



# **CANDIDATE ADVICE ON THE EXAMINATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

PIABC Level 5 Diploma in Packaging Technology  
*(Qualification Number: 610/0740/7)*

Updated: 18 June 2025

## 1. GOVERNING REGULATIONS

Examinations are held in June and November of each year at approved centres.

Examination dates can be found on the PIABC website ([www.piabc.org.uk](http://www.piabc.org.uk)).

Day 1 – am	Diploma Unit 1
Day 1 – pm	Diploma Unit 3
Day 2 – am	Diploma Unit 2 (Paper A)
Day 2 – pm	Diploma Unit 2 (Paper B)

Candidates must register for examinations through their centre at least **SIX WEEKS** before the examination date. After that date, a late entry fee will be imposed.

The use of simple (non-scientific) calculators during the examination is permitted.

Candidates can submit their project at any time throughout the year via their centre.

All projects will be centrally marked and moderated by PIABC.

Some candidates may have particular assessment requirements and arrangements for this are published separately by PIABC (see “*Access to Assessment - Arrangements for Candidates Needing Reasonable Adjustments, Special Consideration and/or Extenuating Circumstances in the Assessment Process*”).

## 2. PIABC QUALIFICATION REGISTRATION FEE

A PIABC qualification registration fee is payable for all candidates along with examination/assessment fees for each unit.

## 3. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

For candidates to achieve a PIABC Level 5 Diploma in Packaging Technology qualification, they must have achieved at least 51 credits.

If candidate pass some units, but not all, then a candidate can request to be awarded a certificate of achievement for the unit(s) that has been passed. A fee is payable for this certificate and the candidate should ask their centre co-ordinator for an “*Application for Certification of Individual Units Form*”.

The Diploma consists of four mandatory units, each of which is separately assessed:

### **Unit 1 – Understand the Role and Functions of Packaging (14 credits)**

Written Examination – 2-hour duration

The examination paper will have a combination of short-answer format and long-answer format questions based on the 6 questions covering the unit. To be successful in the examination, students must ensure that they gain an overall pass mark of 50%.

### **Unit 2 – Understanding Packaging Materials and Components (27 credits)**

Two Written Examinations:

- Paper A (50%) – 2-hour duration (Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4)  
The examination paper will have a combination of short-answer format and long-answer format questions based on the 4 learning outcomes. To be successful in the examination, students must ensure that they gain an overall pass mark of 50%.

- Paper B (50%) – 2-hour duration (Learning Outcomes 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9)  
The examination paper will have a combination of short-answer format and long-answer format questions based on the 5 learning outcomes. To be successful in the examination, students must ensure that they gain an overall pass mark of 50%.

*Please note: Both Paper A and Paper B must be passed to successful achieve Unit 2. Both examination papers do not have to be taken together.*

### **Unit 3 – Understand the Management of Packaging, Production, and Business Processes (10 Credits)**

Written Examination – 2-hour duration

The examination paper will have a combination of short-answer format and long-answer format questions based on the 3 learning outcomes. To be successful in the examination, students must ensure that they gain an overall pass mark of 50%.

#### **Project**

Project – 5,000 words

The candidate has to produce a packaging project. This can be either a packaging related research project or based on a yearly topic set by PIABC.

## **4. PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION**

Programme specification can be obtained from your centre co-ordinator.

The specification provides students with more detail on the qualifications including the learning outcomes and assessment criteria for each unit.

## **5. EXAMINATIONS**

#### **Registration and Re-Sit Fees**

A candidate is required to registered with their centre SIX WEEKS prior to the examination. After that date, a late entry fee will be imposed.

If a candidate is re-sitting, then a candidate needs to complete re-sit form at the time of registering with their centre.

#### **Late Examination Registrations**

Any examination registrations after this time, and up to three weeks before the examination date, will incur a late entry fee. A candidate will be required to complete and return a “*Late Examination Entry Form*”.

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

#### **Entry to Examination Room**

All candidates registered to sit an examination will be issued a registration instructions showing their candidate number along with general examination advice approximately four weeks before the examination date.

It is important that a candidate brings photographic identification (e.g. passport or driving licence) to the examination to allow entry to the examination room.

Registration instructions will not be issued until full payment is received.

### **Arrangements for Candidates Needing Reasonable Adjustments**

A candidate may require reasonable adjustments to be made due to physical disability, visual impairment, hearing impairment, specific learning difficulty, or English as a second language.

A candidate should advise their centre of such a requirement and the centre will inform PIABC using an “*Application for Candidates Requiring Reasonable Adjustments in PIABC Examinations/Assessments Form*”.

For further information, please refer to “*Access to Assessment - Arrangements for Candidates Needing Reasonable Adjustments, Special Consideration and/or Extenuating Circumstances in the Assessment Process*”.

### **Extenuating Circumstances**

Fees are non-refundable other than for certified sickness or other reasons considered acceptable by PIABC. Candidates must advise PIABC using “*Application for Special Consideration in Examinations/Assessments Form*” no later than 14 days after the date of the Examination. Failure to notify PIABC will result in forfeit of examination/re-sit fee.

