



UNIVERSAL COLLEGE *Of*
HEALTH & MEDICAL SCIENCES

Unus pro omnibus, omnes pro uno.

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ASSESSMENT CENTRE MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

All staff should be familiar with this document.

Although we do not currently offer Regulated Qualifications, we have adopted some of the policies and procedures to help us raise and maintain the standards of our own innovative qualifications.

This independence gives us the freedom to design our courses and qualifications for specific purposes and careers, even the development of new professions. However, this also means that other training organisations that offer similar courses and qualifications also have this freedom.

We have actively integrated the following policies and procedures into how we design, develop, produce and assess our courses and qualifications so that we can raise and maintain high standards equivalent to Regulated Qualifications.

We will at some point be offering these kinds of qualifications, and with this in mind, we have decided to implement as many of the following policies and procedures into the general management of the UCHMSc.

This includes training and development of staff, teachers, lecturers, assessors, internal quality assurers.

We are committed to our staff and students' personal and professional goals.

INTRODUCTION

The Universal College of Health and Medical Sciences (UCHMSc), delivers relevant qualifications through its approved Assessment Centre.

IMPORTANT PRE-NOTE:- We do not currently offer regulated qualifications as the subjects that we teach do not have any. However, we do adopt voluntarily most of the policies and procedures laid out in this document so as to make a starting point from which to develop the qualifications into regulated qualifications and therefore establish national occupational standards in these currently unregulated qualifications.

In order for the UCHMSc, to maintain its centre's approval(s) the awarding organisation undertakes yearly external quality assurance inspections.

We are currently accredited by The British and International Association of Health and Aesthetics (Colleges and Registers), and the CPD Group. We must therefore adhere to their policies, procedures, terms and conditions.

Ensuring that standards are maintained by all approved centres forms a key role in an awarding organisation's responsibilities.

Regulated Awarding organisations are themselves subject to regulatory inspection and approval from the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), which was established in 2009 by the *Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act and Education Act 2011*

Delivering RQF qualifications forms a major part of the Development Strategy for The Universal College of Health and Medical Sciences, and this policy document is primarily aimed at supporting the operation and administration of all future regulated qualifications that we aim to deliver, and current ones that are not yet regulated.

QUALIFICATION CREDIT FRAMEWORK (RCF)

Qualifications that use the RQF rules are made up of units. This provides flexible ways to get a qualification. Each unit has a credit value which tells you how many credits are awarded when a unit is completed.

The credit value also gives an indication of how long it will normally take you to prepare for a unit or qualification. One credit will usually take you 10 hours of learning.

Units build up to qualifications. There are three different types of qualification in the RCF:

- **Award** with 1 to 12 credits
- **Certificate** you will need 13 – 36 credits
- **Diploma** you will need at least 37 credits.

Units and qualifications are each given a level according to their difficulty, from entry level to level 8. The title of a qualification will tell you its size and level.

Units awarded by different awarding organisations can be combined to build up qualifications.

The UCHMSc use a similar framework to assign levels and credits to units, modules and qualifications. This is so that we can map our qualifications to existing qualifications from different places.

MANAGERIAL SYSTEMS FOR THE 'APPROVED ASSESSMENT CENTRE'

The approved assessment centre is managed by the Centre Manager (Quality Nominee) who is responsible for managing the systems in place to ensure that quality control is maintained. The Quality Nominee is a qualified assessor and internal quality assurance officer, or at least in training to gain these regulated qualifications.

A network of 'sector competent' assessors, and internal quality assurers (IQAs) qualified to nationally recognised standards (*where possible*) are available to assess and quality assure the levels of knowledge and competence reached by learners undertaking qualifications. All assessors and IQAs are issued with legally binding contracts prior to undertaking any assessment activities.

The centre employs an examination invigilator to support the delivery of online examinations, the examination invigilator adheres to assessment practices and principles.

There may be occasions where staff working at levels lower than those shown above are invited to undertake training and demonstrate competence as assessors or internal quality assurance.

