



# WCSM EXAMINATION HANDBOOK AND REGULATIONS

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### IMPORTANT NOTICE

WCSM announced on 31 March 2019 that it will withdraw from offering accredited qualifications by 31 March 2021. All existing registered students are encouraged to complete their qualifications within this period.

Any candidate who remains registered for a Level 4 WCSM qualification but does not pass all the required units before 31 March 2021 can still complete their qualification but after 31 March 2021 Level 4 Diplomas will be awarded by ABDO, rather than WCSM.

Level 4 Diploma candidates can choose to transfer to an ABDO qualification sooner if they wish. There will be no change in standard or syllabus requirements during the transition period. Please contact the ABDO Examinations Team on 01227 739925 for further information.

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### PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATIONS

Success in all examinations set by the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers (WCSM) calls for an understanding of the theories governing optical manufacturing and optical practice.

**It is entirely a matter of personal choice how those wishing to acquire a WCSM qualification prepare themselves for the examination.** Some candidates may feel that the experience that they have gained through their employment is sufficient preparation. Others, however, may feel they require preparatory training.

No matter whether they follow a course or undertake their own research, students are always expected to consolidate and develop their learning in the workplace. WCSM encourages students to enter for examination only when they feel ready.

There are several organisations offering training for optical assistants and technicians. Under Ofqual rules, training and assessment must be carried out by different organisations and WCSM cannot endorse any particular training course. Candidates should be aware that marks achieved as part of coursework cannot be taken into account and will not be used towards the final marks in any WCSM examination.

For information, details of courses provided by ABDO College may be obtained from:

ABDO College  
Godmersham Park  
Canterbury  
Kent  
CT4 7DT

Tel: 01227 738829  
email: [info@abdocollege.org.uk](mailto:info@abdocollege.org.uk)



## THE EXAMINATIONS

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### LEVEL 4 DIPLOMA FOR OPTICAL TECHNICIANS

(Accreditation number 500/9706/4)

To obtain the Level 4 Diploma for Optical Technicians, candidates must pass each of three inter-related examinations; written papers for both Years 1 & 2 and a practical examination, which will include a practical project that second-year candidates undertake as part of their studies.

Candidates must pass all first year examinations before applying for second year examinations.

#### First year:

Unit	Level	Credits	Optional/ Mandatory	Theory/ Practical	Questions	Time
Unit 1: Mathematics for optical manufacturing	3	7	Mandatory	Theory	4	1.5 hours
Unit 2: The eye and the principles of optics	3	9	Mandatory	Theory	4	1.5 hours
Unit 3: The properties of ophthalmic lenses	4	12	Mandatory	Theory	5	2.5 hours

#### Second year:

Unit	Level	Credits	Optional/ Mandatory	Theory/ Practical	Questions	Time
Unit 4: The theory of lens surfacing	4	10	Mandatory	Theory	2	45 min
Unit 5: The properties of ophthalmic lenses	5	12	Mandatory	Theory	4	1.5 hours
Unit 6: Spectacle lens materials	4	9	Mandatory	Theory	2	45 min
Unit 7: The properties of spectacle frames and glazing	4	12	Mandatory	Theory	4	1.5 hours
Unit 10: Spectacle lens treatments	4	10	Mandatory	Theory	2	45 min
Unit 11: The spectacle industry & standards	3	5	Mandatory	Theory	2	45 min

## Practical examination

The practical examination is based on Units 8 or 9 depending on the candidate's choice of pathway, and is made up of:

A Practical Project each candidate will be assigned tasks, in the form of a project, to be completed by arrangement with the examiners.

- a) Unit 8 - Glazing frame or
- b) Unit 9 - Lens surfacing

Each task must be timed and supervised in practice. Records of timing, etc. and completed tasks are to be submitted to the examiners. At the end of the time allowed for a project, the supervisor must record either that the task was completed or the amount of progress made within the time allowed. A project which is completed but in a longer time period, or the time taken is not properly recorded by the supervisor, will be failed by the examiners.

A Viva and Practical Examination to include

- (a) A viva examination (2 x 20 minutes) on workshop practices and problem solving.
- (b) A practical examination (60 minutes) on:
  - (i) The measurement of frames
  - (ii) The description of frames
  - (iii) Repairs and setting up
- (c) A practical examination (90 minutes) on the verification of completed spectacles, the use of the focimeter, recording lens power and laying off lenses for glazing.

## Passing the examination

To obtain the qualification, a candidate must achieve a minimum of 50% in **each** unit.

The Practical Examination is one unit, comprising five sections, one of which has five subsections. To pass, a candidate must attain a minimum of 50% in each section or subsection. A candidate failing a subsection will be required to retake that whole section.

