



Contingency arrangements for OCN London centres in relation to coronavirus (Covid-19)

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for the assessment of and external quality assurance of learners on OCN London qualifications and accredited provision

The following guidance is aimed at all centres who are delivering assessed OCN London provision – this includes:

- Ofqual regulated national qualifications
- QAA regulated Access to HE Diplomas
- OCN London accredited bespoke courses

OCN London is committed to ensuring a consistent and effective response to the significant disruption to usual practice resulting from the spread of the Covid-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

Any advice provided by OCN London will be informed by that of the official agencies dealing with the circumstances being faced, including Public Health England, and will be co-ordinated as appropriate with Ofqual and QAA as qualifications regulators and with any other relevant agencies – for example the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Our primary concern is to safeguard the interests of learners while maintaining the integrity of assessment and ensuring qualification standards. We are also committed to continuing to provide as much support as possible to our centres in what will inevitably be increasingly difficult circumstances. We are therefore putting in place contingency arrangements that will enable us to:

- support centres to carry out assessment to existing planned deadlines, particularly where the results impact on progression to further study – for example Access to HE Diplomas
- carry out external moderation in line with necessary timescales
- ensure compliance with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment.

Alternative methods of delivery and assessment

We are very happy to support you in making changes to your delivery and assessment mechanisms to accommodate the current situation, and in the first instance you should discuss the adjustments that you plan to make with your OCN London external moderator. Our Curriculum, Quality and Access to HE staff are also available to offer advice and guidance in relation to your particular provision.

If your centre needs or decides to close temporarily, you may be able to maintain existing submission timescales by adjusting the assessment mechanism and/or making use of digital submissions (see below). However, if you need to alter the deadline for submission for all learners, we will be pleased to make any necessary changes to the external moderation schedule to accommodate this.

Digital submissions

With centres inevitably needing to find alternatives to face-to-face delivery to and assessment of learners, we anticipate an increase in the use of digital submissions. For some centres this is already standard practice, while others make some use of this method.

Please note that for Access to HE Diplomas, while we will facilitate flexibility in delivery and assessment practice, QAA regulations on submission, resubmission and referral must still be applied.

Ensuring authenticity

All digital submissions must include a learner declaration that the work submitted:

- is fully their own and has not been developed or written by anyone else
- has not been copied from the work of any other learner(s)
- has not been copied from the internet, any textbook(s) or any other source(s)

Where applicable, normally for higher level work, the declaration must also confirm that:

- any reference to the work of others is for the purpose of discussion, comment or argument in relation to their ideas
- the use of quotation and paraphrasing has been kept to a minimum and used only to support points made by the learner

In all cases the declaration must also confirm the learner's understanding that if they are found to have made a false declaration no credit will be awarded for the work submitted.

It is also good practice for there to be some telephone or online discussion with a sample of learners when all material is submitted digitally. This provides an opportunity for centre staff to identify any discrepancy between a learner's perceived knowledge and understanding as demonstrated in such a discussion and that suggested by the work submitted. The proportion of learners to whom this should apply will vary according to the perceived level of risk applied to the course or qualification in question. Where that level of risk is deemed to be high, discussion with learners will form part of the external quality assurance process, as below. For further guidance on this area, please contact us.

External quality assurance

In the current circumstances we have suspended our usual process of visiting centres to carry out external moderation or any other form of external quality assurance. Where centres already have visit dates in the diary, we will be in touch to discuss options.

Remote moderation

We already have mechanisms in place for external moderation to be carried out remotely. Where learners' assessed work and related records, including of internal moderation, are available electronically these can be made available to our moderators either by email or by providing the moderator with access to a centre's files. Alternatively, material can be sent by post or courier – assuming that these services remain available throughout the period of disruption. In this case we advise sending copies rather than learners' original work.

Rescheduled visits

For other kinds of quality intervention – for example centre review meetings – an online discussion is one option. In some cases, it may be preferable to reschedule for a future date when visits become possible again. This will be agreed on a case by case basis with the centres concerned.

'Hub' moderation

For centres used to participating in the monthly 'hub' moderation events that usually take place at Angel Gate, this facility will continue to be available but on a remote basis, as above. Assessed work will need to be sent or made available electronically rather than coming to our offices. Booking for 'hub' moderation can be made in the usual way, and you can agree at that point how you the external moderator will gain access to your assessed work.

Access to HE final moderation and awards boards

At this stage we do not know for how long the current situation will continue, so we are planning for a scenario where visits to centres will still not be possible by the scheduled dates for final moderation of Access to HE Diplomas. In this case we will arrange to implement the process of remote moderation, as above.

We recognise that, even with alternative delivery and assessment mechanism in place, it may not be possible for centres to be ready for final moderation by the scheduled date. In these circumstances we will work with centres to identify a suitable later date for external moderation. Where individual learners have been affected and unable to complete their work within the original or any extended timeframe the usual process for submitting extenuating circumstance requests will be available.

Many of our awards boards are already held remotely, and we do not anticipate any issues with extending this practice to all boards if required. We will also be liaising with QAA and UCAS with a view to securing some flexibility in the schedule for submitting confirmed results.

For more information ...

Please do contact us if anything is not clear, or if you have a particular question or concern. We are here to help.

Why work with us?

- We are agile and responsive. This means you will get a personal service with direct access to a named contact and a quick turnaround.
- We pride ourselves on our close relationships with centres. The people we work with see us as a trusted partner, not just a supplier.
- We want to help you get the very best from your learners and employees.
- We have a reputation for high quality. The OCN London brand carries national recognition and kudos.
- We are flexible and recognise the importance of accommodating the needs of different learners and different learning styles.
- We offer exceptional value for money.
- We are committed to the belief that learning can change lives.

Our impact

- We have helped tens of thousands to fulfil their dreams of a university education through our Access to HE qualifications.
- We have enabled many people from disadvantaged education backgrounds to develop and progress.
- We have helped to empower people in communities to take control of their lives.
- We are opening up new opportunities in health and social care for people to progress in their careers.
- We have supported small businesses to get started, expand and thrive.
- We have helped to give people a new start in life...and a new career.

Where to find more information

Visit the website www.ocnlondon.org.uk for information about

- fees for individual qualifications and units, membership and centre approval evaluation
- funding and Advanced Learner Loans
- unit development and approval
- how to get replacement certificates
- training and development courses.

Alternatively contact us on **020 7278 5511** or enquiries@ocnlondon.org.uk.



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