Where new qualifications for assessment and internal quality assurance replace existing ones, there will be no requirement for individuals to re-qualify. However, they will be required to carry out their practice in accordance with the current standards for assessment and internal quality assurance.

They must attend professional updating or CPD training sessions to ensure that they maintain their assessment and/or internal quality assurance practice to the required standards.

All new assessors, examination invigilators, and internal quality assurers will receive an induction which will cover the requirements of the role, relevant policies, procedures and documentation of the UCHMSc. They will be formally registered for the appropriate qualification and will work towards this under the direction and guidance of their appointed assessor.

All assessment decisions by unqualified assessors or unqualified internal quality assurers (working towards the appropriate qualification) will be checked, authenticated and countersigned by a qualified and occupationally competent assessor who will also act as their mentor.

It is the responsibility of the Quality Nominee, to ensure that there are sufficient competent and qualified assessors, examination administrators, and internal quality assurers to meet service needs.

ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATION STRATEGY AND SECTOR COMPETENCE

The Awarding Organisation is responsible for determining the assessment strategy for the qualifications being offered. This sets out the overarching principles for assessment and quality assurance. It is incorporated within the standards documentation for each qualification and is available from the UCHMSc. The following key principles are embedded within this strategy.

Requirement for Assessors, Expert Witnesses, Internal Quality Assurers and Examination methods

These are key roles within the process and essential for ensuring validity, fairness and reliability of assessment and therefore the 'integrity and professionalism' of individuals undertaking these roles is of 'paramount importance'. The assessment strategy emphasises the importance for organisations to provide sufficient time for appointed assessors and internal quality assurers to carry out their roles effectively.

i. Required competence of assessors

Assessors are required to be 'occupationally competent'; in other words, competent in the functions covered by the units they are assessing. Occupational competence will be identified by the use of job descriptions and CV's. It is the responsibility of the Quality Nominee to make sure that the assessor has the necessary occupational competence to undertake the assessment process.

Assessors must be familiar with the qualification units they are assessing. They must show that they maintain their occupational competence by actively engaging in continuous professional development activities.

ii. Required competence of examination invigilator

The invigilator is responsible for the conduct and integrity of all examinations, whether written, online or practical. The UCHMSc, invigilators are responsible for familiarising themselves with Awarding Organisations requirements including the Regulations for the conduct of examinations.

iii. Required competence for expert witnesses

Expert witnesses must be occupationally competent. They must be familiar with the qualification for which they are providing testimonies. Expert witnesses must also maintain their occupational competence by actively engaging in continuous professional development activities.

iv. Required competence of internal quality assurers

The UCHMSc, internal quality assurers must be occupationally knowledgeable about the range of units for which they are responsible. They must understand the content, structure and assessment requirements for the qualification they are verifying. They must maintain their occupational competence by actively engaging in continuous development activities.

Internal quality assurers working for and with the UCHMSc, must occupy a position that gives them authority and resources to, provide authoritative advice, call meetings as appropriate, visit and observe assessment practice and carry out all the other important roles of internal quality assurance.

v. Principles of assessment

When assessing competence in the workplace, wherever possible, there should be direct observation of the candidate by a competent assessor or testimony from an expert witness. This can be achieved face to face or utilising current technology such as webcam or video conferencing (as long as validation of identification occurs prior to acceptance of evidence).

Where not possible or practicable to obtain direct observation alternative methods of assessment are acceptable, such as work products, records, reflective accounts and professional discussion.

Each Awarding Organisation assessment strategy also provides guidelines and principles regarding the use of simulation. For example, simulation is acceptable only where evidence in the workplace will not be demonstrated within an acceptable timeframe or where the nature of the work activity presents high risk/danger to the candidate and/or others.

Simulations must be planned and organised and must make neither more nor less demands on the candidate than would be experienced in a real work situation, i.e. they must replicate realistic scenarios that the candidate may reasonably face.

Knowledge and understanding can be assessed utilising a number of methodologies including:

- Questioning, both written, oral, and online examination
- Examination of product
- Professional discussion submitted by audio file, telephone, video conferencing and webcam

vi. Principles of Examination

All question papers, online assessments and computer-based assessment forms carry copyright. They must not be retained or copied in any form in whole or in part unless otherwise specified in subject-specific documentation.