Candidates will only be able to retake a written unit or section of the Practical Examination three times, and only within five years of their first sitting the unit or section concerned. Those who have still not achieved a pass by that stage will be required to re-sit the whole examination.

Candidates will not be permitted to sit the second year examination until they have passed the first year.

## Grading

Results are not graded. A candidate either passes an examination, or fails it.

## Prizes

Both the WCSM and the Optical Industry award prizes to those obtaining the best marks in each part of the examinations held in a single academic year.

## FAST-TRACK TECHNICAL TRAINING FOR FBDO LEVEL 4 DIPLOMA FOR OPTICAL TECHNICIANS

(Accreditation number 500/9706/4)

The FBDO qualification gives exemption from the whole of Year 1 of the Level 4 Diploma for Optical Technicians and Units 6, 7 and 10 and some of the practical units in Year 2.

To obtain the Level 4 Diploma, candidates must pass each of three written papers and the practical examination sections which include a practical project undertaken at the candidate's workplace.

Unit	Level	Credits	Optional/ Mandatory	Theory/ Practical	Questions	Time
Unit 4: The theory of lens surfacing	4	10	Mandatory	Theory	2	45 min
Unit 5: The properties of ophthalmic lenses	5	12	Mandatory	Theory	4	1.5 hours
Unit 11: The spectacle industry & standards	3	5	Mandatory	Theory	2	45 min

### Practical examination

The practical examination is based on Unit 8 - Glazing Frame, and is made up of:

A Practical Project each candidate will be assigned tasks, in the form of a project, to be completed by arrangement with the examiners. Each task must be timed and supervised. Records of timing, etc. and completed tasks are to be submitted to the examiners. At the end of the time allowed for a project, the supervisor must record either that the task was completed or the amount of progress made within the time allowed. A project which is completed but in a longer time period, or the time taken is not properly recorded by the supervisor, will be failed by the examiners.

A Viva and Practical Examination to include

- (i) Viva examinations, A1, A2 & A3 (3 x 20 minutes), on workshop practices, problem solving and glazing
- (ii) A practical examination, C1 (20 minutes), on Problem Solving in Glazing

### Passing the examination

To obtain the qualification, a candidate must achieve a minimum of 50% in **each** theory and practical unit.

Candidates will only be able to retake a written unit or section of the Practical Examination three times, and only within five years of their first sitting the unit or section concerned. Those who have still not achieved a pass by that stage will be required to re-sit the whole examination.

### **Grading**

Results are not graded. A candidate either passes an examination, or fails it.

### **Prizes**

Fast-track candidates are not eligible for prize awards since they are expected to have a higher level of knowledge and experience.

## LEVEL 4 DIPLOMA FOR OPTICAL ASSISTANTS

To obtain the Level 4 Diploma for Optical Assistants, candidates must gain a minimum of 88 credits by achieving all mandatory units or evidencing prior learning (in the case of Units 1 and 2 and possibly Unit 6) and also achieving a pass in three of the optional units.

Candidates who are considering progression are advised that passes in the mandatory units, plus units 6, 9 and 10, may provide exemption from certain elements of Year 1 of a dispensing diploma, at the discretion of the relevant training institution and awarding organisation.

Year 1 consists of Units 1, 2,3 and 4 plus one optional unit.

Year 2 consists of Unit 5 plus two further optional units. In addition, at the end of Year 2, there is a one-day Practical Assessment (Unit 12) which will include a viva based on tasks undertaken in the assessment and an evidence portfolio signed off by the candidate's supervisor, submitted in advance of the examination

Unit	Level	Credits	Questions	Time
<b>Part I: Mandatory units (53 credits)</b>				
Unit 1: The eye and the principles of optics	3	9	4	1.5 hours
Unit 2: Principles of optical retail practice support and management	4	12	4	1.5 hours
Unit 3: The provision of optical screening and clinical support	4	12	5	hours
Unit 4: The provision of spectacles in optical practice	4	12	4	2 hours
Unit 5: The provision of contact lenses in optical practice	4	8	3	1.5 hours
<b>Optional units (at least 3 units must be taken)</b>				
Unit 6: Mathematics for optical assistants	3	7	4	1 hour
Unit 7: The provision of low vision aids in optical practice	4	8	3	1.5 hours
Unit 8: Anterior eye and ocular supplements	4	8	3	1.5 hours
Unit 9: Theory of Optics	4	12	4	2 hours
Unit 10: Theory of Ophthalmic Lenses	4	12	4	2 hours



Unit 11: Business principles for optical practices	4	8	80	
<b>Part II: Practical assessment (mandatory 12 credits)</b>				
Unit 12: Optical skills in practice	5	12	120	One day practical assessment

### Passing the examination

To obtain the qualification, a candidate must achieve a minimum of 50% in **each** theory and practical unit.