For further information, please refer to “*Access to Assessment - Arrangements for Candidates Needing Reasonable Adjustments, Special Consideration and/or Extenuating Circumstances in the Assessment Process*”.

### **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 completed “*Examination Deferment Fee Form*” 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.

## **6. PROJECT**

Candidates have to produce a packaging project. This can be either a packaging related research project or based on a yearly topic set by PIABC.

All candidates need to produce a project plan which must be submitted to PIABC for approval regardless of whether they decide to do the Packaging Related Research Project or one of the yearly published Topics. The project plan needs to include the project’s title, aims and objectives and scope. Candidates should use the “*Project Plan Template*” to complete this plan.

A project plan for Topic 1 and 2 must be submitted by 31 December of the year that the Topic is published.

All candidates will have 18 months from the project plan approval date to submit their completed project for marking.

For more information on completing the project, please refer to the guidance notes for projects documents.

## 7. MARKING OF ASSESSMENTS

All examination papers and projects are sent to markers who are packaging specialists selected by PIABC.

## 8. ORIGINALITY AND 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 and is classed as candidate malpractice. 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.

While discussing others work is an important part of your research the information must be referenced properly and written in your own words or put into quotation marks. It is difficult to produce definitive guidelines for exactly what is or is not acceptable. To avoid any misunderstanding, always put quotations from other authors within quotation marks and give full references to every source you use, even if you are not quoting directly from it.

*All work, statements, images, charts or ideas that you present as your own (i.e. not referenced) must be your own work.*

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 Packaging 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>
<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>

Judgements of what is “minor” and “major” are at PIABC’s discretion.

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

## 9. RESULTS

The results of the June examination will be advised to centres in September. The results of the November examination will be advised to centres in February.

The results of projects will be sent to centres within eight weeks of the project’s receipt by PIABC.

Candidates who fail either an examination or project will be able to re-sit/re-submit.

## 10. EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

In exceptional cases, candidates may feel that they have special circumstances (such as illness or disability), which they wish to bring to the attention of PIABC. Such circumstances, supported by relevant medical evidence, and where possible a covering letter from the candidate’s centre, must be notified in writing to PIABC.

For the written examination papers, the latest date for receipt of such evidence is 14 days after the examination date. Receipt will be acknowledged in writing.

As candidates can submit assignments for assessment quarterly, it is not expected with assessment for elective units that there will be many who experience extenuating circumstances. However, all assignments are carefully marked, and scrutinised and due attention paid to any such extenuating circumstances brought to the attention of PIABC before the date of submission.

All written papers are carefully marked, and scrutinised and due attention paid to extenuating circumstances brought to the attention of PIABC before the Examination date.

PIABC’s decision on extenuating circumstances is final and no correspondence can be entered into after the notification of results

For further information, please refer to “*Access to Assessment - Arrangements for Candidates Needing Reasonable Adjustments, Special Consideration and/or Extenuating Circumstances in the Assessment Process*”.

## 11. ASSESSMENT REVIEW AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

If candidates are concerned about their examination or project results, they should contact their Centre in the first instance. If the Centre is unable to resolve the enquiry the Centre will advise the candidate to contact PIABC. PIABC will ask the candidate to complete form Ext.ec/27.

A candidate may request a photocopy of any examination paper they have taken. Form Ext.ec/46 should be completed (fee chargeable). Candidates should be aware that examiners do not write comments on the papers.

*Clerical Re-check* - A full clerical re-check including the provision of a statement of the marks by element for an individual candidate. This service is chargeable. Form Ext.ec/27 should be completed. The Candidate 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. Form Ext.ec/27 should be completed. The Candidate will be notified of the outcome of the re-mark within 10 working days from receipt of the enquiry.

Applications by 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 **two-weeks** of the publication of results. Requests made after the two-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, lowered, or raised.

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

If you are unhappy with the results of the previous steps for the review of any examination/project, and if these have been exhausted, you may appeal.

## 12. QUALIFICATION CERTIFICATION

The full qualification is available at *Pass, Merit* or *Distinction* to candidates who successfully complete all the units.

The final qualification grade is worked out as follows:

- For all units and project achieved at a **Pass** level, 5 points are awarded towards the final Diploma grade.

- For all units and project achieved at the **Merit** level, 10 points are awarded towards the final Diploma grade.
- For all units and project achieved at the **Distinction** level, 15 points are awarded towards the final Diploma grade.

When all points are aggregated, the following will determine the overall qualification grade:

- Pass                    20 – 34 points
- Merit                    35 – 49 points
- Distinction            50+ points

### 13. AWARD

Candidates who successfully complete all assessments will receive the *PIABC Level 5 Diploma in Packaging Technology*.

If candidate pass some units, but not all, then a candidate can request to be awarded a certificate of achievement for the unit(s) that has been passed. A fee is payable for this certificate and the candidate should ask their centre co-ordinator for an “*Application for Certification of Individual Units Form*”.

Alternatively, if candidate pass some units, but not all to complete the qualification, then a candidate can request to be awarded an Award or Certificate (dependent on size of unit) in each individual unit that he/she has passed. A qualification registration fee is payable for these alternative qualification options. The candidate should talk to their centre co-ordinator about the option to be awarded alternative PIABC qualifications available for the units completed.