Online Assessment

The UCHMSc, will ensure appropriate security systems and procedures are in place to prevent candidates from using computers in examinations and having unauthorised external communications. Our learning management system is designed to prevent cheating.

For online assessment, it is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that both the identity of the candidate is established and that the candidate's name and identity match the name and identity on the online test screen. If candidates sit an examination in another candidate's name (whether or not this is intentional), this may constitute malpractice.

Prior to assessment candidates will be informed of the date, time, place of the examination and the conditions under which it will be held.

The invigilator will take all reasonable steps to make sure that the following conditions are met;

The invigilator will take all reasonable steps to make sure that the following conditions are met:

- they are able to establish the identity of all candidates sitting online assessments. The head of the centre must make sure that appropriate arrangements are in place so that all invigilators can carry out adequate checks on the identity of all candidates. Candidates must show documentary evidence to prove that he/she is the same person who entered/registered for the assessment e.g. passport or photographic driving licence.
- candidates only take into the examination room those instruments or materials which are clearly allowed in the instructions on a question paper. Unauthorised items will be removed before the assessment starts.
- mobile phones and other means of electronic communication are not allowed in any assessment. Candidates should be warned of this rule in advance and reminded at the start of each examination.

- for online examinations, the test must be unlocked for the correct candidate. The invigilator must check the identity of the candidate and then ensure that the correct ID and password are issued. The invigilator must oversee the input of the id and password for each candidate and check to see that the name on the test screen matches the name of the candidate.

If in spite of these checks either the invigilator or candidate becomes aware that the candidate sitting the test in a different candidate's name, then the test should be aborted. The awarding organisation should be notified immediately.

ROLES OF PERSONNEL WITHIN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Role of the Candidate

- Prepare for assessment by making sure he/she is familiar with the standards, what is to be assessed and how he/she will be assessed
- Make sure he/she understands the process of assessment and plays a positive and active role in this
- Carry out specified activities
- Gather and present evidence for assessment
- Receive and act on feedback from the assessor and other people involved in the assessment process
- Ensure the confidentiality and security of evidence in accordance with legislative, organisational and awarding organisation requirements

Role of the Invigilator

The invigilator referred to in this document is the person nominated by the Centre Manager to take responsibility for the arrangement of examinations or tests.

- checks on the identity of all candidates
- provide an induction to the testing procedure and an outline of the qualification
- security of question paper/question bank/test documentation
- examination/test conditions, including online and computer-based assessments, which ensure that the work submitted is that of the candidate alone using only the items/materials specified.
- Ensure that appropriate software, computers, and/or other equipment are being used for candidates registered for online tests with remote invigilation.

A robust approval and booking procedure will exist for online testing (See separate Policy & Procedure 'online testing'). Rigorous and auditable security procedures will be put in place to prevent candidates, from taking on-line examinations and having unauthorised communications with other users. On-line examinations may be taken within a time period set within the system for each candidate.

Role of the Assessor

An assessor has a key role in the development of the candidate and in ensuring that the candidate is able to perform to the required standards.

The assessor is also a 'guardian' of the standards which means making sure that assessment judgements and decisions are safe. A summary of the principal responsibilities of the assessor is given below:

- Provide an induction and an outline of the qualification and what is expected of the candidate
- Carry out an initial assessment of the candidate and make sure that arrangements are put in place to manage any identified additional support needs
- Consider any application by the candidate for recognition of prior learning (RPL)
- Explain how the assessment process will be conducted
- Give details of the candidate's responsibilities with reference to the qualification, development and collection/presentation of evidence
- Agree and record assessment plans with the candidate
- Carry out assessments in accordance with the awarding organisation requirements and those of the centre
- Ensure that evidence meets the requirements for validity, authenticity, sufficiency, fairness and reliability
- Make judgements on the evidence provided and record assessment decisions against the standards
- Provide the candidate with prompt, accurate and constructive feedback
- Maintain accurate records of assessment and achievement in accordance with the awarding organisation and centre requirements
- Regularly review the candidate's progress and agree on new assessment plans where further evidence is required
- Carry out assessment practice in accordance with relevant regulations and organisation policies, such as equality of opportunity, health and safety and data protection
- Take part in standardisation meetings and activities
- Maintain occupational competence and keep records of CPD activities
- Contribute to quality assurance of the qualification in line with the requirements of the centre, awarding organisation, relevant sector skills council, Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) and Office of the Qualifications & Examinations Regulator (Ofqual).