Candidates will only be able to retake a written unit or the Practical Examination three times, and only within five years of their first sitting the unit or section concerned. Those who have still not achieved a pass by that stage will be required to re-sit the whole examination.

### Grading

Results are not graded. A candidate either passes an examination, or fails it.

### Exemption

Exemption for Units 1 & 2 may be claimed in respect of units already taken and passed at Level 3 or for Unit 6 alone if a learner can demonstrate they have equivalent current knowledge or have achieved a certificate in GCSE Mathematics at Grade 4 (equivalent to the former Grade C) or above within the last five years.

**LEVEL 3 OPTICAL SUPPORT – FROM SEPTEMBER 2016**

(Accreditation number Certificate 601/8991/5 Diploma 601/8999/X)

No new registrations for this qualification, or any units within it, can be accepted after 30 October 2019. The following information is intended for those who are already registered but who need to re-sit units in order to complete their qualification.

Candidates must take 3 mandatory units and at least one optional unit to achieve the Certificate (minimum of 21 credits). To achieve a Diploma, Learners must pass the 3 mandatory units and at least 2 optional units to gain a minimum of 37 credits.

**Mandatory units:**

Unit	Level	Credits	Theory/ Practical	Questions	Time
Unit 1: The legal requirements in optics	3	3	Theory	15 MCQ	30 min
Unit 2: Managing people in optics	3	7	Theory	3 out of 4	1 hour
Unit 3: Supporting the provision of spectacles	3	8	Theory	4 out of 5	1.5 hours

**Optional units:**

Unit	Level	Credits	Theory/ Practical	Questions	Time
Unit 4: Supporting the provision of optical screening	4	7	Theory	30 MCQ	1 hour
Unit 5: Supporting the provision of contact lenses	3	7	Theory	3 out of 4	1 hour
Unit 6: Mathematics for optical assistants	3	7	Theory	4	1 hour
Unit 7: The eye and the principles of optics	3	9	Theory	4	1.5 hours
Unit 8: WITHDRAWN					
Unit 9: Processing optical work instructions and providing technical advice <b>Not offered this exam session</b>	3	5	Theory	2 out of 3	40 min
Unit 10: Spectacle lens production methods <b>Not offered this exam session</b>	2	12	Theory	4 out of 5	1.5 hours
Unit 11: Assuring the quality of spectacle lenses <b>Not offered this exam session</b>	3	5	Theory	2 out of 3	40 min
Unit 12: Supporting the provision of refractive surgery <b>Not offered this exam session</b>	3	5	Theory	2 out of 3	40 min

**LEVEL 2 OPTICAL SUPPORT**

(Accreditation number Certificate 601/7502/3 – Diploma 601/7504/7)

No new registrations for this qualification, or any units within it, can be accepted after 30 October 2019. The following information is intended for those who are already registered but who need to re-sit units in order to complete their qualification.

Candidates must take 3 mandatory units and at least one optional unit to achieve the Certificate (minimum of 21-26 credits). To achieve a Diploma, Learners must gain a minimum of 37 credits.

**Mandatory units:**

Unit	Level	Credits	Theory/Practical	Questions	Time
Unit 1: Roles and responsibilities in optics	2	7	Theory	3	24 min
Unit 2: Communication in optics	2	6	Theory	3	24 min
Unit 3: The eye and ametropia	2	8	Theory	3	24 min

**Optional units:**

Unit	Level	Credits	Theory/Practical	Questions	Time
Unit 4: The provision of spectacle lenses in optics	2	8	Theory	3	24 min
Unit 5: The provision of spectacle frames in optics	2	7	Theory	3	24 min
Unit 6: The provision of contact lenses in optics	2	7	Theory	3	24 min
Unit 7: The glazing of spectacles <b>Not offered this exam session</b>	2	12	Theory + project	3	35 min
Unit 8: Supporting the provision of optical screening	2	6	Theory	3	24 min
Unit 9: WITHDRAWN					
Unit 10: WITHDRAWN					
Unit 11: Repairing spectacles	2	5	Theory	3	35 min
Unit 12: Lens treatments and safety eyewear <b>Not offered this exam session</b>	2	7	Theory	3	35 min

**Passing the examinations**

To obtain the qualification, a candidate must achieve a minimum of 50% in **each** unit.

Candidates will only be able to retake a written unit three times, and only within three years of their first sitting the unit or section concerned. Those who have still not achieved a pass by that stage will be required to re-sit the whole examination.

**Grading**

Results are not graded. A candidate either passes an examination, or fails it.

