but it is expected that it will be applied within our education delivery areas. This is referred to as 'The Group' throughout.

- The procedure applies to learners, our people, Board members, contractors, volunteers, and any other third-party organisations delivering services or working in partnership with us.

- Learners undertaking exams are made aware of the existence of this procedure in appropriate courses and can request access to it.

- All tutors and wider delivery teams are made aware of the contents and purpose of this procedure.

4. Our procedure is

If there is an incident that needs evacuation from an exam, complete the following process:

- Stop the learners from writing.
- Collect the attendance register (to ensure all learners are present).
- Evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority.
- Advise learners to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room.
- Learners must be advised to close their answer booklet.
- Learners should leave the room in silence.
- Make sure that the learners are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room to make sure there is no discussion about the examination.
- Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted.
- Allow the learners the full working time set for the examination.
- If there are only a few learners, consider the possibility of taking the learners (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.
- Additional centre-specific actions to be taken.
- Where necessary the exams officer will make a request for special consideration to the Awarding Body.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Centre

• Ensures the emergency evacuation procedure for exams is fit for purpose and complies with relevant health and safety regulation

• Ensures any instructions from relevant local or national agencies are referenced and followed where applicable, including information from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office on the Procedures for handling bomb threats
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bombthreatsguidance/procedures-for-handling-bomb-threats

• Where safe to do so, ensures candidates are given the opportunity to sit exams for their published duration

Management Team

• Where responsible for the centre-wide emergency evacuation procedure, ensures all people and appointed Fire Marshalls are aware of the policy and procedures to be followed when an emergency evacuation of an exam room is required.

Tutor with support from Exams Officer

• Ensures appropriate arrangements are in place for the emergency evacuation of a disabled candidate from an exam room where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for the learner.
• Ensures the learner is informed prior to taking their exams of what will happen in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Exams officer

• Ensures invigilators are trained in emergency evacuation procedures and how an incident and actions taken must be recorded.
• Ensures learners are briefed through the learner handbook prior to exams taking place, on what will happen in the event of an emergency in the exam room.
• Provides invigilators with a copy of the emergency evacuation procedure for every exam room.
• Provides a standard invigilator announcement for each exam room which includes appropriate instructions for learners about emergency procedures and what will happen if the fire alarm sounds.
• Provides an exam room incident log in each exam room.
• Liaises with lead tutor for provision and other relevant team members prior to each exam where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a disabled learner.
• Briefs invigilators prior to each exam where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a disabled learner.
• Ensures appropriate follow-up is undertaken after an emergency evacuation reporting the incident to the Awarding Body and the actions taken through the special consideration process where applicable (in cases where a group of learners have been disadvantaged by a particular event).

Invigilators

• Ensures an understanding of what to do in the event of an emergency in the exam room by attending training and/or update sessions.
• Follow the actions required in the emergency evacuation procedure issued to them for every exam room.
• Confirm with the exams officer, where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a disabled candidate, they are invigilating.
• Record details on the exam room incident log to support follow-up reporting to the awarding body by the exams officer (see below).

Other relevant team members

• Support the Head of Centre, exams officer and invigilators in ensuring the safe emergency evacuation of exam rooms.

Exams Assessment Appeals Procedure

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Exams Assessment Appeals Procedure Contents

1. What this procedure is about and why we need it

Some qualifications that we deliver, contain components of non-examination assessment (or units of coursework) which are internally assessed (marked) by internal assessors and internally standardised.

The marks awarded (the internal assessment decisions) which contribute to the final grade of the qualification are then submitted to the awarding organisation for external quality assurance.

In the Joint Council Code of Practice (of which our education provision adheres to) the Awarding Bodies require centres offering examinations to:

1. Have a published appeals procedure relating to internal assessment decisions
2. Make this document available and accessible to learners.

The Awarding Organisation will moderate the assessed coursework/verbal recordings and the final mark awarded is that of the Awarding Organisation. This mark is outside the control of The Group and is not covered by this policy.

This document covers The Group's procedure in dealing with the Awarding Organisations, employees and any other parties involved in awarding matters when an appeal of decision is made.

The Group's procedure is designed to promote quality, consistency, accuracy and fairness in assessment and awarding. In all cases, the final awarding decisions are taken by the Awarding Organisations.

2. Who does this procedure apply to

This procedure is specifically focused on an element of our education delivery and we refer to our customers as learners throughout.

This procedure applies to Acis Group and group of companies (including Riverside, CLIP, Skills Centre Plus and Abbey Access) learners, but it is expected that it will be applied within our education delivery areas. This is referred to as 'The Group' throughout.

