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**A Parent and
Student Guide to
Internal and External
Assessment
2013-2014**

Introduction

Public examinations can be a stressful time for students and parents and it is important that all those involved are as well informed as possible. Well-informed students will realise that the rules and regulations are designed to ensure fairness and minimise disturbance and it is in the interest of all that the exams run smoothly.

Liverpool Life Sciences UTC will make every effort to ensure that your son/daughter receives the best possible preparation for their examinations, that the administrative arrangements run smoothly, and that the examinations are conducted in a way that will cause as little stress as possible and help students to achieve their best. Mock exams are run to the same standards and rules in order that students are familiar with the process beforehand.

This booklet is intended to inform about examination procedures, to answer some of the most frequently asked questions to help to guide and support students and parents through the examination process.

It also contains the formal regulations that are required by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) to be given to each student.

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Who is responsible for the examinations?

Liverpool Life Sciences UTC's Exams Officer (Miss S McFarlane) is responsible for administering all public examination arrangements under direct responsibility from the Principal. The Exams Officer is assisted by Miss C McGaw. They can be contacted on 0151 230 1320 (admin@lifesciencesutc.co.uk) if you have any queries. There is a team of adult invigilators who will be present during the exams at all times. The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and Examination Boards set down strict criteria which must be followed for the conduct of exams, and the UTC is required to follow them precisely.

Who is entered for public examinations?

It is the UTC's policy to enter every student who is being taught a subject, for the most appropriate level of exam. Only by exception and after consultation with parents, will students not be entered.

Can students take holidays during term time?

Dates for exams are rigidly fixed by the Exam Boards and are subject to change until close to the time that students start study leave.

It is against UTC policy for students to take holidays in term time.

Controlled Assessments & BTEC Assignments

Most subjects have Controlled Assessment elements which have replaced coursework. Controlled assessments take place at times designated by the subject staff and are marked and assessed. Marks and work samples are then sent to the Exam Boards well before the formal exam sessions take place.

The departments/subjects set dates that allow time for this process and to meet the Exam Board deadlines. These dates cannot be changed. Students who do not attend the Controlled Assessment sessions may not be allocated a mark for this portion of the qualification and their overall grade will suffer. Students may also not be eligible for special consideration for the formal exams should they be ill as they will not have completed the minimum 35% of the course. Subject Leaders, Lead Verifiers and OSCA accredited staff are responsible for the internal moderation of coursework, controlled assessment and BTEC assignments prior to external moderation and verification. Students and parents may appeal to Subject Leaders where they believe an assessment decision is unfair. This should be submitted in the form of a letter outlining the reasons for the appeal. Subject Leaders will investigate and outline their rationale for refusing or allowing the appeal within one week of receiving the appeal letter. A further appeal can only be considered by the Principal. An annual review is carried out following external moderation and verification to ensure that all assessment activities are valid and reliable.

What arrangements are made for study leave?

Students should attend all lessons or revision sessions in the lead up to their examinations. Once examinations have ended Year 12 and 13 timetables will begin for current Year 11 and Year 12 students respectively. Current Year 13 students will leave on completion of their last exam or BTEC assignment.

What information will students receive about their examination entries?

When all the exam entries have been entered onto the UTC's computer system, the entries are submitted to the relevant Exam Board and timetables/letters are sent home to parents.

Included in the exam information sent home will be:

- **GCSE Exam Timetable**- listing all exams taking place.
- **Individual Candidate Timetable** – This lists the exams and times that your child has been entered for. *A copy of the Individual Candidate Timetable will also be given to your son/daughter in UTC.*

The Individual Candidate Timetable should be checked thoroughly. Please inform Miss S McFarlane, the Exam's Officer, within 1 week of receiving the exam timetable if you believe there are any errors or problems:

- If you think that the exam entries may be incorrect
- If your child's details (name/DOB etc) are incorrect

If a certificate has to be returned to an exam board for amendment of details, and you did not check the Individual Timetable & notify the Exams Officer of any errors you will be liable for the cost of the replacement certificate.

