



# **CENTRE HANDBOOK FOR KNOWLEDGE BASED QUALIFICATIONS**

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## INTRODUCTION

PIABC Limited are keen to work with centres to make all the processes as easy and straightforward as possible whilst maintaining the rigour that ensures that national standards can be met and maintained and that the public and regulatory authorities can have confidence in the quality of the qualifications being offered. It is not our intention to have specific PIABC documentation and procedures that repeat those already in place for other larger awarding bodies or developed as centre standard documentation and procedures. Therefore, the approval and monitoring processes are about accepting and approving what is already present rather than asking for new procedures and documentation to be implemented.

This handbook has been prepared to meet and match the regulatory/accreditation requirements of Ofqual's "*General Conditions of Recognition (including the Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS))*", CCEA Regulation's "*General Conditions of Recognition (including the Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS))*", and SQA Accreditation's "*Regulatory Principles*". All aspects of procedures, documentation, administration, and quality systems must be present and adhered to in order to ensure that national standards are met and maintained and that the public can have confidence in the quality of the qualifications being offered.

## USEFUL INFORMATION AND ADVICE

PIABC Limited are committed to providing a quality service. If you wish to know more about the information contained in this handbook, then please contact the PIABC Limited team by either email: [piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org) or by telephone: +44 (0)1476 513884.

## CHANGES TO THE PROGRAMME AND ITS DELIVERY

Changes to the programme and its delivery have been notified to PIABC Limited using "*PIABC's Centre/Qualification Approval Update*" available from the PIABC Limited team at: [piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org).

## CENTRE MONITORING

Once Centres have been approved, they will be monitored at least once a year (either by a remote desktop activity or a visit). This is the basic requirement for maintaining centre approval. The purposes of the monitoring procedure are to ensure that Centres continue to meet the criteria for approval and that information on Centres is up to date.

There are two elements to the centre monitoring process:

1. Updating the original “*Centre Approval Form*” and “*Qualification Approval Form(s)*” detailing changes made since the forms were previously completed, that have not yet been notified to PIABC Limited.
2. Centre Monitoring Report detailing the findings including compliance and listing any changes found to be necessary.

In addition, Centres are also invited to submit copies of existing self-assessment and associated action plans detailing for example:

- Professional development undertaken.
- Feedback from classroom observation and other types of evaluation.
- Future plans for the provision, including projected candidate numbers for next year.

Reports from any external inspection undertaken should also be submitted.

Centres are required to return the updated forms and other information to PIABC Limited one week before the agreed date for the centre monitoring visit (or remote desktop activity).

Following the centre monitoring exercise (either by a remote desktop activity or a visit), PIABC Limited will issue a written report to the Centre within four weeks. If there are concerns about the integrity of PIABC Limited’s qualifications, the report may, in accordance with regulatory authorities’ requirements, make the following recommendations:

- Require increased monitoring of the Centre.
- Approve tasks set for candidates, assessment criteria and/or mark schemes.
- Place a moratorium on candidate registrations and on claims for certification.
- Suspend/withdraw approved centre status.

It is a condition of Centre Approval that access for PIABC Limited staff to carry out monitoring exercise (either by a remote desktop activity or a visit) is granted. We hope that you will comply with this and provide them with the information they need.

## **CENTRE SYSTEMS**

### **Administrative procedures and documentation**

Below is a list of the procedures and documentation that PIABC Limited expect the centre to have in place. These will be checked during the approval visit, rechecked during biennial centre re-approval, and could be examined again during Centre Monitoring exercise (either by a remote desktop activity or a visit). As stated earlier it is the aim of PIABC Limited to reduce the burden of bureaucracy on centres and so it is not PIABC Limited’s intention to develop repeat procedures and documents for those already present and being used effectively. PIABC Limited therefore seeks to approve what is already being used effectively and only to develop extra items where necessary. It is envisaged that all procedures and documentation listed below will already be in place in experienced centres.

It is the responsibility of the centre to have in place the following:

Candidates - procedures and documentation for:

- registering candidates
- checking the suitability of candidates (skills scans)
- assessing needs (initial assessment)
- checking basic skills (initial assessment)
- supporting candidates
- ensuring security of records
- tracking the progress of candidates

Centre - procedures and documentation for:

- all aspects of quality assurance
- all aspects of equality and diversity
- all aspects of health and safety
- all aspects of safeguarding
- all aspects of Conflict of Interest
- monitoring the work of course leaders, lecturers, and tutors
- time tabling meetings
- recording and action planning meetings
- collecting candidate and employer feedback
- analysing and responding to candidate and employer feedback
- responding to reports from other external agencies
- recruiting and training staff
- informing PIABC Limited about changes to staffing
- administering special considerations
- dealing with malpractice

## PIABC LIMITED QUALIFICATIONS

Programme specifications for all its qualifications is available on the PIABC website ([www.piabc.org.uk](http://www.piabc.org.uk)) and from the PIABC Limited team ([piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org)).

## CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

Centres must ensure that all candidates are registered with PIABC Limited by completing the “*Candidate Registration Form (CRF1)*” (copy of this form is available from the PIABC Limited team ([piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org))).

The centre will be responsible for candidate enrolments and providing PIABC Limited with details no later than four weeks after course commencement.

## FEES

Details of PIABC Limited's fees (e.g. centre and qualification approval, candidate registration fees, replacement certificates) can be found in the "*Fees and Price List*" booklet, which is available on the PIABC website ([www.piabc.org.uk](http://www.piabc.org.uk)) and from the PIABC Limited team ([piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org)).

## ASSESSMENT DATES

### Examination dates

Where qualifications include assessment by written examination marked by PIABC Limited; then candidates have the opportunity to take examinations on two occasions each year in June and November. The exception is the PIABC Level 2 Award in Clay Technology qualification where its multiple-choice examinations are scheduled to take place shortly after the course is completed.

### Assignments/Projects submission dates

Where qualifications include assessment by assignments/projects, which are marked by PIABC Limited; then these assignments/projects may be submitted to PIABC Limited on the first working day of February, May, August, and November each year.

## EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION

### Registration and re-sit fees

Centres are required to register their candidates with PIABC Limited SIX WEEKS prior to the examination using "*Examination Entry Registration Form (EERF2)*" (a copy of this form is available from the PIABC Limited team ([piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org))). After that date, a late entry fee will be imposed (see "*Fees & Price List*", a copy of this document is available on the PIABC Limited website ([www.piabc.org.uk](http://www.piabc.org.uk))).

If a candidate is re-sitting, then a centre is required to complete re-sit form at the time of registering their candidates with PIABC Limited (a copy of this form is available from the PIABC Limited team ([piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org))).

### Access to Assessments - applying for reasonable adjustments

Centres must write to PIABC Limited to request concessions at least two months before the examination date. Concessions will be limited by syllabus and assessment requirements and supporting evidence will be required. A copy of medical or professional evidence must be sent with the initial application ("*Ext.ec/49 Application for Candidates requiring reasonable adjustments in PIABC Examinations/Assessments*").