The procedure applies to learners, our people, Board members, contractors, volunteers, and any other third-party organisations delivering services or working in partnership with us.

Learners are made aware of the existence of this procedure in appropriate courses and can request access to it.

All tutors and wider delivery teams are made aware of the contents and purpose of this procedure. This procedure is reviewed every three years and may be revised in response to feedback from learners, tutors and external organisations.

3. Our procedure is…

The Group will ensure that:

- Work submitted by the Learner for assessment has been authenticated as original work according to the guidance published by the Joint Council
- At the beginning of the course, Learners are given written guidance about the Awarding Organisations regulations on the production of coursework and the school's deadlines for submission. Information about the Groups' appeals procedure, together with access to this document, will be given at the same time;
- Learners are given adequate and appropriate time to produce the coursework
- Internal assessments are conducted by employees who have an appropriate level of knowledge, understanding and skills
- The consistency of the internal assessment is secured through the departmental mark scheme or marking criteria and internal standardisation, as necessary.

Should a learner feel the process for grading unsatisfactory, we have an internal appeals procedure that is aligned to our complaints process as shown below: *Refer to IQA Appeals flowchart*

- The grounds for appeal may relate to the procedures used in arriving at internal assessment decisions or the production of externally assessed work, but the learner may not appeal against the mark awarded by the centre. The learner must demonstrate why he/she believes that the process was not followed correctly.

- The appeal must be made in writing through our stage two complaints process. This is that it is to be put in writing and submitted to Acis Group's Chief Executive by 31 May of the year that the coursework was assessed. The grounds for the appeal must be clearly stated. The learner can be supported in the presentation of their case by a parent/carer/friend.

- The Operations Manager - Education & Skills/Principle will lead the inquiry if they have played no part in the original assessment process. They will examine the evidence for the procedures used in the assessment, decide upon their appropriateness and that the procedures have been properly followed as required by the Awarding Organisation concerned. The enquiry will be completed by the end of June of that examination series. The findings will be formally reported back to the learner/parent/guardian at the beginning of July.

- Records of the request for the appeal, the evidence, deliberations of the panel and the result will be kept by the Examinations Manager and made available to the Awarding Organisation if required.

Academic Judgement

A learner who does not agree with an assessment grade/mark awarded is encouraged to approach the Assessor concerned, to discuss the mark/grade before submitting an appeal against the grade/mark awarded. An appeal cannot be made against the assessor on a personal or professional level under this policy. Any wider complaints should follow our other appropriate policies.

Exam Contingency Plan

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Exam Contingency Plan Contents

1.0 Introduction

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process across our centres. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.
Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by scenarios contained in the Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

The qualification regulators, JCQ and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed information for schools and colleges in the event of examinations being seriously disrupted. This jointly agreed information will ensure consistency of response in the event of major disruption to the examinations system affecting significant numbers of candidates.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland

This plan complies with JCQ general regulations (section 5) in that:

- The centre agrees to "have in place a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to have a robust contingency plan in place, minimising risk to examination administration, should the examinations officer be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle;"

1.1 Who does this apply to

This plan applies to all examination officers, Head of Centre and those involved in the coordination of examinations both Functional Skills and GCSE's

2.0 Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

- Examinations Officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)
- Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle.
- Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence.
- Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice.
- Failure of IT systems.
- Disruption of teaching time — centre closed for an extended period.

- Learners unable to take examinations because of a crisis — centre remains open.
- Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period.
- Disruption in the distribution of examination papers.
- Disruption to the transportation of completed examination script.
- Assessment evidence is not available to be marked.
- Centre unable to distribute results as normal.

2.1 Examinations officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including:

- Planning of annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered.
- Annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines.
- Sufficient invigilators not recruited and trained.
- Entries of awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff.
- Learners not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment.
- Awarding body entry deadlines missed, or late or other penalty fees being incurred.

Pre-exams

- Exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared.
- Learners not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for learners.
- Exam/assessment materials and learners' work not stored under required secure conditions.
- Internal assessment marks and samples of learners work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators.

Exam time

- Exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies.
- Required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration.
- Learners' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies.

Results and post-results

- Access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to learners.
- The facilitation of the post-results services.

<u>Centre actions:</u>

- A member of staff at each centre to be trained in the delivery of exams.
- All exams administration should be kept accessible.

2.2 Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received.
- Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time, resulting in:
  - learners not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late.
  - late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies.
- Internal assessment marks and learners ' work not provided to meet submission deadlines.