**Prizes**

WCSM awards prizes to those obtaining the best marks in the Level 2 and Level 3 examinations held in a single academic year.

## CERTIFICATE IN OPTICAL CARE AT SCQF LEVEL 5

(Accreditation number R096/04)

No new registrations for this qualification can be accepted after 30 October 2019. The last main sitting of examinations for this qualification will be in December 2019, with 3 re-sit opportunities provided after that date to enable registered candidates to complete their qualification.

To obtain the Certificate in Optical Care at SCQF Level 5, a candidate must successfully sit a two-hour written paper comprising the following five mandatory units, and achieve a mark of at least 50% in each unit.

Unit	Level	Credits	Theory/ Practical	Questions	Time
Unit 1: Responsibilities in optics	5	5	Theory	3	24 min
Unit 2: Communication in optical customer service	5	6	Theory	3	24 min
Unit 3: The eye and ametropia	5	8	Theory	3	24 min
Unit 4: Supporting the provision of spectacle lenses in optical practice	5	8	Theory	3	24 min
Unit 5: Supporting the provision of optical screening in optical practice	5	6	Theory	3	24 min

### Passing the examinations

To obtain the qualification, a candidate must achieve a minimum of 50% in **each** unit.

Candidates will only be able to retake a written unit three times, and only within three years of their first sitting the unit concerned, up to the qualification expiry date of 31 March 2021.

### Grading

Results are not graded. A candidate either passes an examination, or fails it.

### Prizes

WCSM awards a prize to the candidate obtaining the best marks in the examinations held in a single academic year.

## CERTIFICATE IN OPTICAL CARE AT SCQF LEVEL 7 – SYLLABUS FROM FEBRUARY 2017

(Accreditation number R511 04)

No new registrations for this qualification can be accepted after 30 October 2019. The last main sitting of examinations for this qualification will be in December 2019, with 3 re-sit opportunities provided after that date to enable registered candidates to complete their qualification.

To obtain the Certificate in Optical Care at Level 7, a candidate must successfully sit the following four written papers and achieve a mark of at least 50% in each unit.

Unit	Level	Credits	Theory/ Practical	Questions	Time
Unit 1: The legal requirements in optical practice and contact lens care	7	8	Theory	30 mins MCQ <b>and</b> 1 hour - 3 questions	1.5 hours
Unit 2: Optical Screening	7	7	Theory	3	1 hour
Unit 3: Supporting the provision of spectacles in optical practice	7	8	Theory	4 out of 5	1.5 hours
Unit 4: Supporting the provision of low vision aids in optical practice	7	7	Theory	3	1.5 hours

### Passing the examinations

To obtain the qualification, a candidate must achieve a minimum of 50% in **each** unit.

Candidates will only be able to retake a written unit three times, and only within three years of their first sitting the unit concerned, up to the qualification expiry date of 31 March 2021. .

### Grading

Results are not graded. A candidate either passes an examination, or fails it.

### Prizes

WCSM awards a prize to the candidate obtaining the best marks in the examinations held in a single academic year.

## **EXAMINATION REGULATIONS FOR CANDIDATES**

(ANY BREACH OF THESE REGULATIONS MAY RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION)

### **REGISTRATION OF STUDENTS**

WCSM qualifications are advertised on the ABDO and WCSM websites. Dates and costs of the examinations and examination application forms can be found on the ABDO website at <http://www.abdo.org.uk/examinations/wcsm-examination-forms/>

Potential candidates can also apply to the ABDO Examinations Office by telephone or by post for an application form. Application forms will automatically be sent to those known to the Office to be on a course of preparatory training.

All application forms should be returned, with payment of the examination fee, to:

ABDO Examinations and Registration  
The Old Dairy  
Godmersham Park  
Godmersham  
Canterbury  
CT4 7DT

Telephone: 01227 732925

Whilst late applications may be accepted, failure to meet that deadline may result in candidates' choice of venue being severely curtailed and an additional fee may be charged. In particular, candidates should note that it may not be possible to take examinations online from a practice if they miss the application deadline; they may still take the examination but on paper, in one of the designated examination venues.

Each form will require the candidate to certify that he has received a copy of this handbook, and that he or she has read and understood the regulations governing WCSM examinations.

Each form will also require the candidate to decide whether he or she intends to sit for the whole examination, or merely a number of specified units.

### **CLAIMS FOR REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS**

The WCSM will look sympathetically on all requests for reasonable adjustments to its examinations from those with disabilities or other impairments, such as dyslexia and the use of wheelchairs, and will do everything practicable within the prevailing circumstances to facilitate their sitting of the examination without additional charge.