The current cost is £35 per certificate.

Where will the examinations be held?

The main location for exams will be in the Sports Hall or Learning Resource Centre but do check the Exam Timetable for the venue for each exam. Students are asked to be at the exam venue by **8.50 a.m. for morning exams. Timings for afternoon exams are adjusted to ensure that students can leave at the normal time. However, this is not always possible and students must check the exact time for each afternoon exam.**

They will be asked to wait quietly outside the room until invited to enter. Where a candidate sits will be determined by their surname and candidates **MUST** check the Seating Plan located on the Exam Boards to find out their Seat Number (e.g. Seat C6 = Row C, Seat 6). The candidate will sit at a desk bearing a card with their candidate number and name.

How do I know when the exams take place?

External GCSE Exams take place in November, January, March, May-June, however, Controlled Assessments take place throughout each academic year.

When parents receive the Exam Timetables it is helpful if parents make sure these timetable are kept safe at home with their son's/daughter's exams highlighted.

At what times do the exam sessions begin?

The exam boards dictate the permissible start times for exams.

Liverpool Life Sciences UTC exams will normally start at 9.30 a.m. for a morning exam and 1.30 p.m. for an afternoon exam. Candidates are asked to report no later than 8.55 a.m. for morning examinations and in plenty of time for afternoon examinations in accordance with the exact time. The length of examination papers varies and will not finish until the scheduled time. Students will not be allowed out of an exam early for any reason. Students and parents/carers should be aware of this and make appropriate arrangements for getting home. Some students may also receive an allowance of extra time for the examinations so their finishing times will be even later. If you think your child is eligible for additional time or was eligible for additional time at a previous school you should contact Mr Westwater (SEND-Co). Timings for some papers may deviate from this pattern and candidates will be made aware of this.

It is the candidates' responsibility to be aware of the start time of each exam, but parents should be warned there is a tendency for students to confuse morning and afternoon sessions. Please ensure that your son/daughter checks his/her exam commitments for each day on the previous evening.

How are students supervised?

Adult external invigilators will supervise students under the direct management of the exams officer. Once candidates enter the exam room they must remain supervised and follow the invigilators' instructions at all times. The invigilators are experienced in exams procedures and subject to strict regulations, references and police checks. They usually work in teams and can contact the exams officer to resolve any issues.

The Invigilators will call candidates into the exam venue. The students will then locate their desk with their candidate number card on it.

What happens if a student cannot find his/her place in the exam room?

Occasionally problems arise because a student's number card is not where he/she thinks it should be. There are a number of possible reasons for this and the situation has to be investigated. Your son/daughter will be asked to wait at the front for a few moments whilst the invigilator on duty in that venue checks the entry and sorts the problem out with the exams officer. Every effort is made to keep these problems to a minimum and they will not prejudice any student's chance of taking an examination for which he/she has been entered. Students who have been officially withdrawn from an examination will not be permitted to sit the papers.

What happens if a student is late?

If parents are aware that their son/daughter has got the timing of the examination wrong and has missed the starting time, they should telephone the UTC immediately.

Depending on how long the exam has been in progress, it may be possible for the student to be admitted. However, we are bound by examination board regulations on this matter. Normally candidates with a genuine reason and who are brought straight to UTC may be admitted within the first 30 minutes of the **official*** start time, after this time the board will decide whether to accept any paper sat.

Candidates who arrive more than 30 mins late may be admitted but their paper is likely not to be accepted by the Exam Board.

Candidates who arrive more than 1 hour after the start of the exam will not be admitted.

**Official start times are 9.30 a.m. for a morning session and 1.30 p.m. for an afternoon session, therefore a student arriving after 10.00 a.m. or 2.00 p.m. may be allowed to take their exam but will not receive their full time allowed. An official form will have to be submitted to the exam board who will then decide whether or not to accept the exam paper.*

What should candidates bring to the examinations?

The UTC will provide all students with the correct equipment for each of their exams. However, if your child would like to bring their own equipment they will need:

- 2 Black ball point pens
- 2 pencils
- Eraser
- Pencil sharpener (preferably one that catches the 'shavings')

Additional equipment is sometimes required, for example, coloured pencils, compass, protractor and calculator.