Centre actions:

- Operations Manager - Education & Skills/Principle should ensure that any prolonged absence of teaching staff is covered by suitably qualified and informed staff.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams.
- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days.
- Invigilator absence on the day of an exam.

Centre actions:

- Recruitment/ planning for Invigilation staff must commence at the latest in the winter term of each year. This timeframe will allow the exams officer/ chief executive to interview, induct and suitably train invigilators.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Exams officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning.
- Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days.
- Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time.

Centre actions:

- The Head of Centre will initially coordinate the use of alternative facilities with local partners prior to the exam period. For example, The Bridge would relocate to Riverside Training, and Mablethorpe would move to Springwell & Community Centre.

2.5 Failure of IT systems/cyber attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- system failure at final entry deadline.
- system failure during exams preparation.
- system failure at results release time.
- system failure as a result of a cyber attack

Centre actions:

- Exam entries can be made via an internet connection directly to the exam boards therefore the Head of Centre should ensure that internet access is made available to the exams officer.
- Exam results can be made via an internet connection directly to the exam boards therefore the Head of Centre should ensure that internet access is made available to the exams officer at results release time.

2.6 Disruption of teaching time — centre closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre closed or learners are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning.

Centre actions:

- The centre to communicate with parents, carers and learners about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.
- The Management Team will in the first instance negotiate the use of local facilities starting with wider Group locations alongside the group business continuity team support (as in section 2.4).
- Should the main exam venue be unavailable at the exam time the exams officer should make prior negotiations locally.

2.7 Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis — centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Learners are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal.

Centre actions:

- The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. The centre to communicate with parents, carers and learners regarding solutions to the issue.
- The Head of Centre will in the first instance negotiate the use of local facilities (as in section 2.4).

2.8 Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations.

Centre actions:

- The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue.

- The centre to communicate with parents, carers and learners regarding solutions to the issue.

- Should the main exam venue be unavailable at the exam time the Head of Centre should make prior negotiations in local venues in extenuating circumstances.

2.9 Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations.

Centre actions:

- The exams officer to contact relevant awarding organisations to arrange alternative delivery of papers.

2.10 Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts.

Centre actions:

- The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue.

2.11. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked.

Centre actions:

- The Head of Centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently, if necessary, to learners and their parents or carers.

2.12. Centre unable to distribute results as normal

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to learners, or to facilitate post results services.

Centre actions:

- The centre should contact the awarding organisations to discuss alternative options.

3.0 Awarding body contingency planning requirements

All learners must be informed that they must remain available until the date specified in the ICE guidelines for academic year, should an awarding body need to invoke its contingency plans. This can be found at: https://www.jcq.org.uk

4.0 Additional guidance

JCQ

General regulations: https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

Guidance on alternative site arrangements: https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms/guidance-notes-on-alternative-site-arrangements/

Instructions for conducting examinations: https://www.jcq.org.uk

A guide to the special consideration process: https://www.jcq.org.uk/

GOV.UK

Emergencies and severe weather: schools and early years settings:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings

Teaching time lost due to severe weather:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions

Dispatch of exam scripts guide:

Yellow label guidance:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service
Guide:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/

Examination and Invigilation Procedure

Lead officer	Rachael Crawford – Quality & Compliance Manager
Author	Rachael Crawford
Version number	3
Date agreed	26 January 2023
Agreed by	Enterprise Committee
Review date	31 March 2026
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Diversity compliant	Y
Equality Impact Assessment required	N
Data Protection compliant	Y
Health and Safety compliant	Y

Contents

1. What this procedure is about and why we need it

This procedure gives details of the rules around exam invigilation and exam conduct that applies to all employees involved in preparing learners for exams and staff invigilating exams as well as all learners.

2. Who does this procedure apply to?

This procedure is specifically focused on an element of our education delivery and we refer to our customers as learners throughout.

This procedure applies to Acis Group and group of companies (including Riverside, CLIP, Skills Centre Plus and Abbey Access) learners, but it is expected that it will be applied within our education delivery areas. This is referred to as 'the Group' throughout.

The procedure applies to learners, our people, Board members, contractors, volunteers, and any other third-party organisations delivering services or working in partnership with us.

Learners are made aware of the existence of this procedure in appropriate courses and can request access to it.

All tutors and wider delivery teams are made aware of the contents and purpose of this procedure. This procedure is reviewed annually and may be revised in response to feedback from learners, tutors and external organisations.

3. Our procedure is…

- to ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of learners;
- to ensure the operation of an efficient exam system with clear guidelines for all relevant employees.