Such claims should be submitted to ABDO Examinations along with the examination application form, using the Request for Reasonable Adjustment Form. The form must be signed by the student and must be accompanied by a statement by a GP, consultant, optometrist or other appropriately qualified professional confirming how the candidate's performance in an examination would be affected and the nature of the adjustments needed. If the employer has

made adjustments in the workplace for the candidate, a statement by the employer of those adjustments should also be included.

Claims will be considered and assessed by the WCSM Qualifications Committee.

## WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS

### ARRIVAL AT THE EXAMINATION VENUE

1. Candidates should arrive at the examination venue at least 15 minutes prior to the published start time of the examination(s). Candidates will be asked to wait outside until called in by the invigilators. Candidates should bring with them their confirmation of examination entry showing their candidate number and the examination(s) for which they have been entered. Candidates should also bring, and will be asked to show, photographic evidence of identity in the form of a valid passport or photo-driving licence, and may also be asked to sign against a named list.
2. Those that arrive at the examination venue more than 30 minutes after an examination has started will be denied entry unless the invigilator feels that they are in a fit state to do themselves justice in the remaining time, and that they will not disturb the other candidates. Those who arrive up to 30 minutes late may be permitted to sit the examination at the discretion of the designated invigilator. The decision of the invigilator shall be final.
3. Usually there is more than one written examination being undertaken simultaneously. Candidates should therefore listen carefully to the instructions given by the invigilator to ensure that they know exactly where to sit. Those sitting individual units, as opposed to complete papers, will be seated nearest the exit.
4. After entering the examination room, candidates may not speak to anyone except the invigilators. Coats, bags and cases are to be left in the nominated area as directed by the invigilator.
5. **It is an examination offence to be in possession of a mobile phone or communication device during an examination. The period of an examination includes visiting the toilet or taking a permitted break as part of agreed reasonable adjustments.**
6. All mobile electronic communication devices are to be switched off outside the examination room, and then left with coats and bags as directed by the invigilators. Candidates wishing to leave the room (for example, to visit the toilet) will be accompanied by an invigilator and must allow the invigilator to inspect pockets and any bag considered essential to the candidate for that purpose both on exit from the examination room and before re-entry.
7. Candidates found to be in possession of any electronic communication device during the examination will have their scripts annotated at that point, and no marks will be awarded for questions already answered. Candidates will be required to remain in the examination room for the remainder of the time period. Anyone detected using such a device during the course

of any WCSM examination will be disqualified and may not be accepted for future registration for WCSM examinations.

### CONDUCT DURING THE EXAMINATION

8. Candidates are not allowed to bring any books or paper into the examination room. All rough work is to be carried out using the pages provided in the examination script booklet or on scrap/extra sheets provided on request from the invigilator.
7. Candidates must bring writing implements into the examination room in a clear plastic bag. Pencil cases or boxes are not permitted.
8. Candidates are to provide their own calculators. These must be of the non-programmable type, and should be removed from their case.
9. Candidates must have nothing on their desk apart from the examination paper, writing materials and calculator.
10. Answers involving annotation of diagrams or calculations may be written in pencil; all other answers should be written in permanent ink.
11. Candidates are not to touch or turn over their examination paper(s) until given permission to do so by the invigilators.
12. Communication or attempted communication with any other candidate will automatically result in disqualification.
13. If a candidate wishes to speak to an invigilator, he or she should raise a hand and wait.
14. Candidates must not leave their desks without permission from the invigilators.
15. Candidates are to make sure that they have crossed out any rough work that is not to be marked.
16. Candidates leaving the examination room early with the permission of the invigilator should do so quietly, and minimise the disruption that their movement may cause others. Once outside the examination room, they should move well clear of it before talking to another person. On no account should candidates congregate outside the examination room whilst an exam is in progress.
17. No candidate sitting the full examination, as opposed to merely a unit of it, will be permitted to leave during the last 15 minutes of the examination.
18. Any allegation of improper conduct or cheating will be taken extremely seriously. If a candidate sees someone cheating during an exam, they should raise their hand to attract the attention of the invigilator nearest to them and communicate their concerns by writing on a piece of paper. Such information will enable the invigilators to watch the alleged offender



closely. The invigilators will take appropriate action whilst keeping the disclosure confidential and details of the report, and the identity of any person who makes such a disclosure to invigilators, will not be provided to the person suspected of cheating.

### **CONDUCT AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION**

19. When the invigilator tells them to stop writing, candidates are to lay down their pens/pencils immediately. They are then to wait in their seats until all papers have been collected, and the invigilators have given them permission to leave. Since there may be more than one examination in progress at the same time, and they may not all finish simultaneously, those whose examination is over should leave quietly out of consideration for those who are still completing their papers.
20. No papers, notes or rough work may be taken out of the examination room.