In the case of specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia at Level 3 and above, the use of readers/writers will only be approved on the basis of a psychologist's report, which includes a recommendation on the use of readers/writers. In these circumstances the relevant certificates on unit credit will be endorsed to indicate the assistance of readers/writers.

Applications can be made for question papers in the following alternative formats: electronic text, modified print (on application please state font and size required), Braille, raised text or audio. Applications for question papers in alternative formats should be made to PIABC Limited at least two months before the exam.

Further information can be found later in this handbook in the Access to Assessment section.

### **Late examination registrations**

Any examination registrations after this time, and up to three weeks before the examination date, will incur a late entry fee (see “*Fees and Price List*”, a copy is available on the PIABC Limited website ([www.piabc.org.uk](http://www.piabc.org.uk)) or from the PIABC Limited team ([piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org))). A centre will be required to complete and return the “*Examination Entry Registration Form (EERF2)*” and the “*Late Examination Entry Form*” (a copy is available on the PIABC Limited team ([piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org))).

PIABC Limited will not accept any late examination registrations within the three-week period before an examination date.

### **Candidate entry to examination room**

Approximately four weeks before the examination date, PIABC Limited will despatch examination letters and general examination advice for candidates’ sitting examinations, which states candidate numbers, examination regulations and any reasonable adjustments requested.

It is extremely important that candidates bring photographic identification (e.g. passport or driving licence) to the examination to allow entry to the examination room.

Candidate’s letter and general examination advice will not be issued until full payment is received.

### **Deferral of examination**

Deferral of Examination between registering and three weeks before the examination will be classed as a deferral and there is a fee should a candidate wish to defer an examination to another series for health or any other reason. If a candidate is unable to undertake their examinations, it is essential that they advise PIABC Limited in writing before the appropriate date, otherwise the full entry fee will be applicable. ***Please note that a candidate may only defer an examination on one occasion.***

### **Cancellation of examination**

Cancellation of an examination within 3 weeks of the examination will incur a cancellation fee, except in extenuating circumstances, which are at the discretion of PIABC Limited.

## **EXAMINATIONS**

PIABC will send all examination papers and associated paperwork to the centre at least 1 week prior to the examination date. The centre will keep the examination papers in a secure place prior to the examination date.

The examination papers must be opened and distributed in accordance with the invigilator instructions supplied by PIABC Limited (see below).

If instructed by PIABC Limited, the invigilator should scan and email a copy of the completed answer book(s) to the PIABC Limited team at [piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org) before despatching the examination material back to PIABC Limited.

The answer books and any used examination materials should be stored before they are despatched to PIABC Limited. Examination papers must be sent within 24 hours by secure and trackable means (e.g. Royal Mail “special delivery” or courier).

## **GUIDANCE NOTES FOR EXAMINATION INVIGILATION**

### **Introduction**

The integrity of the examination requires that the invigilator(s) should be satisfied as to the acceptability of the examination room conditions and be able to ensure compliance with these instructions and that a tutor/teacher who has prepared the candidates for the examination should not be the sole invigilator.

Where there is more than one candidate sitting an examination, then a centre should use or have access to a second invigilator to accompany any candidate who wish to leave the examination room (e.g. toilet breaks or illness).

### **General**

PIABC Limited will supply answer books for candidates; no other paper should be provided or used. Each candidate is to bring his/her own writing implement. The invigilator(s) must be present in the examination room throughout each examination session.

PIABC Limited will visit one examination centre during each examination series to do a spot check that the examinations are being run in accordance with PIABC Limited examination procedures. PIABC Limited will not give any warning to the examination centre that that the visit will take place.

### **Administrative arrangements – pre-exam**

The invigilator should ensure that the following are in place at least 30 minutes before the examination start:

- A suitable well-lit and noise free room is used.
- A chair and table for each candidate is available and set well-spaced out.
- Suitable signage giving directions to the examination room.

- A clock is available in the room and visible to all candidates.
- Any special need arrangement has been arranged (e.g. a computer).

### **Access to the examination room**

The invigilator should allow candidates access to the examination room to begin 20 minutes before the examination start time. Candidate should be in place 10 minutes before the start time.

As candidates enter the examination room the invigilator should:

1. Check all photographic identification (e.g. passport or driving licence) as candidates enter the examination room. If a candidate does not bring their photographic identification, then that candidate will not be permitted entry into the examination room.
2. Request that mobile phones are turned off.

**NO** candidate should be permitted to enter the examination room after the start time.

**NO** candidate may be permitted to leave the examination room during the last 30 minutes to avoid disruption to other candidates.

### **Commencement of the examination**

The examination papers are supplied in a sealed envelope. The envelope must be opened in the presence of the candidates and on no account before the time stated on the outside of the envelope.

The invigilator should:

- Be present in the examination room throughout each examination period.
- Ensure that all candidates have read and understood the “*General Advice to Candidates*” issued to all candidates in respect of the examinations.
- Advise the candidates that they must record their candidate number on the answer book and not write their names.
- Bring to the candidates’ attention the examination instructions.
- At the start of each paper also draw attention to the following rules (a copy of which has been sent to each candidate) and require them to give up any forbidden articles:
  1. Candidates are forbidden to have in their possession any papers or books and if these are brought into the examination room, they should at once be given into the safe keeping of the invigilator.

Bi-lingual non-technical dictionaries may be permitted for those candidates with extra time allocation (normally 25%). Electronic bi-lingual dictionaries or translators may not be used. The invigilator must check all bi-lingual non-technical dictionaries before the candidates can use them during the examination.

The use of calculators is permitted, but mobile phones are not allowed to be used as a calculator replacement.

2. Warn candidates that they **must** give the invigilator any unauthorised materials or to place it in their bags. **This includes potential technological/web enabled sources of information such as iPods, mobile phones, MP3/4 players, smart watches and wrist watches which have a data storage device.**
3. Tell candidates to remove their wristwatch and place it on their desk so that it is in sight of the invigilator.
4. Candidates are forbidden to communicate with each other once the examination has started. Any general questions which may arise must be addressed to the invigilator(s).
5. Candidates may not leave the examination room during the last 30 minutes of the session.

No candidate is permitted to leave the examination room unaccompanied during the examination. If a candidate leaves the room unaccompanied, then he/she will not be permitted to re-enter the examination room.

The invigilator should advise the candidates when 30 minutes remain for the completion of the papers.

#### **Reading time available at the start of each examination**

Before the start of the examination, candidates are allowed a 5-minute period to read the examination paper. During this 5-minute period candidates are not allowed make any written notes or start answering the examination paper.

#### **At the end of each examination sitting**

At the close of the examination, the invigilator(s) must check that they have collected all the answer books and examination papers for each examination against the list of candidates to ensure that they have collected everything.