The role of the invigilator

The examination invigilator at Acis Group is the person in the examination room with responsibility for conducting a particular examination session in the presence of learners.

Invigilators have key role in:

- upholding the integrity of the examination process.
- ensuring that examinations are conducted in accordance with regulatory requirements
- complying with the security of the examination papers and completed response sheets, before, during and after the examination

- preventing possible candidate malpractice

Invigilators must:

- Be appropriately trained in their duties
- Be able to observe each learner in the examination room at all times
- Be fully conversant with Awarding Body requirements for confirming learner identity
- Inform the Manager in charge if they are suspicious about the security of examination papers, completed response sheets or any other issue that threatens the integrity of the examination process. (In such cases, the Manager must inform Awarding Body immediately and send a full written report within five working days of the suspicion arising).
- Complete invigilation documents in-line with Awarding Body requirements.

Invigilators must not:

- Carry out any other task (for example, reading a book, work on their laptop) in the examination room.
- Only water may be consumed in the room; food is not permitted.

Learner Identification Procedure

Lead officer	Rachael Crawford – Quality & Compliance Manager
Author	Rachael Crawford
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Equality Impact Assessment required	N
Data Protection compliant	Y
Health and Safety compliant	Y

Learner Identification Procedure Contents

1. **What this procedure is about and why we need it**

The aim of this procedure is to establish guidelines for the process of validating Learner identity.

Due to the mix of online, distance and face to face learning environments in which the Group operates, it is extremely important that all learners who enrol on the courses and undertake assessment processes are the ones completing the work. By following this procedure, the Group can establish that the learner is the named learner who participates in, completes the learning program and receives the academic credit.

This statement is specifically focused on an element of our education delivery and we refer to our customers as learners throughout.

This applies to Acis Group and group of companies (including Riverside, CLIP, Skills Centre Plus and Abbey Access) learners, but it is expected that it will be applied within our education delivery areas. This is referred to as 'The Group' throughout.

2. **Authenticating learner identity is essential:**
   - to prevent impersonation of Learners on the course/assessment.
   - to ensure compliance of quality procedures. the group including Riverside, Skills Centre Plus, Abbey Access and Community Learning in Partnership (Clip) is required by the awarding organisations and funders to have strict systems in place to authenticate all learner's identity.

All internal and external learners are required to provide valid photographic identification as proof of identity before starting their studies. This ID must be uploaded to Envelope/Management Information System and will be verified prior to sitting examinations. Valid examples are current Passport or Photo ID driving licence.

In the event of a learner not holding a current Passport or Photo ID driving licence other forms of learner identity proof may be accepted at the discretion of the Group and only if this has been deemed acceptable by the awarding organisation.

The Group may hold a copy of learner's ID in the form of a scanned copy, photograph or screenshot. Where Photographs and screenshots are being gathered, the information will be uploaded to Acis' secure system and only accessed by authorised employees, and the image deleted off the device it was taken with.

Malpractice and Maladministration Procedure

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Data Protection compliant	Y
Health and Safety compliant	Y

Malpractice and Maladministration Process Contents

1. What this procedure is about and why we need it

This procedure aims to identify and minimise the risk of malpractice by employees or learners in relation to examinations, assessments, and qualifications delivery. It also aims to protect the integrity of The Group and accredited qualifications.

Definition of Malpractice

Malpractice is essentially any activity or practice which deliberately contravenes regulations and compromises the integrity of internal or external assessment processes and/or the validity of certificates.
For the purpose of this procedure this term also covers misconduct and forms of unnecessary discrimination or bias towards certain groups of learners.
Examples of malpractice are:

- Discrimination against or bias towards any learner.
- Improper assistance to learners during assessments.
- Failing to keep assessment papers secure prior to assessment.
- Making fraudulent claims for certificates.
- Falsifying learner records, assessment/examination records, internal quality assurance records and/or authentication statements.
- Collusion in examinations/assessments.
- Contravention by a learner of the assessment arrangements specified AIM qualifications.
- The deliberate destruction of another learner's work.
- Inclusion of inappropriate evidence in assessment.
- Impersonation by assuming the identity of another learner or having someone assume their identity in relation to an assessment.
- Acting in a disruptive manner during an assessment.

Definition of Maladministration

Maladministration is essentially any activity or practice which results in non-compliance with administrative regulations and requirements and includes the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration within a centre (e.g. inappropriate use of learner records, submission of false information to gain a qualification or unit, deliberate falsification of records to claim certificates, giving inaccurate advice to learners)

2. Who does this procedure apply to?

This procedure is specifically focused on an element of our education delivery and we refer to our customers as learners throughout.