## E-ASSESSMENT

### REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATES

1. Some, but not all, WCSM written examinations may be taken online as an e-assessment at the candidate's own place of work. This is recommended for candidates who wish to remain closer to their practice and reduce travel costs. E-assessment will be dependent on the candidate proving that their systems are compatible with the online examination system used by the Awarding Organisation. Neither WCSM nor the ABDO Examinations Department will be responsible for systems failure which prevents a candidate from completing e-assessment in their own workplace.
2. All online examinations will take place at the same time as written examinations conducted by the Company at authorised examination venues. Online assessment is not available on demand.
3. Candidates who elect for e- assessment must nominate an individual who will act as the invigilator on the day of the examination. The nominated person should be currently registered with the General Optical Council and ideally qualified as a member of the College of Optometrists, the Royal College of Ophthalmologists or an FBDO. The proposed invigilator's full details must be entered on the application form when the candidate registers for the examination and the proposed invigilator must countersign the application form to indicate their consent and give an undertaking that they understand and accept the responsibilities of an invigilator.
4. If a candidate is unable to call upon the services of an appropriately qualified person, s/he may nominate someone of equivalent professional status, whose suitability for the role will be assessed by the Head of ABDO Examinations and Registration. Acceptance of an individual's ability to act as an invigilator will be determined and confirmed by the ABDO Examinations Office. Appeals against a decision will be referred to WCSM.
5. The ABDO Examinations Office, on behalf of WCSM, will send a separate confirmation of the examination entry to the invigilator, together with instructions for conduct of the examination and an Online Invigilator Undertaking which must be completed and returned to the ABDO Examinations Office ahead of the examination. The nominated invigilator will also receive an Authentication Certificate which must be completed and returned to the ABDO Examinations Office after the examination. A failure to do so will mean that the candidate's answers will not be marked.
6. Should the nominated person no longer be available on the day of the examination, candidates should inform the Examinations Office at ABDO as soon as possible to nominate a suitably qualified replacement and provide contact details.
7. If a suitable invigilator cannot be identified, the candidate will not be able to use the e-assessment option and will need to take the examination at an authorised venue.
8. WCSM reserves the right to conduct an on-the-spot inspection of any practice at which e-assessment is taking place.

## BEFORE THE EXAMINATIONS

9. Between four and six weeks before the examinations, the ABDO Examinations Office will email a password to the candidate giving them access to the Questionmark computer system. The nominated invigilator will receive an Authentication Certificate which must be completed and returned to the ABDO Examinations Office immediately after the examinations. (see 5. above)
10. The Candidate must then download the Questionmark Secure software, and attempt a set of practice questions, typically comprising three basic questions. This will serve as proof that the candidate can successfully access the system and should be able to sit the e-assessment.
11. Candidates who cannot download the software must contact the ABDO Examinations Office immediately. Candidates who do not complete the practice questions will be contacted by the ABDO Examinations Office to try to resolve technical issues. If, by **three weeks before the examination date**, the ABDO Examinations Office cannot confirm that the candidate has successfully downloaded the software and attempted the practice questions, the candidate will not be eligible to take the examinations by e-assessment and will be required to sit the written examination at an authorised examination venue. Candidates will be informed of their nearest available examination venue. Neither WCSM nor ABDO can be held responsible for technical issues within a practice environment which prevent a candidate from downloading the Questionmark software and taking the examination online, nor for any costs which may arise from the candidate having to change their plans and sit the examination at an approved examination venue.
12. Immediately prior to the start of the examination, the candidate will hand the invigilator a full face photograph which is to be endorsed and forwarded to the ABDO Examinations Office by post within **seven** days of the examination, together with the Authentication Certification. Failure to supply a properly endorsed photograph will invalidate the examination.

## CONDUCT OF THE EXAMINATIONS

13. Between 15 and 30 minutes before the e-assessment, the invigilator must inspect the room where the examination is to be taken and remove from it any notes, information or learning materials which could otherwise be of assistance to the candidate during the examination.
14. The examination must take place on the computer on which the Questionmark software has been installed and in a room where the candidate will not be disturbed. Candidates must not have access to any written material, or communication devices; nor may the candidate use any equipment in the room to communicate with any other person during the examination.
15. The nominated invigilator must be present in the room for the entire duration of the examination and not leave, for any reason, the candidate unattended. This is essential to ensure that computer equipment within the room is used solely for the purpose of accessing the Questionmark software and to maintain the security of the examination room, to be able to report immediately to the ABDO Examinations Office if the examination is disturbed or compromised in any way, for example by power or equipment failures, and to safeguard the health and safety of the candidate.