Role of Internal Quality Assurer

Internal quality assurers are responsible for maintaining and improving assessment within the centre. They must ensure that procedures are in place to support assessors in making robust and reliable assessment decisions.

A summary of the key aspects of the role is given below.

- Carry out inductions with new members of the assessment invigilation team and identify any training or support needs
- Make sure that assessors and invigilators have the right competence and expertise to carry out their role
- Carry out standardisation activities to ensure that there is consistency of assessment and that appropriate assessment methodologies are used by assessors
- Make sure that there is an effective system for recording candidate achievement
- Keep accurate and up to date records of internal quality assurance
- Provide advice and guidance to assessors and invigilators to ensure that assessment and testing meets the requirements for sufficiency, authenticity, validity and consistency
- Take appropriate corrective action where necessary
- Take part in the formal stage of an appeal
- Carry out sampling and monitoring activities to ensure that assessors' judgements and decisions are consistent, fair and reliable
- Observe assessors and invigilators carrying out their practice
- Give feedback and support to enable them to maintain the quality of assessment and improve on their performance
- Make sure that the requirements for equality and diversity are being met
- Monitor the impact of legal issues including health safety and welfare of others
- Apply centre procedures for managing information such as recording, storing and reporting including maintaining confidentiality
- Monitor and manage own continuous professional development and that of the assessment team
- Contribute to centre meetings for assessors and internal quality assurers and take an active part in making sure that assessment and internal quality assurance is 'fit for purpose'
- Obtain feedback from candidates to ensure they are receiving the support and access to assessment to which they are entitled

Role of the External Quality Assurer

- Monitor and ensure the quality of internal quality assurance across a number of centre's
- Plan how external quality assurance will take place
- Monitor and critically evaluate the quality of the centre's internal quality assurance systems, administrative arrangements, staffing levels and staff expertise and competence, arrangements for assessment, the methods used and the assessment decisions made, providing advice and support to the centre's
- Complete required documentation as required by the awarding organisation
- Giving feedback and support to the centre's

Role of the Centre Manager (Quality Nominee)

The Centre Manager who acts as the Quality Nominee, and is the main point of contact between the centre and awarding organisation for information relating to quality assurance. Responsibilities are outlined below.

- Make sure that all staff are aware of the awarding organisation's requirements
- Manage the centre quality assurer meetings
- Receive and share with invigilators, assessors, internal quality assurers and other relevant personnel, information from the awarding organisation relating to the delivery of approved programmes
- Make sure that assessment and internal quality assurance is effective on all approved programmes
- Liaise with the external quality assurer regarding quality assurance practice and standards verification
- Give feedback to senior managers, internal quality assurers and assessors following external quality assurance, quality review and development processes
- Manage the training and support of new invigilators, assessors and internal quality assurers
- Provide opportunities for continuous professional development for assessors and internal quality assurers

Role of the Support Administrator

This is the person designated by the centre to provide administrative support to the Centre Manager (Quality Nominee), internal quality assurers, assessors and candidates. Key responsibilities are:

- Ensure all records are up to date and accurate
- Update candidate records to reflect unit or qualification achievement
- Register candidates with relevant awarding organisation following approval from the Quality Nominee
- Prepare notification documentation to relevant personnel on candidate achievement
- Carry out quarterly checks on the accuracy of internal records containing details of online testing, remote invigilation, traditional invigilation, candidates, assessors and internal quality assurers
- Keep accurate records of internal Quality Assurance meetings
- Maintain files and records held by the Assessment Centre
- Carry out periodic audits to check and confirm the accuracy of data held by the centre