This procedure applies to Acis Group and group of companies (including Riverside, CLIP, Skills Centre Plus and Abbey Access) learners, but it is expected that it will be applied within our education delivery areas. This is referred to as 'The Group' throughout.

The procedure applies to learners, our people, Board members, contractors, volunteers, and any other third-party organisations delivering services or working in partnership with us.

Learners are made aware of the existence of this procedure in appropriate courses and can request access to it.

All tutors and wider delivery teams are made aware of the contents and purpose of this procedure. This procedure is reviewed annually and may be revised in response to feedback from learners, tutors, and external organisations.

3. Our procedure is …

To avoid malpractice or plagiarism, the Group will:

- Seek to avoid potential malpractice by using the induction period for both staff and learners, the learner handbook to inform learners of our procedure on malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice.
- Where applicable, show learners the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources.
- Require learners to formally declare that their submitted work is entirely their own and has not been generated or significantly influenced by artificial intelligence (AI) tools. This declaration should emphasize personal responsibility and integrity in academic work, ensuring that learners understand the importance of producing authentic, original content. By signing this declaration, learners confirm that any AI assistance used was limited to permitted activities, such as research or language correction, and that the work itself reflects their individual effort and understanding. Provide staff training.
- Conduct an investigation in a form that is appropriate to the nature of the malpractice allegation. Such an investigation will be supported by the Operations Manager - Education & Skills/Principle and all personnel linked to the allegation.

It will proceed through the following stages:

1. Make the individual fully aware at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven.
2. Give the individual the opportunity to respond to the allegations made.
3. Inform the individual of the avenues to appeal against any judgment made.
4. Will report any internal investigation to the awarding body.
5. Document all stages of any investigation.
6. Where malpractice is proven, we will follow the appropriate disciplinary processes.

To avoid maladministration, the Group will:

- Register learners no later than six weeks from the date the learner begins the course.
- Instruct the Head of the Centre to promptly report:
    - any inaccuracies in registrations or certification claims directly to the relevant Awarding Body and inform our internal Quality department. This ensures thorough investigation and oversight to maintain the integrity of our processes.
    - to relevant Awarding Body for mistakes on certificates, no later than four weeks after receipt with the certificate(s) also returned. Where the mistake is not due to an error on the part of the relevant Awarding Body, a fee may be charged for the certificate to be re-issued. Requests outside of this time period will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may be subject to additional administrative charges.
    - The Awarding Body will reissue a certificate in the following circumstances (and will incur a charge where relevant):
        - Spelling errors input at registration.
        - Additional information provided by centre e.g., addition of ULN certificates lost between centre and learner.
        - Certificates lost in transit between Awarding Body and the centre.
        - Reissued certificates may not have the same information on as the original certificate.
        - Awarding Body will replace a certificate where a learner has lost or damaged their certificate. Replacement certificates will have the same information on as the original but will also have the words 'Replacement certificate issued (date)' on it and will incur a charge.
        - Replacement certificates will not be issued with a changed name unless not changing a name breaches the Equalities Act or other relevant legislation. Applicants must provide evidence to support any claim for a name change.
        - Awarding Body reserves the right to revoke any certificate that contains false information as a result of malpractice, maladministration or appeal. This will only be done after careful consideration of culpability and the overall effect of the revocation. Where the Awarding Body decides to revoke certificates, centres will be given adequate notice of the intended actions and will be expected to take every action to recover revoked certificates from learners.
    - The Awarding Body will be contacted via email for any other registration/certification inquiries and learner will be informed on progress until rectified.

Actions to be taken following investigation:

Any instances of malpractice or maladministration will be recorded in the Malpractice and Maladministration Log. Any instances of malpractice will be reported to the appropriate Awarding Body.

Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs)

As an ongoing requirement, we will maintain awareness, and heighten employee awareness of specific risks associated with CAGs, namely:

- Breaches of internal security- to be managed through our Data Protection Policy.
- Deception.
- Improper assistance to students- to be managed through Disciplinary Procedure.
- Failure to appropriately authenticate a student's work- to be managed through our Disciplinary Procedure.
- Over direction of learners in preparation for common assessments- - to be managed through stringent compliance to the groups Code of Conduct for CAGs and dealt with through our Disciplinary Policy if required.
- Allegations that center's submit grades are not supported by evidence that they know to be inaccurate- to be managed through stringent compliance to Centre procedure for CAGs.
- Failure to engage as requested with awarding organisation's during the External Quality Assurance and appeal stages- to be managed through stringent compliance to the group's Code of Conduct.
- Failure to keep appropriate records of decisions made and teacher assessed grades- to be managed through stringent compliance to the group's Code of Conduct.

