



***Policy on***

***Examinations and Assessments***

<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Examinations &amp; Assessments Policy</b>
<b>Document Owner</b>	<b>Academic Registrar</b>

<b>Directorates and Departments affected by this Procedure</b>	<b>All staff</b>
<b>Procedure Effective From</b>	<b>May 2021</b>
<b>Next Review Date</b>	<b>May 2026</b>

New College Durham is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, as well as vulnerable adults, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

If you require this document in an alternative format and/or language, please contact [records@newdur.ac.uk](mailto:records@newdur.ac.uk)

We review our policies regularly to update them and to ensure that they are accessible and fair to all. All policies are subject to equality impact assessments which are carried out to determine whether the policy has, or is likely to have, a different impact on those with protected characteristics. We are always keen to hear from anyone who wants to contribute to these impact assessments and we welcome suggestions for improving the accessibility of fairness of this and all College policies.

To make suggestions or to see further information please contact:

**Suzy Taylor**

Academic Registrar

[records@newdur.ac.uk](mailto:records@newdur.ac.uk)

Equality Impact Assessed: April 2021

Accessibility Check: April 2021

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## 1. Scope

This Policy will ensure the College can exercise its core function of providing awards to learners who enrol on its courses. This policy will cover both HE and FE awards and will cover the provision of examinations to the standards set by all relevant validating bodies, awarding bodies and regulators.

The Policy will ensure

- that the College complies fully with the requirements for assessment as set out for each qualification; and
- that students are not negatively impacted by any emergency or unforeseen situations which may affect the delivery of examinations.

## 2. Responsibilities

The Principal, Senior Leadership Team and Heads of School are accountable for the fair, safe and secure conduct of examinations and controlled assessments and for considering this in making decisions to close the College.

The Academic Registrar is responsible for ensuring

- an Examinations and Assessments Policy is in place and that staff are aware of the policy
- that the Exams Team is resourced to deliver Policy requirements

The Examinations and Assessments Co-ordinator is responsible for

- ensuring students are registered with Awarding Bodies as identified by Curriculum Managers (CMs) and entered for exams and assessments as requested by the CMs before the deadline for final entries;
- ensuring compliance with Awarding Body regulations including for the receipt, storage, co-ordination and safe transmission of examination and assessment materials and mark sheets
- ensuring procedures are in place to confirm learner identification and records attendance during all examinations and assessments
- arranging suitable accommodation and invigilation for examinations and controlled assessments on request from the CMs, including provision of requested access arrangements
- ensuring training for Invigilators and other staff involved in supervising or managing examinations and controlled assessments
- creating, publish and updating an internal appeals policy for controlled assessments.
- managing alternative arrangements or rescheduling of examinations or controlled assessments and communicating those outcomes to students and staff

The Head of Learning Support is responsible for ensuring access arrangements have been applied for and working with the Exams Team and teaching staff to ensure requirements for support staff are met.

Teaching staff with responsibility for controlled assessments are responsible for ensuring the most up to date Awarding Body guidance is followed in relation to these.

Students have a responsibility to abide by the rules for examinations and controlled assessments as displayed at the examination site.

Invigilators are responsible for enforcing the Instructions for Conducting Examinations published by JCQ and any other Awarding Body rules which may apply from time to time.

### **3. Relationship with existing policies and regulations**

This policy will facilitate compliance with awarding body requirements and particularly the JCQ General Regulations and Instructions for Conducting Examinations. It will also ensure Compliance with UK Quality Code expectations and rules set by the College's and awarding partner's regulations

In addition this policy should be read in the context of the following College policies and procedures:

- Academic Registry Policy
- Procedure for Controlled Assessments
- ICT Procedure for Controlled Assessments
- Procedure for HE Examinations
- Academic Malpractice Policies and Procedures (HE&FE)
- Fire Policy
- Contingency Procedure for Sports Hall use

### **4. Malpractice**

Breaches in conduct may result in the candidates being disqualified from the assessment for which they have been entered and a formal investigation will be undertaken into the malpractice that has been reported. This may result in disciplinary action.

Allegations of malpractice on the part of staff or students' will be reported to the relevant validating body or awarding body as per the guidance given by the Joint Council for Qualifications and the validation or awarding body's own procedures. This may also result in disciplinary action under the College's Academic Malpractice Policies for HE and FE.

## **5. Conflict of Interest**

The College manages conflicts of interest by maintaining a central record of centre staff who have ‘related people’ sitting exams at the centre. These records will be made available to Awarding Organisations as required and individual awarding body guidance will be followed if there is any change to normal procedures.

The Academic Registrar will ensure a risk assessment is completed and protocols are put in place to mitigate any potential risk to the integrity of the qualifications affected and ensure fairness in any process reviews or appeals. This will include ensuring the member of centre staff does not have access to relevant examination or assessment materials or Awarding Body portals and is not able to confer any preferential treatment on the candidate. This includes situations where centre staff are asked to determine grades awarded.

## **6. Appeals**

Appeals will be managed according to the FE Appeals Procedure which will cover awards which are certificated by an external Awarding Organisation.

Exceptions to the procedure will be HE awards validated by HE institutions (eg. OU and NCD) and Pearson Higher National Awards. These will be covered by ‘HE QMP 4-7-2: Assessment and Moderation Academic Appeal Procedure for New College Durham, Open University and Pearson Awards’.

The College will decide whether a review or appeal is appropriate and, if a payment is required, the decision on whether the College will pay for the appeal will be made by the Head of Centre or an appropriate delegate.

Exceptions to this will be implemented in line with any statutory guidance provided by OfQual and variations to the procedure will be made in these instances.

