

**External Assessment**

**Unannounced Visits Guidance**

Unannounced visits are essential for maintaining and improving quality. They ensure that all relevant procedures are being followed for maximum compliance and to prevent malpractice. Such checks will create the opportunity to comment on good practice and also identify areas for improvement. This guidance will provide a framework for carrying out unannounced visits and includes templates for recording that these have taken place.

**Introducing Centres to Unannounced visits**

Open Awards will introduce centres to the concept of unannounced visits via the qualification guide where the assessment strategy includes external assessment. A Quality Representative from Open Awards or an approved centre internal verifier will carry out these unannounced visits.

Centres must provide the person carrying out the visit, upon request, access to premises, people and records relating to learner assessments, achievement and internal quality assurance. If a Centre fails to provide access, Open Awards will suspend the Centre’s approval status subject to further checks.

**How many unannounced visits and how often?**

Centres will be spot checked in line with Open Awards’ normal arrangements for monitoring risk. Risk factors may include volume of registrations, incidents reported and exception reporting of statistical data. In any situation where Open Awards has concerns about the ability of a Centre to meet the terms and conditions of the Centre agreement, quality assurance requirements or financial obligations then Open Awards will undertake a unannounced visit to determine the level of risk to the security of the award.

**Feeding back to Centres**

Centres will receive feedback from the unannounced visit within a maximum of 10 working days. Any actions to make improvements and/ or any good practice observed will be captured on the unannounced visit form (Appendix 1).

**Imposing Sanctions**

On completion of an unannounced visit, Open Awards reserves the right to apply conditions, special measures and sanctions on Centres, to safeguard the award of achievement and protect their interests. Any sanction proposed will be reviewed by the Open Awards Head of Quality before being applied.

The level of sanction imposed will depend on the nature of the Centre’s non-compliance. In cases of serious breach of non-compliance, for example in relation to the security of its assessments, the Open Awards may withdraw a Centre’s recognition. This withdrawal of recognition may impact upon the Centre’s eligibility to deliver all qualifications with Open Awards or other awarding organisations. Open Awards will provide centres with guidance on protecting the interests of learners appropriate to the circumstances of the withdrawal.

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| Description: Open Awards Logo |

**Appendix 1: Unannounced Visits**

**to Check Assessment Invigilation**

**Externally Marked Assessments**

**Observation Checklist**

This checklist should be used by a Quality Representative from Open Awards or approved centre internal verifier undertaking unannounced visits on assessment invigilation. Completed forms must be returned to the Open Awards Head of Quality.

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| **Provider:** |  | |
| **Quality Representative details:** |  | |
| **Site Visited (address):** |  | |
| **Date and Time of assessment:** |  |  |
| **Duration of Observation Visit** *(hours)***:** |  | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A** | **Arranging the Assessment Room** | **‘YES’ *Please tick***  **✓** | **Comments** |
|  | Check that assessment room walls have been cleared of any material that may assist learners |  |  |
|  | Check that provider has the following on display:   * Poster advising learners that mobile devices (phones, iWatches etc.) are not allowed in the exam room * Examination notice for learners * Centre Appeals procedure * Emergency/Evacuation procedures * A clock that all learners can see clearly * A board showing the centre number, relevant assessment information including; start and finish time of each assessment |  |
|  | Desks/computers are correctly spaced |  |
|  | There is a sign clearly visible to others in the building that an examination is taking place |  |
|  | Learners have access to the required data files *(Functional Skills ICT Assessments only)* |  |
|  | There is IT Support available for the set up and duration of the test |  |

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| **B** | **Identifying Learners** | **✓** |  |
|  | The identities of all candidates are checked using photographic ID (e.g. passport, driver’s licence or college issued ID card) **and** the relevant Attendance Register has been completed to identify attendees at the assessment |  |  |
|  | Learners unable to provide the required identity documents and photograph are advised that they **cannot** sit the assessment |  |

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| **C** | **Before the Examination Starts** | **✓** |  |
|  | There is a second Invigilator present/available in case of emergencies, illness and toilet breaks |  |  |
|  | The Invigilator to Learner ratio is within the guidance of 1:30 for paper-based assessments, 1:20 for on-screen assessments and 1:10 for Functional Skills ICT assessments |  |
|  | Learners told they were subject to examination conditions |  |
|  | Learners’ attention drawn to:   * Emergency/Evacuation procedures * Poster advising learners that mobile phones, tablets, media players or other data storing devices must be switched off and not used during the examination * Examination Notice for Learners * Centre Appeals Procedure |  |
|  | Learners told that they must place any unauthorised materials, including course notes, at the front, or back of the room and only equipment required for the assessment is available |  |
|  | Learners told when they can begin, how much time they have, and when they can leave the examination room; a minimum of 30 minutes after the start, (unless for a medical emergency). |  |
|  | Learners who arrive after the examination starts, told they cannot sit the examination |  |
| **Paper –Based examinations** | | |
|  | Envelope(s) containing the assessment papers opened in the assessment room |  |
|  | Learners told:   * To enter their personal details on to the learner information sheet *(if this has not already been completed)* * To read the instructions on the front of the response sheet |  |
|  | Learners reminded to use on blue or black ink *(pens issued if applicable)* |  |

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| **D** | **During the Examination** | **✓** |  |
|  | Invigilator vigilant throughout. Supervised the learners **at all times** to prevent cheating and distractions. This included walking around the examination room. |  |  |
|  | Invigilator did not give any information to learners about the content of any question or answer on the paper or the requirements for answering particular questions. |  |
|  | Invigilator did not carry out any other task whilst in the assessment room. |  |
|  | Learners given a 15 minute and 5 minute warning before the end of the assessment and advised to stop writing/typing at the end of the assessment. |  |
|  | Computer-based assessments. Invigilator monitored the use of Internet and Email. At no time, except as required for ICT Functional skills, should learners access these programmes. Any use of Internet and Email should be reported to Open Awards and the learner warned that this may lead to disqualification. |  |
|  | In the event of an emergency, the Emergency process was implemented. |  |

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| **E** | **At the end of the Examination** | **✓** |  |
|  | Invigilator ensured that learners leaving before the finish time did so without causing distraction to others. |  |  |
|  | Invigilator collected all assessment papers and response sheets (***paper-based examination only***), ensuring they were kept in a secure place before being sent for processing. |  |
|  | The Attendance Sheet is retained according to guidance or returned to Open Awards if any issues occur that Open Awards or the marker need to be made aware of. |  |
| **Additional Comments:** | | | |

**Actions/Recommendations for Centre**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *(add additional rows as necessary)*  **Actions** | | **By Whom** | **By When** |
| 1 |  | |  |  |
| 2 |  | |  |  |
| 3 |  | |  |  |
|  | **Recommendations** | | **By Whom** | **By When** |
| 1 |  | |  |  |
| 2 |  | |  |  |
| 3 |  | |  |  |
| Good Practice Identified: | | | | |
| **Signature of individual conducting the unannounced visit:** | | **Signature of Centre Staff:** | | |
| Print Name: | | Print Name: | | |