Reasonable Adjustments & Special Considerations Procedure

Lead officer	Rachael Crawford – Quality & Compliance Manager
Author	Rachael Crawford
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Data Protection compliant	Y
Health and Safety compliant	Y

Reasonable Adjustments & Special Considerations Procedure Contents

1. What this procedure is about and why we need it

This procedure details the adjustments that can be made to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation.

Definition of reasonable adjustments:

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. It is made to an assessment for a qualification to enable a disadvantaged learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding of the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of what needs to be assessed, but may involve:

- changing the usual assessment arrangements, for example allowing a learner extra time to complete the assessment activity.
- adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in Braille.
- providing assistance during assessment, such as a reader and/or scribe.
- changing the assessment method, for example from a written assessment to a spoken assessment.
- providing different colour backgrounds to screens for onscreen assessments or seeking permission for copying paper-based assessments onto different coloured paper for paper-based assessments.
- allowing, and providing, if necessary, different coloured transparencies with which to view assessment papers.
- setting in place approved reasonable adjustments before the assessment activity takes place, to allow learner access to the programme. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a learner's work.

The Group is only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access and will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

Learners identified as requiring reasonable adjustments will be assessed in line with the current JCQ procedures followed by the Group.

Definition of special consideration

Special consideration can be applied after an assessment if there is a reason why the learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment.

For example, special consideration could apply to a learner who has temporarily experienced:

- an illness or injury
- some other event outside of their control

and which has had, or is likely to have had, an adverse effect on the learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment.

Special consideration, if successful, may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark of the learner. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances and reflect the difficulty faced by the learner.

2. Who does this procedure apply to

This procedure is specifically focused on an element of our education delivery, and we refer to our customers as learners throughout.

This procedure applies to Acis Group and group of companies (including Riverside, CLIP, Skills Centre Plus and Abbey Access) learners, but it is expected that it will be applied within our education delivery areas. This is referred to as 'The Group' throughout.

The procedure applies to learners, our people, Board members, contractors, volunteers, and any other third-party organisations delivering services or working in partnership with us.

Learners are made aware of the existence of this procedure in appropriate courses and can request access to it.

All tutors and wider delivery teams are made aware of the contents and purpose of this procedure.

Where the Awarding Body permission is required, the Group must complete a reasonable adjustment or special considerations form providing relevant details and, where appropriate, supporting evidence.

3. Our procedure is…

To avoid any confusion, The Group will ensure that learners are aware:

- Where an assessment requires the learner to demonstrate practical competence or where criteria must be met fully, it may not be possible to apply special consideration.
- In some circumstances, e.g. for on-demand assessments, it may be more appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date.
- Requests for special consideration must be submitted using the Awarding Body Special Consideration Form as soon as possible and no later than 5 working days after the assessment. Failure to submit a Special Consideration application within

the 5 working days period will result in the application being rejected and possible sanctions applied to the centre for not following documented procedures.

Principles of making reasonable adjustments

These principles should be followed when making decisions about a learner's need for adjustments to assessment and should:

- not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification.
- give the learner an unfair advantage.
- reflect the learner's normal way of working.
- be based on the individual need of the learner.

Copies of supporting evidence will be retained securely by The Group until the learner completes the qualification or leaves the organisation. An External Verifier may request to see the evidence (with the learner s permission) as part of the Audit. Approved reasonable adjustments are valid for an academic year. All applications must be completed annually for each learner.

All reasonable adjustment must be requested before the assessment takes place.

The Group will keep records of reasonable adjustments we have permitted and those they have requested from the Awarding Body. These records must normally be kept for three years following the assessment to which they apply.

Where reasonable adjustment is permitted at the discretion of The Group, the Awarding body may require centres to keep records for inspection, including any declarations that are signed and dated by a member of the centre staff who has formally been given delegated authority for this by the Head of Centre.

Requests for reasonable adjustments for paper examinations must be submitted no later than 25 working days before the assessment via the Awarding Body. For online exams requests for reasonable adjustments must be submitted no later than 10 working days before the assessment. Failure to submit a reasonable adjustment application within these timeframes could result in the application being rejected and sanctions applied to the centre for not following documented procedures. Reasonable adjustments cannot be applied and approved retrospectively.