These items **must be placed in a clear transparent plastic bag or pencil case**. Non-transparent pencil boxes or cases will not be permitted in the examination room.

Pens should be **BLACK**.

Some subject papers will require the use of dictionaries or set texts, and candidates will be advised by their subject teachers about this.

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that they bring everything they need to the examination.

What should candidates not bring with them?

Some items are strictly banned from exam rooms and should not be brought into the examination room under any circumstances. The exam boards treat mere possession of these items as an infringement.

- **Mobile phones**
- **Personal CD/tape/minidisk players** - unless permitted for individual language exams.
- The use of **Tippex** or correction pens is not permitted. Candidates should cross through work they do not wish to be marked
- **Notes, papers and text books** etc are only allowed in certain exams and candidates will be informed by the subject teachers in advance
- Candidates should not bring **lucky mascots** etc. into the examination room
- **No food items or chewing gum are allowed**

If a candidate brings these items into the exam room they must be handed to an invigilator **before the start** of an exam, but the centre cannot be responsible for the security of these whilst the examination is in progress

May students bring a drink?

Candidates may bring a drink with them into the exam room. However this must be still water only, in a clear unlabelled plastic bottle, with a sports cap top.

What happens if a student has more than one exam at the same time?

If a candidate is timetabled to sit two or more exams at the same time this is known as a 'clash'.

If these exams are for the same subject this is intentional on the part of the exam board and the exams are meant to run one after another. If not, then this should be picked up during the checking process and notified immediately to the exams officer who can grant permission for one of the papers to be taken at a different time on the same day. The candidate will have to remain under supervision between the two papers.

If an exam is delayed from a morning to an afternoon session the candidate will be supervised during lunchtime. He/she should bring some revision or reading material along with their lunch and a drink, as they will not be allowed to buy food. Even attempting to communicate with any other candidate will invariably result in the loss of all those exams for all of the candidates involved.

In rare cases it may be necessary for a paper to be taken the next day and it is a requirement that the candidate is supervised overnight. This is essential to avoid compromising the integrity of the examination and needs to be organised well in advance.

Regulations governing the use of calculators

Some subject papers, especially Maths, explicitly prohibit the use of calculators. Candidates must not have on them or attempt to use any form of calculator for these.

Also calculators with any of the following facilities are NOT allowed:

- Noisy keys
- Data banks
- Dictionaries/Language Translators
- Permanent memory
- Use magnetic card input
- Retrieval of text or formulae
- QWERTY/alphabetic keyboards
- Built-in symbolic algebra manipulations
- Symbolic differentiation or integration
- Capability of remote communication with other machines

The use, or attempted use, of any such calculators will be regarded as malpractice.

What are the regulations regarding mobile phones?

The regulations state that mobile phones are not to be brought into examination rooms under any circumstances. They cause disturbance to other candidates if they ring and can present opportunities for malpractice.

Candidates should leave their mobile phone, MP3 player, IPOD or similar items at home. If any of these items are seen or heard during the exam, the examination papers for **ALL** subjects for your son/daughter may be cancelled.

If candidates do bring any of these items to the exam, they will be asked to switch it off and place the item into an envelope with their details on it. The envelope must then be handed to a member of staff and will be returned to the candidate at the end of the exam.

Please note that the UTC will not accept any responsibility for loss or damage.

What is meant by Malpractice?

Malpractice is the term that the exam boards use for any irregularity, or breach of any of the regulations, i.e. having a mobile phone go off in an exam, talking, using notes etc. The exams officer is required to, and will, report all malpractice to the Exam Board and they will decide on what action to take based on the nature of the infringement. Most cases of malpractice result in an automatic cancellation of the candidate's exam paper and in extreme cases may result in the cancellation of all their papers. The exam boards take the integrity of exams very seriously and it is important that candidates heed the exam officer's instructions carefully.