The answer books and any used examination materials should be securely stored before they are despatched to PIABC Limited. Examination papers must be sent within 24 hours by secure and trackable means (e.g. Royal Mail “special delivery” or courier).

If instructed by PIABC Limited, the invigilator should scan and email a copy of the completed answer book(s) to the PIABC Limited team at [piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org) before despatching the examination material back to PIABC Limited.

Invigilator(s) should complete Invigilator Report noting any problems.

Under no circumstances should the invigilator(s) engage in any discussion with candidates regarding the examination.

## ASSESSMENT RESULTS

PIABC Limited will issue:

- examination results to the centre approximately three months after the examination\*
- assignments/projects result to centres no later than eight weeks of the submission date

\*The exception is the PIABC Level 2 Award in Clay Technology qualification where the examination results will be released to centres within 7 working days of the examination.

The centre will be responsible for issuing the examination and assignment results to candidates.

Candidates who fail either an examination will be able to re-sit and candidates who fail a project/assignment will be able to resubmit.

## CERTIFICATION PROCESS

### Issuing of certificates

On successful completion of the qualification PIABC Limited will issue the centre with certificates, for candidates studying at their centre, no later than 4 weeks after the issuing of the examination or assignment/project results.

If candidates pass some units, but not all to complete the qualification, then a candidate can request a certificate for each unit(s) that he/she has passed.

PIABC Limited will issue certificates to the centres and the centre will then be responsible for issuing the candidates with the certificates.

### Issuing replacement certificates

To ensure safeguards against fraudulent or mistaken claims for certificates the following actions will be taken:

Replacement certificates will only be issued on receipt of a completed “*Replacement Certificate Request Form*” accompanied by the correct fee. A copy of the form is available from the PIABC Limited team at [piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org).

New certificate will be issued and marked “Replacement”.

### Security of Certificates

Certificates, which are individually numbered, are kept in the secure PIABC Limited office. Centres are required to store all certificates issued by PIABC Limited in a secure location.

### Non-issue of Certificates by Centres

All non-issued certificates need to be returned to PIABC Limited after six months and not kept by the Centre.

## **ACCESS TO ASSESSMENTS - ARRANGEMENTS FOR CANDIDATES NEEDING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND/OR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

Please refer to PIABC Limited's "*Access to Assessment – Arrangements for Candidates Needing Reasonable Adjustments, Special Consideration and/or Extenuating Circumstances in the Assessment Process*" document for more information. A copy of this document is available on the PIABC Limited website ([www.piabc.org.uk](http://www.piabc.org.uk)) or from the PIABC Limited team at [piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org).

In carrying out assessments, PIABC Limited's policy is to give all candidates equal opportunity to demonstrate attainment and to provide candidates with disabilities, learning difficulties and other problems the same access to assessment as other candidates.

The principles of the policy are that:

- Special assessment arrangements do not give unfair advantage over other candidates.
- Arrangements are determined according to the particular disability or learning difficulty.
- Users of certificates are not misled about candidate attainment.

In order to maintain these aims PIABC Limited maintains contacts with professional bodies interested in the occupational and educational opportunities for people with disabilities and learning difficulties. Arrangements are regularly reviewed and take account of feedback from these bodies and from centres and candidates.

PIABC Limited's vocational courses and qualification are developed to the National Occupational Standards (NOS) established by the Sector Skills Council (SSC's), or levels of attainment specified by statutory organisations or special advisory groups. Assessments are designed to measure only the skills, knowledge and understanding, which are expressly, stated in the qualification documents. PIABC Limited carries out the assessment practice and procedures to ensure the required standards are met but will not undertake to alter these standards without consulting the relevant organisation as this would undermine the credibility of the qualifications. Issues relating to the standards therefore need to be referred to the appropriate responsible body.

### **Variation of assessment arrangements**

Assessment arrangements maybe varied however, where the standards permit, for candidates with particular requirements. These requirements may take the form of special condition/extenuating circumstances for candidates whose needs are covered by the Equality Act 2010 or extenuating circumstances for those whose needs result from temporary disability or indisposition such as short-term illness.

The nature of any special arrangements depends largely upon the course/qualification being followed and the assessment strategy employed.

Scheduled examinations: Arrangements concerning scheduled fixed date examinations must be agreed directly with PIABC, according to the procedures set out in this document.

### **Arrangements for candidates needing reasonable adjustments**

Categories of need: In general, variation in assessment arrangements may be needed for:

- physical disability
- visual impairment
- hearing impairment
- specific learning difficulty
- medical conditions
- use of English as a second language.

Physical impairment permanent or temporary: In cases of physical impairment resulting from, for instance, spina bifida, paraplegia or temporary incapacities arrangements may include a writer, interpreter, extra time allowance for the candidate (normally 25%) and mechanical/ electronic aids.

Visual impairment: Arrangements may include the services of a writer and/or a reader, tapes, question papers produced in large print, Braille or Moon in an electronic format or raised text. Extra time allowance (normally 25%) and the use of mechanical/electronic equipment by the candidate (such as computers with magnifiers, JAWS or Braille displays).

Hearing impairment: Arrangements may include the use of a communicator/interpreter, extra time allowance (normally 25%) and the use of mechanical/electronic aids by the candidate. In addition, candidates whose hearing loss results in a possible linguistic disability may be provided with question papers with appropriate modified wording, as recommended by a specialist teacher of the deaf.

Learning difficulties: In the case of candidates with specific learning difficulties of a dyslexic or similar nature, arrangements may include a writer and/or a reader, extra time allowance (normally 25%), tapes and typescripts of answers. Arrangements for candidates with other learning difficulties may include a writer and/or a reader, extra time allowance (normally 25%) and other audio/visual aids as appropriate to the needs of the individual.

Medical conditions: In cases of candidates with medical conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes and respiratory disorders individual cases will be considered on their merits. In cases where candidates require hospitalisation or confinement to home, arrangements can normally be made for an assessment to be made in hospital or at home.

Bi-lingual dictionaries and translators: Translators/interpreters are not allowed for candidates whose first language is not English. However, bi-lingual dictionaries may be allowed with extra time allocation (normally 25%) permitted. Electronic bi-lingual dictionaries or translators may not be used.

Please contact PIABC Limited with specific requests that do not fit into the categories above.

### Applying for reasonable adjustments

Scheduled examinations: For assessments at Level 3 and above centres must write to PIABC Limited to request concessions at least two months before the assessment. Concessions will be limited by syllabus and assessment requirements and supporting evidence will be required. A copy of medical or professional evidence must be sent with the initial application.

In the case of specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia at Level 3 and above, the use of readers/writers will only be approved on the basis of a psychologist's report, which includes a recommendation on the use of readers/writers. In these circumstances the relevant certificates on unit credit will be endorsed to indicate the assistance of readers/writers.

Applications for question papers in the following alternative formats:

- Electronic text
- Modified print (on application please state font and size required)
- Braille
- Audio

Applications for question papers in alternative formats should be made to PIABC Limited at least two months before the exam.