16. If, in an emergency or for any other reason, the invigilator needs to leave the room, arrangements must be made for a replacement to sit with the candidate for the period of the invigilator's absence. The invigilator must not leave the room **before** the replacement invigilator is in attendance. Notification of such an event and the reasons for it, and the name and occupation and qualifications of the replacement, must be provided to the ABDO Examinations Office in writing immediately following the examination.
17. Each candidate must log in using the details provided by the ABDO Examinations Office. Should the candidate have difficulties logging in at the exact scheduled start time for the examination, there will be a one-hour window in which to do so. The Questionmark system will remain active for the full duration of the examination e.g. if the scheduled exam start time is 10am and the examination is due to last 30 minutes, the window in which a candidate may log on will run from 10am to 11am and a candidate who can only log on to the system at 10.10 am will still have the full 30 minutes until 10.40 am to complete their answers. In the event of logging-in problems, the invigilator should email or call the ABDO Examinations Office for assistance.
18. **Please note that the questions will not be visible to the candidate before the scheduled start time of the exam.** It will not be possible to access the examination paper on the Questionmark system earlier than the stated start time E.g. if the exam start time is 10 am the questions will not be visible before 10 am. If the candidate has logged on and questions are not visible **after** the scheduled exam start time **and** the candidate has refreshed the computer screen , the invigilator should email or call the ABDO Examinations Office for assistance. **Please do not contact the ABDO Examinations Office before the scheduled exam start time.**
19. Once logged in, the candidate will have a specific amount of time to complete the examination, and this will be displayed on the screen. Candidates should make themselves aware of the time allowed. Invigilators should also be aware and remind the candidates when they have fifteen minutes remaining and then when they have five minutes remaining.
20. Once the candidate has answered all of the questions, they should submit their answers by pressing the submit button. This will end the examination and all the questions answered will be submitted for marking. If a candidate presses the submit button early by mistake, they will not be able to enter more information and the examination will end. The invigilator should contact the ABDO Examinations Office immediately and explain the circumstances.
21. If the candidate has not answered all the questions in the time allowed, the system will automatically submit those questions already answered. The candidate will not be allowed more time.
22. Candidates found to be in possession of any electronic communication device during the examination will have their scripts annotated at that point, and no marks will be awarded for questions already answered. Candidates will be required to remain in the examination room for the remainder of the time period. Anyone detected using such a device during the course of any WCSM examination will be disqualified and may not be accepted for future registration for WCSM examinations.

### **AFTER THE EXAMINATION**

23. The Authentication Certificate should be sent to the ABDO Examinations Office correctly signed and endorsed by the invigilator and accompanied by an endorsed photo (e.g. passport or driving licence). The candidate's answers will not be marked and results provided without this authentication.

### **MARKING THE EXAMINATION**

24. The ABDO Examinations Office will download all papers, and pass them to the examiners for manual marking and/or checking that the automatic marker has functioned correctly.
25. Marks will be recorded, and the record verified, in exactly the same manner as for the written papers.

### **MODERATING THE EXAMINATION**

26. E-examinations will be moderated in exactly the same manner as the written papers.

### **REQUESTS FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION**

27. As notified above, a candidate who arrives at an examination venue more than 30 minutes after the start of the examination will be denied entry. If ABDO subsequently judges that there were mitigating circumstances behind that late arrival, it may, after reviewing the evidence, allow the candidate to sit the examination at the next available opportunity free of charge. Requests for such consideration must be lodged at ABDO within 7 days of the examination, together with as much supporting evidence as is available.
28. A candidate who attends and completes the examination on time, but feels that his or her performance was impaired by an unforeseen and unforeseeable change in personal circumstances occurring over 48 hours before the examination that seriously affected his or her ability to prepare for it, may petition ABDO within 7 days after the examination. Such a petition must be accompanied by supporting evidence, including where appropriate, documentation from the employer and/or GP. ABDO will then notify WCSM of the request for special consideration and this will be taken into account in marking and moderation.
29. Receipt of a request for special consideration will be acknowledged immediately, and ABDO will endeavour to provide a definitive response within a month, and preferably alongside publication of the examination results.
30. A candidate who is prevented by illness or other circumstances beyond his or her control from sitting an examination, and who provides acceptable evidence to ABDO, will be allowed to re-sit it at no additional cost at the next scheduled opportunity.

## NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

The WCSM's examinations are usually held in June and December. WCSM will endeavour to notify candidates of their results within 7 weeks of the date of the final examination for each qualification. For Level 4 Diplomas, this will be usually be the date of the practical assessment.

This time period allows for individual marking and checking of all completed work and moderation for all qualifications to maintain standards and fairness for all candidates.