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS (*For further information see detailed Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy*)

The UHCMSc, is committed to ensuring that all learners are given equality of opportunity and access to qualifications. An individual who may require a reasonable adjustment to help reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places him or her at substantial disadvantage in the assessment process. It is stressed that this adjustment will reflect the normal working practice of the candidate within the occupational area and the specified assessment criteria for a particular qualification will still be met. Reasonable adjustment will not affect the validity or reliability of the assessment outcome or give an advantage over other candidates. Adaptations to be made to the physical environment for access purposes or adaptation to equipment will be acceptable as long as these do not impact on the standards being tested.

Discussions regarding reasonable adjustments will take place prior to the assessment process. It is important that invigilators and/or assessors provide opportunities for candidates to raise any concerns regarding assessments and to make applications for reasonable adjustments during induction and assessment planning stages. Any reasonable adjustments will comply with the awarding organisation's policy and guidance. Advice on reasonable adjustments can be requested from the Equal Opportunities Adviser and Centre Manager.

APPEALS PROCEDURE *(For further information see detailed Appeals Policy)*

The UCHMSc, provide a written appeals procedure for any candidates who are dissatisfied with the conduct or outcomes of their assessment. Throughout the assessment process it is in the interest of all parties to ensure that the judgement of the candidates is accurate and fair.

Where assessors are unsure whether the candidate has demonstrated competence, the assessor is advised to declare the candidate “not yet competent”. Whilst the candidate may believe that he/she is competent and has demonstrated competence, after discussing this concern with his/ her assessor, the candidate may lodge an appeal if he/she still feels aggrieved.

WHEN APPEALS MAY BE LODGED

Appeals regarding the conduct of an assessment may be made if the candidate feels that:

- He/she has not had access to assessment against the relevant criteria
- The conditions of assessment were not appropriate
- The judgement of the assessor conflicts with the standards

MALPRACTICE *(For further information see detailed Malpractice Policy)*

The UCHMSc, has in place a published centre policy on malpractice.

In this context, malpractice is defined as any act which undermines the integrity and validity of assessment, the certification of qualifications and/or damages the authority of those responsible for conducting assessment and certification.

It is the responsibility of all training and development staff to be vigilant regarding malpractice and where it occurs or where it is attempted it must be dealt with in an open and fair manner.

EXAMPLES OF MALPRACTICE BY THE CANDIDATE

- Work that does not belong to the candidate, such as evidence that has been falsified, plagiarised or copied
- Alteration of any documents such as witness testimonies or certificates of achievement

PREVENTING MALPRACTICE

The centre will take all reasonable steps to minimise the possibility of malpractice.

These will include:

- Informing candidates of the centre's policy on malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice. This information should be given during the induction period and included in written information given to the candidate
- Checking the validity and authenticity of candidates' written answers to questions
- Use of oral questions with candidates to check their knowledge and understanding and explore how this is applied in their workplace
- Developing an awareness of candidates' written style, way of working and abilities so that a judgement can be made on the authenticity of evidence that has been provided by other means than through direct observation or oral questioning
- Ensuring the integrity of candidate login and passwords to computer systems.

DEALING WITH MALPRACTICE

Any malpractice or attempted act of malpractice which has influenced the assessment outcome, must be reported to the Quality Nominee so that this can be logged and the incident communicated to the awarding organisation.

The centre will be required to carry out an investigation and to report the findings to the awarding organisation. The Centre Manager must notify the individual under investigation of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven.

The individual must be given the opportunity to respond in writing to the allegations made. The Centre Manager must also inform the individual of the avenues for appealing should a judgement be made against him/her.

A full investigation will then take place by the awarding organisation and the centre will be expected to cooperate fully with this. Where a candidate certificate has been awarded, this may be recalled and declared invalid.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

Candidates will be registered by the Assessment Centre for the relevant qualification using the awarding organisation's online registration process.