Local evidence: Centres must establish individual candidate's needs in good time and in the event of a PIABC Limited audit, be confident that the syllabus and assessment requirements have been met. Medical or professional evidence is necessary at all levels and must be retained at the centre as either originals or authenticated (i.e. signed following the submission of the original) copies.

Entry category codes for candidates with particular requirements:

Category	Description
01	Reader and writer - hearing impairment
02	Reader and writer - learning difficulties
03	Reader and writer - physical impairment permanent or temporary
04	Reader and writer – visual impairment
05	Reader – hearing impairment
06	Reader – learning difficulties
07	Reader – physical impairment permanent or temporary
08	Reader – visual impairment
09	Second language (use of non-technical language dictionary)
10	Extra time only – hearing impairment (25%)
11	Extra time only – learning difficulties (25%)
12	Extra time only – physical impairment permanent or temporary (25%)
13	Extra time only – visual impairment (25%)
14	Extra time only – English as a second language (25%)
15	Writer – hearing impairment
16	Writer – learning difficulties
17	Writer – physical impairment permanent or temporary
18	Writer – visual impairment

*Reader and writer above covers any communication medium to or from the candidate including use of magnification, overwrite facilities, signers, tape recorders and word processors.*

### **Extenuating circumstances**

Fees are non-refundable other than for certified sickness or other reason considered acceptable by PIABC Limited. Centres must advise PIABC Limited using the form “*Ext.ec/38 Application for Special Consideration/Extenuating Circumstances in Examinations/ Assessments*”. This form can be found in the PIABC Limited’s “*Access to Assessment – Arrangements for Candidates Needing Reasonable Adjustments, Special Consideration and/or Extenuating Circumstances in the Assessment Process*” document, which is available on the PIABC Limited website ([www.piabc.org.uk](http://www.piabc.org.uk)) or from the PIABC Limited team ([piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org)). This form needs to be returned to PIABC Limited no later than 14 days after the date of the Examination. Failure to notify PIABC Limited will result in forfeit of examination/re-sit fee.

Categories of need: The reasons for extenuating circumstances that PIABC Limited may consider to be serious include:

- The death or critical illness of a dependant or close relative (evidence such as medical certificate or death certificate is required).
- A severely debilitating illness during most of the revision period or the examination (medical evidence is required).
- An unexpected medical condition (evidence is required).
- If a candidate becomes ill during the examination this should be detailed on the returning Invigilators Report (ext.ec/37) supplied with examination papers.

Circumstances that are **not** considered serious include:

- A planned house moves
- Pressure of work
- Normal pregnancy

### **Special consideration**

Those centres applying for special consideration should complete the Ext.ec/38 form and add any supplementary evidence. Forms should be returned to PIABC Limited no later than 14 days after the examination/assessment.

Form Ext.ec/38 should be used only to report special or extenuating circumstances that may have an adverse effect on your candidates’ examination or other assessment.

Special considerations are for those whose needs result from disruption at time of the examination caused by:

- Fire alarm, excessive external noise, evacuation, etc.
- Recent emotional trauma (i.e. car crash on way to assessment, death of a relative)
- Temporary disability or indisposition such as short-term illness

It is anticipated that most applications for special consideration will relate to candidates sitting scheduled examinations as the greater flexibility in the submission of assignments or in carrying out in-house assessment, lessen the impact of such problems.

All applications for Extenuating Circumstances/Special Considerations will be considered by the Assessment Board and a decision made. That decision will either be that the Extenuating Circumstances/Special Considerations are accepted, and the marks adjusted by an agreed amount, or they are rejected.

Issue of Aegrotats: Following discussion with the PIABC Board and the Assessment Boards it has been agreed that PIABC Limited will not allow the issue of aegrotats for the following:

- PIABC Level 2 Award in Clay Technology
- PIABC Level 2 Award in Timber and Panel Products and their Uses
- PIABC Level 3 Certificate in Clay Technology
- PIABC Level 3 Certificate in Packaging
- PIABC Level 3 Certificate in Wood Technology and Applications
- PIABC Level 5 Award in Understanding the Role and Functions of Packaging
- PIABC Level 3 Award in Understand the Management of Packaging, Production and Business Processes
- PIABC Level 5 Certificate in Understanding Packaging Materials and Components
- PIABC Level 5 Diploma in Packaging Technology

All those taking the above qualifications are employed, undertake the qualification on a part time basis, choose the time to take the examination and do not depend upon the qualification for moving to the next stage of education. Due to the mode of attendance, there are no internally assessed pieces of work that could be used to predict achievement in either the examinations or the assignments. For example: the units of the PIABC Level 5 Diploma in Packaging Technology cover different areas of expertise and monitoring of examination results have shown that candidates exhibit different skills and knowledge in these differing areas. Therefore, predicting achievement in a particular unit using the results of other units would not be reliable. Examinations are offered twice a year, so candidates have another opportunity to sit these. Assignments and projects are handed in for assessment four times a year (01 February, 01 May, 01 August, 01 November).

Information for centres: When candidates complete and submit either form Ext.ec/38 or Ext.ec/49, documentary evidence must be supplied. Special circumstances which are not supported by documentary evidence may not be considered. If evidence is not immediately available, please explain this on the form and send the evidence as soon as possible.

## PLAGIARISM

There are several definitions of plagiarism, but they all have in common the idea of taking someone else’s intellectual effort and presenting it as one’s own. The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) define plagiarism as: *“unacknowledged copying from, or reproduction of, third party sources or incomplete referencing (including the internet and AI tools)”*.

PIABC regards plagiarism as a very serious issue. Plagiarism refers to a candidate copying work and submitting it as their own. This can involve published resources (whether in print or on the internet), AI-generated content, essays, or pieces of work previously submitted for assessments by others or manufactured artefacts. Copying can involve memorisation and reproduction of text.

In practice, severe cases are rare, but the following are examples:

- Downloading information/whole sections of text from the web, without reference to the original source or using quotation marks and without using the material to answer the question or to support your argument.
- Quoting, re-writing or scanning information from books, journal articles, etc., again without adequate reference.
- Copying information from colleagues and including this as if it were your own work (whether modified or not), e.g. individual reports, tutorial assignments, coursework scripts.
- Published resources (whether in print or on the internet), AI-generated content, essays, or pieces of work previously submitted for assessments by others or manufactured artefacts. Copying can involve memorisation and reproduction of text.

Plagiarism also incorporates the direct and unacknowledged translation of foreign language texts into English.

PIABC regards this as cheating and it can have serious consequences, even if it is unintentional. All suspected cases of plagiarism will be referred to the Business Compliance and Administration Manager for investigation. Based on the evidence obtained, a decision will be made in terms of what penalty, or penalties (see below) will be imposed, and this shall be reported to the PIABC’s Assessment Board.