With effect from September 2019, results will be notified by email, sent to the address provided on the examination application form. Emails containing results will be sent individually, in order of registration.

Candidates should ensure that any changes in email address are notified immediately to the ABDO Examinations Office. Instructions to change details will be taken only from the candidate. Neither WCSM nor ABDO will be liable for any delay or failure in receipt of results arising from a candidate's failure to provide, or update, their details or for any breach of confidentiality arising from a candidate's provision of a public or insecure email address.

## ENQUIRIES

An enquiry concerning the WCSM's examination procedures and policies should be to:  
ABDO Examinations and Registration

The Old Dairy  
Godmersham Park, Godmersham  
Canterbury  
CT4 7DT

It is the ABDO's policy to reply to such enquiries within a month.

Enquiries about examination results must be lodged with ABDO Examinations and Registration within one month of the date shown on the letter notifying those results. They will be acknowledged immediately with a request for a fee, and a definitive answer given within one month of receipt of that fee, which will be refunded, should the enquiry show WCSM or ABDO to have been at fault.

Where the outcome of an enquiry brings into question the accuracy of other results, the WCSM will take immediate steps to protect the interests of all candidates who sat the paper in question by reviewing their results in the light of findings on that enquiry.

## COMPLAINTS

A candidate (or an employer) who wishes to complain about some aspect of ABDO's administration and/or assessment procedures, whether the perceived error be one of omission or commission, should submit the complaint in writing (giving as much detail as possible) to the ABDO Examinations Office, as soon as he or she feels aggrieved. The complaint will be forwarded to WCSM, as the Awarding Organisation.

It is ABDO's policy that a definitive answer will be given to each complaint within a month of all the facts being established.

Candidates sitting examinations for a qualification accredited by SQA to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications framework (SCQF), or their employers, have a right of appeal direct to SQA

Accreditation if they are not satisfied with their appeal to WCSM as the Awarding Organisation but should inform WCSM and the ABDO Examinations Office if they choose to exercise this right and why. Candidates must be aware that SQA will not overturn assessment decisions.

Should the candidate be unsatisfied with the response of SQA Accreditation, they can then contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

## APPEALS

1. An appeal must set out the grounds for the appeal clearly and in detail, and be sent to ABDO's office at:  
**ABDO Examinations and Registration, The Old Dairy, Godmersham Park, Godmersham, Canterbury, Kent CT14 7DT**  
within 28 days of the date shown on the letter notifying the candidate of his or her result. Where the appeal arises out of dissatisfaction with the Company's response to an enquiry, then it must be lodged within two weeks of the date of that response.
2. The Head of ABDO Examinations and Registration will acknowledge receipt of an appeal immediately and request a fee.
3. If the substance of the appeal is not clear, ABDO will seek clarification from the candidate.
4. It is ABDO's policy that appeals will be responded to within 28 days of receipt of the fee payable.
5. The Head of ABDO Examinations and Registration will then forward the appeal and the relevant script to the relevant Principal Examiner appointed by WCSM and ask for a report within 7 days. These will then be referred to the WCSM Moderation Group who will be asked to make a ruling. If the ruling is against the candidate, the WCSM Moderation Group will be asked to put its reasons in writing for onward transmission to the candidate.
6. If the candidate does not accept the findings, the appeal and the Principal Examiner's report will then be referred to the Chairman of WCSM's Qualifications Committee for decision. A response to the candidate, confirming whether the Committee has upheld or rejected the appeal, will be provided within a month.
7. A further appeal may be made to the WCSM Professorial Committee. The Committee, which is made up of heads of academic departments across the UK, will be asked to include two independent arbiters in their deliberations and to include their opinions in a written judgement which should be delivered to the Clerk at WCSM within a month. This will be sent to the candidate via ABDO.
7. If the candidate is still not satisfied, the matter will be submitted to a totally independent review panel, which will again be asked to report within a month. There may be a separate fee for this review. The fee will be refunded if the appeal is upheld.
8. Candidates sitting for a qualification accredited by SQA to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications framework (SCQF), or their employers, have a right of appeal direct to SQA Accreditation if they are not satisfied with their appeal to WCSM as the Awarding Organisation but should inform

WCSM if they choose to exercise this right and why. Candidates must be aware that SQA will not overturn assessment decisions. Should the candidate be unsatisfied with the response of SQA Accreditation, they can then contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

9. If the appeal is upheld at any stage in this process, and in the opinion of the adjudicators calls into question the accuracy of other results, the matter will be referred immediately to the Chairman of the Qualifications Committee for urgent consideration, in consultation with ABDO, the Principal Examiner and the Head of the Moderation Group.
10. The Head of Examinations and Registration will maintain a log of all appeals received within each academic year, and the action taken.