A record will be made of the candidate's registration number and date of registration.

Candidates may (if acceptable by the awarding organisation) take certain tests online by remote invigilation.

CANDIDATE PORTFOLIOS ELECTRONIC PORTFOLIO SYSTEMS

Evidence of candidates' competence can be saved electronically.

An electronic portfolio system has a number of advantages over a paper-based system. Candidates, assessors, internal quality assurers and centre staff have access to the portfolio whenever needed.

The system removes the need to transport candidate portfolios from one location to another and there is no physical storage needed.

The system is secure and is backed up every 15 minutes so there is no risk of losing the portfolio as could occur with a paper-based document.

Candidates' progress can be easily tracked and there are useful reports available to learners, assessors, internal quality assurers and centre staff.

The system supports the uploading of a range of different media such as audio, video and photographs.

PORTFOLIO CONTROL AND SECURITY

Portfolios are the collective evidence required to demonstrate that a candidate has met the standards necessary to achieve the qualification.

The integrity and safekeeping of an electronic portfolio is easily ensured through the requirement for a login and password.

Users must not divulge their passwords to another person.

If a user feels that the integrity and confidentiality of their account has been compromised the password should be reset immediately.

RETENTION OF CANDIDATE PORTFOLIOS

The awarding organisation requires that assessment records be retained for a minimum of three years following certification. Electronic portfolios are held for five years and, after this period, a notification is sent to the centre asking if the portfolio can now be destroyed.

REVIEWING AND TRACKING CANDIDATE PROGRESS

The purpose of tracking a candidate is to ensure timely achievement and also to alert the assessor, internal quality and Quality Nominee to the potential need for additional help and advice, guidance when progress is slow.

‘Tracking’ is the monitoring of a candidate’s progression through the qualification process, from the time of the initial application through to completion and achievement of the qualification.

Progress will be monitored by the assessor, internal quality assurer and Quality Nominee using the reporting mechanisms within the system.

Records held on the system will show completion and certification of all qualifications.

EVALUATION OF STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

The Quality Nominee shall arrange quarterly Quality Assurance meetings. The purpose of the meetings will be to ensure effective communication within the Assessment team, and address the following issues: -

- The provision of information, advice and guidance to candidates and prospective candidates
- Reviews of current learning resources and those in development in relation to provision of ‘underpinning knowledge’ requirements of regulated qualifications
- Reviews of the quality and fairness of the assessment procedures and the provision of resources required for candidates with additional learning needs
- The effectiveness of the appeals procedure and policy on malpractice
- The appropriateness and range of the assessment methods/resources used
- The effectiveness of quality assurance procedures
- The effectiveness of assessment and internal quality assurance records
- Health and safety and any issues relating to equality of opportunity

- Review of assessment and internal quality assurance practice and discussions of recommendations for further improvements and developments
- Sharing of good practice
- Updates from the awarding organisation, external quality assurer, sector skills council and other stakeholders
- Discussion and implementation of new standards

DOCUMENT CONTROL PROCEDURES

All 'active' documents used by personnel for the implementation, monitoring, assessment and control of qualifications will be kept within The UCHMSc, document library.

Policies, procedures and documents will be reviewed annually or as required by changes in regulation or good practice.

Each document will carry a unique reference number and date of issue and review date.

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

External Quality Assurance visits are carried out on an annual basis and are conducted by representatives from the awarding organisation.

The Quality Nominee will be the contact point for communications between the UCHMSc, and the awarding organisation and will be responsible for facilitating these visits.

However, as well as meeting with the Quality Nominee, Awarding Organisation representative will want to speak to programme leaders, assessors, invigilators and internal quality assurers.

They may also wish to consult with senior managers to examine the Service's overall strategy for qualification development and delivery.

All personnel involved in the process are expected to make every effort to be available and to support and cooperate fully with these visits if requested.

These policies have been approved and authorised by:

Dr Nicholas Pearce
Principal / Director

21st February 2024, and is due for review on or before 21st February 2025.

Information is correct at the time of publication but is subject to change at any time.

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