PIABC has guidelines on the penalties that can be imposed:

<p>a) Evidence of plagiarism involving scripts containing minor components of information from third-party sources, without referencing.</p>	<p>Up to a 50% reduction in project marks.</p>
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<p>b) Evidence of plagiarism involving scripts containing major components of information from third-party sources, without referencing.</p>	<p>Up to a 100% reduction in project marks and a ban on submitting project for a fixed or indefinite period.</p>
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Judgements of what is “minor” and “major” are at PIABC’s discretion.

Candidates are required to sign a cover sheet that declares that the assignment/projects are their own work and any sources used or assistance from others has all been acknowledged.

## CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT REVIEW AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

*Clerical Re-check* - A full clerical re-check including the provision of a statement of the marks by element for an individual candidate. No charge for this service. Form Ext.ec/27 should be completed. A centre will be notified of the outcome of the clerical re-check within 5 working days from receipt of the enquiry.

*Re-mark* - A re-mark of the specified unit assessment, which includes a clerical re-check and a statement of marks by element for an individual candidate. Only one re-mark per candidate will be allowed for each unit. This service is chargeable, and details can be found PIABC’s *Fees and Price List* available from either your Centre or PIABC Limited. Form Ext.ec/27 should be completed. This form is available from the centre or from the PIABC Limited team (piabc@iom3.org). The centre will be notified of the outcome of the re-mark within 10 working days from receipt of the enquiry.

Applications by a centre on behalf of its candidates for either a clerical re-check or re-mark must be:

- Submitted on the relevant form with any accompanying payment that is due.
- Submitted within **four weeks** of the publication of results. Requests made after the four-week period will not be accepted.

It is not possible to make retrospective enquiries about previous examination series.

In cases of a clerical re-check, where inaccurate marking or a clerical error is revealed, marks maybe confirmed, lowered, or raised.

In cases of a re-assessment or re-mark the result may be confirmed, raised, or lowered.

By signing and submitting the application form the candidate confirms awareness of the possible outcomes and has consented to the application.

If a centre is unhappy with the results of the previous steps for the review of any assessment or examination, and if these have been exhausted, it may appeal on behalf of its candidate. There are 2 appeal stages:

### *Stage 1*

Stage 1 will involve a review of the case by a senior member of PIABC Limited's staff (or nominee) who has had no previous involvement in the case.

The Stage 1 appeal request must be made in writing on the form (ext.ec.27). The form must be received by PIABC Limited within 20 days of you being informed of the outcome of the review process which has been described above or in the cases of plagiarism, of you being informed of PIABC Limited's decision.

The receipt of your request will be acknowledged within 5 working days of PIABC Limited having received it and the outcome of Stage 1 will be reported in writing to you within 10 working days of the receipt of your request.

### *Stage 2*

If you remain unhappy after Stage 1, you may write to request a Stage 2 appeal (also using form ext/ec/27). Again, this should arrive with PIABC Limited within 20 days of you being notified of the outcome of Stage 1. The receipt of your request will be acknowledged within 5 working days of PIABC Limited having received it.

This Stage involves the hearing of the case by a panel convened by PIABC Limited. The panel will comprise three members, at least one of whom will be an independent member (who has not been a member of PIABC Limited's Board or its committees, or an employee or examiner of PIABC Limited, at any time during the previous two years).

The PIABC Limited Appeals Panel is not authorised to re-assess your work nor can it change the grades or decisions made in cases of plagiarism. It has powers to direct PIABC Limited to reconsider a case and may offer recommendations.

PIABC Limited will aim to undertake the appeal within 28 working days of receiving the request. However, if this is not possible, PIABC Limited will inform you of the date of the appeal within 15 working days.

You will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeals hearing within five working days of the hearing; a copy of which will be sent to your Centre. A report will be published within 28 working days of the hearing.

Should the outcome of any appeal bring into question the accuracy of the results of other candidates, PIABC Limited will extend the enquiry to include any other candidates who may have been affected, and as a consequence of a change in result PIABC Limited will:

- notify the centre at once in writing.
- refund the candidate appeal fee (via the centre), if applicable.

- issue a revised statement of results and/or issue a revised certificate where necessary when the original certificate has been returned.

## Independent Assessor

Should a centre or candidate remain dissatisfied with the outcome of PIABC Limited's appeals process, further, final recourse is available through the Regulatory/Accreditation Authority.

A Regulatory/Accreditation Authority does not make judgements on the quality of candidates' work and cannot change academic decisions but determines whether PIABC Limited has complied with both its own policies and the regulators' requirements.

Therefore, if a centre or candidate is dissatisfied with the outcome of PIABC Limited's appeals process, then it might be possible for the centre, on behalf of the candidate, to present a case to the Regulatory/Accreditation Authority. The Regulatory/Accreditation Authority must receive any application within three weeks of the final draft report detailing the outcome of the stage two appeal.

PIABC Limited will provide the complainant with the Regulatory/Accreditation Authority's name and address upon request.

## RECORDS RETENTION

Student registration forms should be retained for 10 years. Centres have discretion as to whether a database or paper record is retained.

## MALPRACTICE & MALADMINISTRATION

### What is Malpractice and Maladministration?

**Malpractice** would be deemed to be any deliberate activity, neglect, default, or other practice likely to invalidate the qualification and/or validity of certificates or bring into doubt the integrity of the assessment and/or quality assurance process whether by the candidates, centre staff or any others involved in providing the qualification.

The most common instances of malpractice would include, for example:

- the evidence assessed is not entirely the learner's own work.
- provision of scripts/answers covering either performance and/or knowledge.
- the learner is still working towards the qualification after the qualification has been claimed.
- the qualification has been claimed on the basis of falsified records.
- requests for certification are made contrary to the regulatory bodies' Codes of Practice.
- breaches of security.

- false ID at registration and/or assessment.
- collusion and/or cheating.
- improper invigilation.
- improper use of regulatory bodies'/awarding organisation logos.
- signatures on blank forms.
- discrimination against learners or employers.
- assessment by unapproved assessor(s).
- inducements/bribery.
- Intimidation.

**Maladministration** would be deemed to be any activity, neglect, default, or other practice likely to invalidate the qualification and/or validity of the certificates or bring into doubt the integrity of the assessment and/or quality assurance process.

The most common instances of maladministration would include, for example:

- late registrations
- early certification claims
- incorrect certificate claims
- loss of learner's work
- poor/erratic record keeping.

A copy of this policy is available directly from the PIABC Limited team ([piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org)).

PIABC Limited has procedures in place to deal with malpractice or maladministration on the part of candidates and Centre staff (please refer to the section of this document entitled "*Procedure for Dealing with Malpractice and Maladministration*").

During an investigation, the candidate concerned will not be entitled to claim any PIABC Limited certificates. In the case of competency-based qualifications, the Centre or partner organisation involved, will be immediately suspended from making claims for certification pending the outcome of the investigation.

PIABC Limited reserve the right to withhold a candidate's results for all PIABC Limited qualifications they may be studying at the time of notification of the suspected malpractice or maladministration and to refuse to accept future entries and/or registrations.