Malpractice also applies to the assessment of internally marked qualifications such as ASDAN or BTEC awards and the controlled assessments that may form part of GCSE qualifications. Examples of malpractice by staff include tampering with a candidate's work prior to external moderation or verification, fabricating assessment or internal verification records or authentication statements, as well as assisting a candidate with the production of assessment material outside the guidance provided by the awarding body. Examples of malpractice by students include plagiarism, collusion and refusal to abide by the instruction of an assessment. Attempted or actual malpractice will not be tolerated.

Investigations into allegations of malpractice will be coordinated by the Principal. They will ensure that an initial investigation is carried out within 10 working days of an allegation or report. The investigation will establish the full facts relating to an allegation. Potential witnesses will be interviewed and their version of events recorded.

Any member of staff accused of malpractice will be informed in writing of the allegation made against them. Evidence supporting the allegation will be shared in the letter including the possible consequences of malpractice should it be proven. This will explicitly include a written warning, a requirement for additional CPD, special conditions or suspensions such as a bar preventing the future involvement of the member of staff with internal or controlled assessment, as well as gross misconduct and potential dismissal. Neutral suspension may be invoked to allow a fair investigation. Staff will have an opportunity to consider their response, seek professional advice and submit a written statement. If malpractice is proven, the member of staff will be informed of the appeal process. Serious malpractice may be shared with the relevant awarding body, Ofqual, the police and or professional bodies such as the Teacher Agency.

If a teacher suspects a candidate of malpractice, the candidate will be informed of the allegation. Evidence supporting the allegation will be shared.. A candidate will have an opportunity to consider their response and give their version of events. If a candidate is found guilty of malpractice the awarding body will be informed. Students may or may not be allowed to repeat the assessment to which the malpractice related. Previous assignments and controlled assessment may be remarked or rejected if similar concerns are identified. A student may appeal to the Principal if found guilty of malpractice.

What happens if a student does not turn up for an examination?

A student who absents themselves from any examination without presenting a doctor's note or a satisfactory reason for a request for special consideration will receive a grade based only on those elements of the examinations which have been marked. Parents should be aware that the centre will seek to recover the exam fees if a student does not turn up for an examination and parents will be asked for the relevant payment.

How are exams started?

A member of the teaching staff will usually announce the exam formally, and students are cautioned that they are subject to the regulations. Any instructions or board notices, changes to papers etc will be read out and the candidates asked to complete their details on the answer papers.

What standards of behaviour are expected during examinations?

All candidates are given a copy of a 'notice to candidates' produced by the examining bodies, which gives general guidelines for conduct, which must be observed. The wording of this is included at the back of this booklet.

Liverpool Life Sciences UTC and the examination boards regard breaches of examination regulations very seriously. Parents/carers should please impress on your son/daughter the importance of good behaviour in an examination, as any activities that may disturb or upset other candidates will not be tolerated and your child will be penalised for this as it is malpractice.

The Principal, Exams Officer and Exam Lead have the power to remove disruptive candidates from an exam. Students are asked to wait quietly outside the exam venue, and to enter and leave in silence. This avoids disturbance to other candidates and does help to maintain a calm atmosphere for those students who are nervous about their exams.

Candidates who try to communicate with other candidates inside the exam venue, or who create a disturbance in the examination room will be asked to leave, and the circumstances will be reported to the examination board. This may result in the candidate not receiving a grade for the whole of that examination.

What should students wear for examinations?

All students must wear normal UTC uniform. We ask for the co-operation of parents in ensuring candidates are correctly dressed as we wish to avoid causing stress to candidates in the examination room by pointing out when they are not in correct uniform. All students know the uniform rules and it is their responsibility to ensure they observe them.

Students who are not wearing uniform will not be permitted to sit exams.

Candidates should bring as little as possible in the way of coats and baggage into the examination room.

What do I do if my son/daughter is unwell at the time of one of the examinations?