## **7. Invigilation**

The College is committed to ensuring the JCQs Instructions for Conducting Examinations is adhered to by Invigilators and will provide regular training to all staff who perform invigilation duties. These will apply to FE and HE examinations and assessments.

## **8. Contingency planning**

The College aims to ensure that the delivery of examinations to learners are not negatively impacted by any unforeseen situations or emergencies.

Where possible the College will plan examinations and assessments taking into account holidays and planned closure days. It is acknowledged that some examinations take place during set “windows” that the College does not have control over. Where this is the case, the College will work within established JCQ guidelines to plan and conduct these examinations and assessments.

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, the College should assume that any exam or timetabled assessment should take place if it is possible to do so. This may mean having to locate and utilise alternative premises.

If the exam or assessment cannot take place, or if a student misses or loses their assessment due to an emergency or other event outside the control of the College, the Examinations and Assessments Co-ordinator will attempt to agree alternative arrangements with the awarding organisation.

The College has identified three categories of situation that may arise

**a. Widespread disruption to UK Examination system**

In the event of widespread sustained national disruption the government will communicate with regulators, awarding organisations, schools and colleges before a public announcement. The regulators will provide advice to government departments on implications for exam timetables.

The College will follow external advice supplied by either JCQ, Department for Education or awarding bodies and put this into practice. In these instances, the Examinations and Assessments Co-ordinator will notify the Academic Registrar so that effective internal and external communication can be provided.

**b. Local level incident resulting in an inability to utilise examination centre**

All examinations and assessments are planned to be delivered utilising examination centres that comply with JCQ regulations. Where a local level incident occurs that results in an inability to utilise the examination centre, the Examinations and Assessments Co-ordinator will contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow their instructions.

It may also be necessary to liaise with relevant local and national agencies in deciding whether the College is able to open. In these instances, this decision will be made by the Principal or designated individual.

If the College is unable to open, the Examinations and Assessments Co-ordinator and Academic Registrar will discuss and if possible identify whether the exam can be sat at an alternative venue. This would be subject to agreement with the relevant awarding organisation. This decision would then be communicated to the affected learners.

Where accommodation is limited, the Examinations and Assessments Co-ordinator and Academic Registrar will prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exams when planned. This will be subject to agreement with the relevant awarding organisation. This decision would then need to be communicated to the affected students.

Where the progress of students would not be severely delayed or where there is no accommodation available to relocate the examination to, students will be advised to sit their exam in the next available series. This would be subject to agreement from the relevant awarding organisation. This decision would then need to be communicated to the affected students.

After the examination, the Examinations and Assessments Co-ordinator will ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions and that they are returned to the awarding organisation in line with their instructions, unless told to follow alternative arrangements by the awarding organisation. Following the conclusion of the examination, the Examinations and Assessments Co-ordinator and Academic Registrar will meet to consider whether the students would be eligible for special consideration. A full report would then be completed.

**c. Local level incident resulting in evacuation**

All examination(s) taking place are subject to the risk of emergency or unforeseen situations arising that may result in an evacuation. Potential examples of this include fire alarm, bomb scare or flooding. In the event of the fire alarm being raised, staff will comply with the fire policy. Invigilators will remove candidates to a defined evacuation area reminding them that they are still under examination conditions.

The Examinations and Assessments Co-ordinator and Academic Registrar will decide whether it is appropriate to continue the session using the following criteria:

- The length of time that has passed since the official start time;
- Whether the minimum time for remaining in the examination has passed to maintain the integrity of the examination;
- The amount of time left to complete the examination(s);
- Whether there is sufficient time to complete the examination(s) before another session starts;
- Whether continuing the examination takes the candidates over the session limit of three hours, taking particular care to consider candidates with access arrangements which include extra time.

In deciding to continue the examination(s) the Examinations and Assessments Co-ordinator must be satisfied that communication between the candidates has not taken place outside of the examination room. **Only if completely satisfied that no communication whatsoever has taken place must candidates be allowed to continue the examination.**

If the session is abandoned, this will be either:

- Because of consideration of the criteria above;
- Because re-entry to the premises cannot be secured;

- Because the risk of communication between candidates, which would invalidate the examination, cannot be eliminated.

If the examination must be abandoned:

- The Examinations and Assessments Co-ordinator will contact the Awarding organisation and seek advice to apply for Special Consideration;
- Partially completed papers should be collected by invigilators and sent as usual unless the awarding organisation requests that papers should not be submitted.

## **9. Communication of alternative arrangements**

As a result of discussing alternative arrangements with awarding bodies, an agreement will be reached on an outcome. Examples of this are outlined below

- Using an alternative venue;
- An exam result being generated by the awarding organisation, based on factors such as the students' performance on other assessments in the same subject;
- The opportunity for students to sit any missed exam later in the year.

The College will ensure students, parents and employers are aware of what has been agreed.

In the event of any change being made to a planned examination or controlled assessment, communication will need to take place to ensure that students are made aware of this. If the College is unable to open, or another venue has been arranged the College will utilise its usual external communication networks to inform students, parents and employers. This may include online communications, use of noticeboards, calls, texts or emails.

The Examinations and Assessment Co-ordinator will also ensure that a staff member is available in the original location to redirect any learners.

## **10. Provider Contingency**

In the event that the College is prevented from delivering a qualification because an awarding body either goes out of business or is otherwise unable to award a qualification; or in the event that the College is no longer able to offer a particular qualification because it has lost its centre accreditation, the student will be offered a course of study in an alternative equivalent qualification. The College may also choose to outsource the provision of the qualification.

If there are any changes to the delivery or assessment of the Technical Qualifications which may affect the College's ability to meet Awarding Body approval criteria the College undertakes to notify the Awarding Body in a timely manner.