The Awarding Body will acknowledge receipt of the Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration within 2 working days of submission. The outcome of the decision to authorise a reasonable adjustment or special considerations will be communicated directly to the centre within 10 working days.

If The Group disagrees with a decision made by the Awarding Body about a reasonable adjustment or special consideration, the Group can ask for the decision to be reviewed.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Procedure

Lead officer	Rachael Crawford – Quality & Compliance Manager
Author	Rachael Crawford
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Data Protection compliant	Y
Health and Safety compliant	Y

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Procedure Contents

1. What this Procedure is about and why we need it

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessment (leading to the award of a qualification) that considers whether learners can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning.

The key aims of this document are to:

- define recognition of prior learning.
- set out the procedure and evidence requirements for recognition of prior learning.
- confirm the process for administering the recognition of prior learning.

2. Who does this procedure apply to

This procedure is specifically focused on an element of our education delivery, and we refer to our customers as learners throughout.

This procedure applies to Acis Group and group of companies (including Riverside, CLIP, Skills Centre Plus and Abbey Access) learners, but it is expected that it will be applied within our education delivery areas. This is referred to as ‘The Group’ throughout.

The procedure applies to learners, our people, Board members, contractors, volunteers, and any other third-party organisations delivering services or working in partnership with us.

Learners are made aware of the existence of this procedure in appropriate courses and can request access to it.

All tutors and wider delivery teams are made aware of the contents and purpose of this procedure.

3. Our procedure is…

All evidence must be given before the beginning of the course, so that the learner can be enrolled on a course that is appropriate for them.
It’s The Group’s responsibility to:

- make learners aware that evidence provided for consideration of RPL, and achievement must have been achieved before the start of their qualification or unit.
- inform and make clear to learners at the beginning of the RPL and achievement process the timescales for the submission of evidence for it to be considered for RPL and achievement so that it is transparent (prior to enrolling onto the course)
- take responsibility for any RPL and achievement applications for their learners.
- signpost learners to support materials to assist them in their understanding of relevant pieces of evidence for RPL and achievement use.

- ensure that formal requests for RPL and achievement are made at the point of learner enrolment and comply to this procedure.
- ensure that a learner has sufficient evidence to make a viable claim and to support evidence collection and presentation for assessment.

- **Valid** - The evidence must show that the assessment requirements have been fulfilled.
- **Current** - Evidence for the Awarding Body should be from the last three years unless an external licensing body or authority specifies otherwise. It must also align with current practice standards.
- **Authentic** - The evidence should be the learner's own work, unless the unit requires group or team collaboration.
- **Sufficient** - The evidence must be enough to fully meet the requirements of the learning aim or assessment criteria. If it falls short, additional evidence from other assessment methods is necessary before requirements are considered met.
- **Reliable** - The evidence should demonstrate the learner's competence, ensuring confidence in their ability to reproduce the task in the future. Assessors should arrive at the same assessment decision if the assessment were repeated.

- Clarification must be sought from the Awarding Body if a centre has any doubt over credit transfer and the Awarding Body Head of Compliance will have the final decision on any request for credit transfer.
- Claims for credit are made through the Awarding Body by completing a recognition of prior learning and credit transfer form. The Group is required to keep records of valid claims through exemptions and equivalencies for three years.
- If a learner disagrees with The Groups decision to recognise prior learning or achievement, the learner can ask to review its decision in accordance with The Groups Appeals Procedure.
- If any learner is unhappy with how a centre has dealt with their application for RPL and achievement and has exhausted the Groups appeals policy, they must follow the Awarding Body Complaints Policy to submit a complaint.
- The Awarding Body Head of Compliance will have the final decision.
- Ensure that the assessment process for RPL and achievement is subject to the same quality assurance processes as any other part of the assessment process.

Examples of evidence

The evidence required to demonstrate RPL and achievement will depend on the purpose; learning aims and assessment criteria of the unit(s) in question. All evidence submitted for RPL, and achievement must be referenced and signposted clearly to facilitate internal assessment, internal quality assurance and external quality assurance.

The items listed below are examples of evidence which could be used:

- Certificates—copies of previous qualifications
- Qualification Specifications—to map the learning outcomes and assessment methods, the assessor must see qualification units and previous assessment methods.
- Witness Statements—signed by a reliable person such as a line manager as evidence of practical experience.
- All evidence of learning must be valid, authentic, sufficient, current and reliable to enable it to be accepted as appropriate evidence.

- This evidence must be recorded as evidence before the course starts.
- If there is no evidence of prior learning, an initial assessment must take place, and be assessed, before enrolment.