### **Competency based qualifications**

Centres offering competency-based qualifications should be particularly aware of the additional responsibilities they undertake on these schemes, for the assessment and internal quality assurance of candidates and for reporting their achievements to PIABC Limited.

PIABC Limited seeks to ensure the complete integrity of the assessment, internal quality assurance and certification processes in relation to competency-based qualifications and Centres are reminded that this policy and procedure applies equally to those awards in which Centre-based assessments are carried out.

Where PIABC Limited has reasonable grounds to doubt the integrity of the assessment process for competency-based qualifications this policy and procedure apply.

### **Centre responsibility**

PIABC Limited expects Centre staff to co-operate fully with any investigations into malpractice or maladministration. Failure to do so may result in the Centre's approval status being permanently or temporarily removed.

The Centre is responsible for informing staff and candidates affected by the removal of any PIABC Limited services.

In cases of suspected malpractice or maladministration by candidates, Centre staff should make candidates aware that their final results may be void if the case is proven.

Centre staff who identify suspected cases of irregularity, malpractice or maladministration must immediately report their findings in writing with supporting evidence (please see *"Procedure for Dealing with Malpractice & Maladministration"*).

PIABC Limited requires its Centres to report to it any malpractice or maladministration suspected after candidates have been registered, making clear any possible implications of a failure to cooperate for the issue of certificates and the future acceptance of entries.

### **PIABC Limited responsibility**

PIABC Limited will ensure that all Centres, its own staff, and the regulators receive copies of this document *"Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure"*.

PIABC Limited will carry out a full investigation of any allegations of malpractice or maladministration and provide a comprehensive report to the relevant parties.

In the case of competency-based qualifications, PIABC Limited will inform the regulators when commencing an investigation and provide an estimated timescale for its completion.

PIABC Limited will inform the regulators whenever it finds evidence that certificates may be invalid and agree appropriate remedial action with the regulators.

In the case of malpractice or maladministration by a candidate or Centre employee, PIABC Limited will instruct the appropriate Centre staff to investigate the issue in liaison with PIABC Limited appointed personnel.

*"Suspected Malpractice & Maladministration Form"* to be completed by the complainant and returned to PIABC Limited. A copy of this form is available at the end of the document or from the PIABC Limited Team ([piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org)).

PIABC Limited maintains authority to undertake investigations into alleged irregularities within their Centres.

On receipt of the form PIABC Limited will carry out an investigation and report its findings to the Centre and regulators. On receipt of the form, PIABC Limited will inform the Centre and the regulators of the estimated timescale for the completion of the investigation. This will normally be within one month of the receipt of the form.

The investigation will be carried out by a team independent of the management of normal working relationships with the Centre or External Quality Assurer involved.

The final report will contain:

- The origin of the complaint and mode of discovery
- The investigations carried out
- The evidence obtained
- The conclusions drawn
- The recommendations for action and the resolution of the matter

The report will be made available to the Centre concerned and if appropriate, the regulators. The report will be shared with other external parties if appropriate.

In the case of competency-based qualifications, if an investigation finds that certificates may be invalid PIABC Limited will inform the regulators and agree the appropriate action with them.

Where a decision is taken to invalidate certificates, PIABC Limited will:

- Seek to protect the interests of individual candidates in so far as is reasonable and possible in the circumstances.
- Contact the candidates involved and notify them of the status of their certificates and of any arrangements for re-assessment and/or certification.
- Ensure that the original certificates are cancelled on its database so that duplicates cannot be issued.
- Inform the regulators of the details of the invalidated certificates and, where appropriate, make the information available to public funding bodies.

This policy is reviewed and revised regularly by PIABC Limited.

## **Appeals**

A Candidate or a Centre wishing to appeal against the findings of the malpractice or maladministration investigation, or the penalties and sanctions imposed should contact the Business Compliance & Administration Manager in writing.

Appeals will be accepted from a Candidate or a Principal/CEO/Head of Centre or individual members of staff who are personally implicated in the decision and should be made in writing to the Business Compliance & Administration Manager.

## Appeals Process

*“The Appeal Process (For Appeals against PIABC Decisions)”* should be followed (please refer to PIABC Limited’s *“The Appeal Process (For Appeals against PIABC Decisions)”*).

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

PIABC understands that as an awarding body it has an important role to play in guaranteeing equality of opportunity in all the approved centres. It also recognizes that centres have a responsibility to ensure the equality and diversity of both the centre staff and the candidates registered by them.

What do we mean by Equality and Diversity? It means not treating one person less favourably than another or putting a person at a disadvantage by imposing requirements which are harder for some individuals to meet than others.

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination in employment or in the provision of training and education on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics listed in the act.

The purpose of this section, therefore, is to make clear the commitment of PIABC Limited in preventing discrimination and promoting equality and diversity in all spheres of responsibility. It does so not merely to satisfy legal requirements, social or contractual obligations, but in the belief that such a policy will secure maximum contribution from employees, centres and all personnel who come into contact with PIABC Limited.

### As an awarding body

The awarding body is firmly committed to the principle that all Centres offering its qualifications will have in place an Equality and Diversity Policy that covers its responsibilities as an employer and a deliverer of qualifications in commercial and industrial settings.

Details of how effects of any barriers can be mitigated by PIABC Limited for candidates of its qualifications can be found in its *“Assess to Assessment: Arrangements for Candidates Needing Reasonable Adjustments, Special Considerations and/or Extenuating Circumstances in the Assessment Process”* document.

All centres must aim to provide an environment free from discrimination and harassment which results from the protected characteristics as laid down by the Equality Act 2010. Centres must show how this is embedded in their centre culture.

Centres are obliged to provide a safe working environment for disabled people and ensure, where possible, disabled persons are provided with equipment and facilities to enable them to carry out their duties. Centres are obliged to review, periodically, the duties and responsibilities of disabled learners and employees in the light of any changes in their condition.

Centres are obliged to recruit, train, and promote employees/potential employees on the basis of ability and the requirements of the job.

The Centre will have regard to all appropriate legislation especially The Equality Act 2010.

To this end Centres must have in place methods to show the awarding body that:

- they actively oppose inequality, discrimination, harassment, and oppression.
- their Equality and Diversity Policy is reviewed, monitored, and updated on a regular and systematic basis.
- that employees have access to this policy and all related policies.
- that learners are informed and have access to their centre's Learner Equality and Diversity Policy and all related policies/procedures.

Equality and Diversity compliance will be examined as part of the centre annual monitoring.

Where problems are identified within a Centre an action plan will be agreed and monitored.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

It is the policy of PIABC Limited that centres not only to comply with the letter and spirit of the law regarding safe working but consider the provision of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other relevant legislation as minimum requirements.

During centre and qualification approval PIABC Limited will ensure that all Centres applying to offer its qualifications have in place the policies and procedures to ensure that they conform to the requirements of the Health and Safety Work Act 1974.