Use of Artificial Intelligence Procedure

Lead officer	Rachael Crawford Quality & Compliance Manager
Author	Rachael Crawford
Version number	3
Date agreed	30 April 2024
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Diversity compliant	Y
Equality Impact Assessment required	N
Data Protection compliant	Y
Health and Safety compliant	Y

Use of Artificial Intelligence Contents

1. What this procedure is about and why we need it

The aim of this procedure is to establish guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence.
Due to the mix of online, distance and face to face learning environments in which the Group operates, it is extremely important that all learners who enrol on the courses and undertake assessment processes are the ones completing the work. By following this procedure, the Group can establish that the learner is the named learner who participates in, completes the learning program and receives the academic credit.
This statement is specifically focused on an element of our education delivery and we refer to our customers as learners throughout.
This applies to Acis Group and group of companies (including Riverside, CLIP, Skills Centre Plus and Abbey Access learners, but it is expected that it will be applied within our education delivery areas. This is referred to as 'The Group' throughout.

Creating an AI procedure within The Group is crucial for ensuring that the integration of AI technologies aligns with our values, educational goals, and legal standards.

2. Ethical use and guidelines

To avoid any confusion, the Group will ensure that learners are aware:

- **Enhance Learning:** Use AI to personalise learning experiences and improve learner outcomes.
- **Equity:** Ensure equitable access to AI tools and prevent any form of bias or discrimination for all learners.
- **Transparency:** Maintain transparency in AI operations and decision-making processes.
- **Bias and Fairness:** Regularly audit AI systems to detect and mitigate biases, to ensure AI decisions do not unfairly disadvantage any group.
- **Accountability:** Establish clear lines of accountability for AI decisions.
- **Transparency:** Clearly communicate how AI systems make decisions. Provide explanations that are understandable to learners and staff.
- **Training and Support:** Provide training for all learners and staff on how to effectively and ethically use AI tools. Offer continuous support and resources.

Use of a Word Processor in Examinations Procedure

Lead officer	Rachael Crawford Quality & Compliance Manager
Author	Rachael Crawford
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Equality Impact Assessment required	N
Data Protection compliant	Y
Health and Safety compliant	Y

Use of a Word Processor in Examinations Procedure Contents

1.0 Introduction

The use of word processors in examinations and assessments is reviewed and updated annually on the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and Instructions for conducting examinations. The Group learners that require a word processor for their examinations are provided with laptops which comply with JCQ regulations:

"Centres are allowed to provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre and is appropriate to their needs".

1.1 Who does this apply to

This plan applies to all examinations officer, Head of Centre and those involved in the coordination of examinations both Functional Skills and GCSE's

2.0 Principles for using a Word Processor

- The use of word processors is allowed to remove barriers for learners who would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.
- The use of word processors is only permitted whilst ensuring that the integrity of the assessment is maintained, at the same time as providing access to assessments for a disabled learner.
- The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.
- Learners may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands on our learners, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis.
- The use of a word processor for learners is only granted if it reflects the support given to the learner as their 'normal way of working'.

The only exception to this, is where an arrangement may need to be put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment at the time of an exam or assessment.

3.0 Use of a word processor

Particular types of learners may benefit from using a word processor:

- A learner whose handwriting is illegible/ incomprehensible.
- A learner whose handwriting speed is slow and when assessed the learner has a handwriting speed standardised score of less than 85.
- A learner who has a medical condition whereby it is uncomfortable and/or painful for them to write for extended periods.
- A learner with a physical disability which affects their ability to write.

A word processor will not be granted to a learner simply because they prefer to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home.

4.0 Responsibilities

We will:

- Provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled.
- Only grant the use of a word processor to a learner where it is their normal way of working within the centre.
- Only grant the use of a word processor to a learner if it is appropriate to their needs.
- In all cases, ensure that a word processor cover sheet (JCQ Form 4 for AQA, Edexcel and OCR exams) is completed and included with each learner's typed script.
- Ensure word processors have been cleared of any previously stored data.
- Ensure word processors are in good working order at the time of the examination.
- Ensure a learner using a word processor during an examination will be accommodated separately and a separate invigilator is used.
- Ensure word processors have the facility to print from a portable storage medium.
- Ensure documents are printed after the examination is over.
- Ensure learners are present to verify that the work printed is their own.
- Ensure word processed scripts are inserted in any answer booklet which contains some of the answers.
- Ensure word processors are not used to perform skills which are being assessed.
- Ensure word processors are not connected to the internet or an intranet or any other means of communication.
- Ensure learners are not given access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc. when using a word processor.