Representatives of the awarding body will monitor compliance during annual centre monitoring visits to centres.

Evidence of the following will be required:

- A Health and Safety Policy which covers its responsibilities as an employer and a deliverer of qualifications.
- A procedure for monitoring the policy on a regular and systematic basis and how any revisions are made available to staff and students.
- A named person responsible for the Health and Safety Policy.
- Provision for staff training.
- A separate statement or a statement within the policy, stating that staff and students must abide by the regulations.

## CENTRE WITHDRAWAL FROM PIABC LIMITED

### Withdrawal by a centre

If for whatever reason a centre decides that it no longer wishes to offer PIABC Limited qualifications the protection of the candidates is of paramount importance.

Reasons for withdrawal may include:

- strategic decisions by centres to use only one awarding body.
- more suitable qualifications being offered by other awarding bodies.
- cheaper products.
- dissatisfaction with the service offered by PIABC Limited.

In every case PIABC Limited would:

- require the centre to give reasons for withdrawal.
- contact the centre to discuss the reasons for withdrawal.
- the centre must inform PIABC Limited of the names and details of any candidates affected by the withdrawal.
- the centre is expected to aid its candidates in enabling transference to another centre or completion of the qualifications as appropriate.
- the centre must return to PIABC Limited any properties belonging to PIABC Limited.
- the centre must stop using the PIABC Limited logo.

### Withdrawal of existing approval

PIABC Limited will regularly monitor the centre's ability to deliver the qualifications. This will be done through centre monitoring visits. If a centre is not able to meet the full requirements of the approved centre and qualification criteria, then PIABC Limited will introduce appropriate sanctions and penalties and inform the centre of required actions (with timescales). In situations where there are significant shortcomings in the centre's ability to maintain the centre and qualification approval criteria then approval may be withdrawn. The centre will be advised of a developmental plan with agreed timescales with the aim of meeting the PIABC Limited approval criteria in the near future.

In instances where PIABC Limited considers that there is irretrievable breakdown in the management and quality assurance for the delivery of specified qualifications, PIABC Limited will withdraw centre approval for those qualifications.

In such instances:

- PIABC Limited will give the centre a reasonable period of notice (usually 3 months) to terminate its delivery of PIABC Limited qualifications.
- the centre may appeal against the decision by PIABC Limited to withdraw approval by following procedures laid down in this document.
- the centre is expected to aid its candidates in enabling transference to another centre or completion of the qualifications as appropriate.

- the centre must return to PIABC Limited any properties belonging to PIABC Limited.
- the centre must stop using the PIABC Limited logo.

PIABC Limited will still be entitled to be paid any money owed prior to withdrawal.

Should the centre feel that in their opinion they do meet the stated criteria and differ in this judgement, and then they may follow the procedures laid down in this document, to appeal for a review of PIABC Limited's decision.

### **Centre appeal against a decision not to grant approval or to withdraw approval**

If a centre wishes to appeal against a decision not to grant approval or to withdraw approval, the centre should follow The Appeals Process - For Appeals against PIABC Decisions (please refer to PIABC Limited's "*The Appeals Process - For Appeals against PIABC Decisions*").

### **Fees**

Where a centre instigates an appeal in relation to non-approval or withdrawal of approval, PIABC Limited will request the centre to meet at least some of the costs arising from undertaking further investigation into the appeal (e.g. additional visits to the centre, or the cost of the PIABC Limited Operational Group meeting specifically to consider the appeal). In any event, the maximum cost to the centre will not exceed £200.

## **ASSESSMENT IN WELSH AND IRISH (GAELIGE)**

PIABC Limited's policy is to facilitate the promotion, delivery and assessment of all its qualifications in Welsh and Irish (Gaelige) if there is a demand for this to be available.

Currently there is no demand, but this is reviewed by the PIABC Board and if there is a need, they shall consider making the following available in Welsh and/or Irish (Gaelige): promotional materials; PIABC Limited policies and procedures; scheme documentation; and certification.

The Board will also consider appointing staff with appropriate language skills to conduct assessments; provide administrative support; etc. and will provide training for them.

In making these arrangements, PIABC Limited will ensure that there is sufficient expertise to guarantee the comparability of Welsh and/or Irish (Gaelige) and English language assessments.

If Centres require PIABC Limited materials to be in Welsh/Irish (Gaelige) they should contact PIABC Limited as soon as the requirement for alternative language provision becomes known.

## COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Here at PIABC Limited we believe that the needs of centre personnel and candidates are our top priority, and we are committed to providing quality services in the most effective and efficient way possible. However, we realise that, even in the best run organisations, there may be times when things go wrong, and you may not be happy with the service you receive.

If this happens or you feel that our services are not up to scratch, then let us know and we will do all we can to investigate and solve your problem as quickly as possible.

To help you make your comment or complaint in the most effective way and to the right person we have set up a procedure.

When you make a complaint, you will receive:

- An acknowledgment within 5 working days
- A full response within 10 working days

However, if the complainant takes the complaint to the second and/or third stages the process will take much longer.

### Who can complain?

The complainant should usually be the centre who has been directly concerned with or affected by the conduct of the awarding body.

If the complaint is from a candidate, they should contact their centre in the first instance and follow the procedures set out by that centre.

Likely nature of complaints:

- Customer service (including administrative procedures)
- Quality assurance (including centre monitoring)
- Assessment issues (including access to assessment/examinations)
- Equality and diversity
- Registration
- Certification
- The administrative/outcome complaints procedure

Please note that the awarding body has separate policies and procedures for dealing with Malpractice and Maladministration (please refer to PIABC Limited's "*Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure*") and Academic and Assessment Appeals (please refer to PIABC Limited's "*Assessment Review and Appeals*").

It is important that you make your complaint as soon as possible after the event you want to complain about happens - usually PIABC Limited will only investigate complaints that are either:

- made within 6 months of the event; or
- made within 6 months of you realising that you have something to complain about as long as that is not more than 12 months after the event itself.

In exceptional circumstances, these time limits may be waived if there is valid documented evidence for not complaining earlier.

Appeals regarding complaints should follow The Appeals Process - For Appeals against PIABC Limited Decisions (please refer to PIABC Limited's "*The Appeals Process - For Appeals against PIABC Decisions*").

### **Contacting the regulator**

If you have followed PIABC Limited's complaints procedure and would still like to take your complaint further, you can contact the appropriate qualifications regulator:

CCEA Regulation	info@ccea.org.uk
Ofqual	public-enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk
SQA Accreditation	accreditation@sqa.org.uk

### **Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) (*Users of public bodies in Scotland only*)**

Users of public bodies (e.g. FE Colleges) in Scotland have the right to complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) as the final arbiter. Users have to exhaust the public body's own complaints procedure before the SPSO will consider their complaint, and it must usually have been raised within the previous 12 months. The complaint cannot be under consideration in a court of law.

The SPSO defines a complaint as "an expression of dissatisfaction by one, or more, customers about an FE College's lack, or lack, of action or about the standards or services provided by the FE College or on its behalf". FE Colleges are required to implement a documented complaints process which makes it plain that candidates can complain, in turn, and once the previous stage has been exhausted, to the Centre, to PIABC Limited, to SQA Accreditation, and to the SPSO. It must explain the circumstances in which each of these can be contacted. The SPSO will not consider complaints about academic decisions, such as the outcome of an assessment. These types of complaints should be treated as an Appeal; therefore, should follow PIABC Limited's Assessment Review and Appeals Procedure.

## **THE APPEALS PROCESS – FOR APPEALS AGAINST PIABC DECISIONS**

This procedure is for the following:

- Complaints
- Malpractice/Maladministration
- Centre and Qualification Approval
- Quality Assured Centre and Qualification Approval
- External Quality Assurance

- Removal of Centre and Qualification Approval

It is not for academic and assessment appeals (please refer to PIABC Limited's "Assessment Review and Appeals").

A Candidate or a Centre wishing to appeal against the findings, decisions, penalties, or sanctions imposed should contact the Business Compliance & Administration Manager in writing.

Appeals will be accepted from a Candidate or a Principal/CEO/Head of Centre or individual members of staff who are personally implicated in the decision and should be made in writing to the Business Compliance & Administration Manager.

### **Stage 1 appeal**

This will involve a review of the case by a senior member of PIABC Limited's staff who has had no previous involvement in the case.

The stage 1 appeal request must be made in writing to the Business Compliance & Administration Manager within 20 days of you being informed of the findings, decisions, penalties, or sanctions.

The receipt of the request will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt by PIABC Limited. The outcome of Stage 1 will be reported in writing within 10 working days of your request.

### **Stage 2 appeal**

If you remain unhappy after stage 1, then you may write to the Business Compliance & Administration Manager to request a stage 2 appeal. You will be asked to explain in writing exactly why you are still dissatisfied if you have not already done so. The letter should also include details of the original complaint, the actions taken by the centre and a copy of the centre's response. Again, this should arrive within 20 days of you being notified of the outcome of the stage 1 Appeal. The receipt of your request will be acknowledged within 5 working days of PIABC Limited having received it.

This stage appeal involves a hearing of the case of a panel convened by PIABC Limited. This independent panel should be convened within 28 days of the receipt of the request. You will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal hearing within 5 working days of the hearing.

The panel will have three people - an independent lay person acting as chairman, the convener, and one other person. The panel will re-examine fully the concerns referred to it, talking to everyone involved, and getting any specialist advice it needs. It will then prepare a report setting out the results of its investigations, together with its conclusions and any appropriate comments or suggestions. The panel has the powers to direct PIABC Limited to reconsider a case and may offer recommendations. You will be given a copy of the report, and the Business Compliance & Administration Manager will write to tell you of any action being taken as a result of the panel's recommendations. This process will generally take no

longer than 28 working days from the receipt of the convenor’s letter to yourself informing you that a panel meeting will take place.

The Business Compliance & Administration Manager does not have to set up a panel every time one is requested. The Business Compliance & Administration Manager will only do so if he/she thinks that a panel investigation is likely to resolve the problems you have identified. Either way, you will be informed of the Business Compliance & Administration Manager decision in writing, generally within 28 working days of your letter requesting a stage 2 appeals process. If he/she decides to set up a panel, he/she will tell you what matters the panel will investigate.

PIABC Limited will charge an administrative fee for appeal(s). The fee(s) will be refunded if the appeal(s) are upheld. Details of fees for these services can be found on PIABC Limited’s website ([www.piabc.org.uk](http://www.piabc.org.uk)).

## SANCTIONS

Whilst PIABC Limited maintains excellent communications and seeks at all times to work with and support centres it does recognise that there may occasionally be the need to impose sanctions.

Reason	Sanction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to candidate job roles</li> <li>• Failure to complete actions within agreed time scales</li> <li>• Failure to respond to requests for information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased monitoring of the centre either by remote sampling or additional visits.</li> <li>• Place a moratorium on candidate registrations and on claims for certification.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to complete actions following requests above.</li> <li>• Repeatedly fail to respond to communications, requests for information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place a moratorium on candidate registrations and on claims for certification.</li> <li>• Suspend/withdraw approved Centre status.</li> <li>• Inform regulatory and accreditation authorities</li> </ul>

## RECOGNISED PRIOR LEARNING/EXEMPTIONS

Centres that have candidates who wishing to have prior learning or exemptions recognised and accredited against an individual unit(s) need to provide a portfolio of evidence to the PIABC Limited Assessment Board using the “*Application Form for Recognition of Prior Learning/Exemptions*” (a copy of this form is available from the PIABC Limited team at [piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org)).



This portfolio should include:

- Details of the Unit for which credit/exemption is being sought.
- A comprehensive description of the experience for which recognition/exemption and accreditation is sought.
- Specific evidence of the achievements, which could be in an actual written, photographic or electronic format. For example: evidence of packaging operations or processes established, or packages designed. If success in examinations is being put forward as evidence, please forward course details and contents together with the course certificate.
- In some instances, the Assessment Board may wish to talk to the candidate and/or carry out visits to further verify evidence. The visits may be charged to the candidate.
- Fees for recognised prior learning are published annually on the PIABC Limited website ([www.piabc.org.uk](http://www.piabc.org.uk)) and must accompany this form.

## **UNIQUE LEARNER NUMBER (ULN)**

***(This is not applicable for SQA Accredited Qualifications)***

A centre must have in place procedures to obtain a candidate's unique learner number (ULN), when a candidate gives her/his permission. This ULN needs to be sent to PIABC Limited on registration of a candidate.

The unique learner number (ULN) is a 10-digit identifier that will eventually enable any student over the age of 14 in UK education and training - in England, Northern Ireland, and Wales - to build a lifelong record of their learning participation and achievements. If a candidate hasn't already got a ULN, then the centre needs to obtain permission from the learner to obtain one on their behalf. ULNs are issued and held by the Learning Records Service on the Learner Register ([www.learningrecordservice.org.uk](http://www.learningrecordservice.org.uk)). *(UK only)*

## **PERSONAL LEARNING RECORD (PRL)**

***(This is not applicable for SQA Accredited Qualifications)***

Personal Learning Record (PRL) is an authoritative record of all credit and qualifications achievements made by an individual learner. Achievement data from PIABC Limited and other awarding bodies recognised by Ofqual to deliver qualifications will be collected and held on the PLR. A centre must request a candidate's permission to obtain their Personal Learning Record and maximize opportunity for credit exemption. *(UK only)*

## **PIABC LIMITED AND THE UK GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (UK GDPR)**

PIABC Limited is committed to protecting personal data and will process it in compliance with Data Protection law. For more information on how we process and protect data and rights under the new UK General Data Protection Regulation (from 25 May 2018). Please see our Privacy Notice <http://www.piabc.org.uk/privacy-policy>.