Even if you would not normally visit your doctor's surgery for minor illnesses it is important that you do so at examination time. Your doctor will advise as to whether your son/daughter is fit to sit the examination. If the candidate takes the paper, your doctor should give you a letter, which Liverpool Life Sciences UTC can forward to the examination board asking for special consideration on the grounds of illness. If a student is unable, through illness to sit a paper the exam board **may**, after examining the doctor's letter and any evidence of performance on other papers, decide to award a grade. It is essential that you see your doctor on the day of the examination or previously. Retrospective information is not accepted by the examination boards and any doctors' letters must be forwarded to the exams officer within 5 days **without delay**, as there is a tight deadline.

Please telephone the UTC if your son/daughter will **not** be attending an examination or if he/she will be present but is unwell. It is often helpful for the invigilator to be aware that a candidate is not feeling well. Please be aware that any medical certificate must be accompanied by a note detailing the examinations to which it refers and the date on which the papers were sat. We cannot guarantee otherwise that all relevant examinations will be covered 10

NB: There is a standard JCQ form (JCQ/ME Form14) available from the exams officer available for self-certification for a missed exam(s), which can be countersigned by your doctor/nurse or surgery receptionist. Your Doctor's surgery may make a charge for this.

What do students do who finish an exam early?

Students should use all of the available time on their exam paper and spend any time at the end checking their answers. In any event they are not permitted to leave before the end of the exam. They must sit quietly at their desk and not disturb or try to communicate with other students.

What do I need to do if a student has problems that may affect his/her examination performance?

Some candidates are eligible for extra time or special examination arrangements. These are normally identified by the UTC and appropriate applications made, supported by an educational psychologist's report, the exams officer and head of centre are empowered to grant extra time, the provision of a prompter or similar arrangements, but only given the correct evidence and at their sole discretion. Mr Westwater (SEND-Co) will make arrangements for providing any other special assistance and inform the candidates of any special rooming arrangements. If you think your child is eligible for additional time or was eligible for additional time at a previous school you should contact Mr Westwater (SEND-Co).

Any illness, or family circumstances, which may affect examination performance, arising shortly before or during the exams, should be notified as soon as possible to the exams officer so that an application for special consideration can be made to the exam boards. Parents should be aware that any adjustment is likely to be small and that no feedback is ever provided.

How can parents best help their son/daughter during the examination period?

Examinations are inevitably a stressful time for some candidates and support from both UTC and parents/carers can be helpful. Liverpool Life Sciences UTC will provide advice about revision programmes and examination techniques, and if this is followed it should not be necessary for any student to work abnormally long hours during the revision period. It is probably helpful to discuss with your son/daughter how he/she intends to organise revision and to talk through any anxieties about particular techniques or subject matter. Testing knowledge of factual material can benefit the student if such help is requested, but often all that is needed is a quiet place to work and lots of encouragement. Students should get plenty of sleep and some opportunities for relaxation.

What happens about the return of centre books and equipment at the end of the examination period?

Students will have been informed by subject departments, of the arrangements for the return of books etc. Please ensure that all textbooks and equipment are returned promptly to the UTC.

When and how are the results distributed?

GCE results are released the 2nd Thursday in August and GCSE results are released the 3rd Thursday in August.

Collection on Day: Results will normally be available for collection between 10.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m.

Results will not be given over the telephone under any circumstances.

If your child is not available to come and collect results an immediate family member (parent/sibling) over 18yrs of age may collect the results on their behalf- although they **MUST** bring ID and a letter signed by the candidate giving permission for their results to be collected.

By Post: Any students not intending to collect their results in person should leave a stamped addressed envelope, with the exams officer Miss S McFarlane before the end of the Summer Term. **The envelope must be A4 size and must have a large letter stamp on it.** Result slips not collected or posted on results day will be retained in UTC for collection at the start of term, again with the necessary authority.

What can I do if results are substantially different from what is anticipated?

It must be remembered that examinations can only measure performance on the day, and that candidates can do better or worse than anticipated for a variety of reasons. It is advisable to obtain a copy of the script and mark scheme before proceeding to an EAR (enquiry about result) that is very expensive. If there are serious grounds for concern about a result then the UTC can initiate an enquiry with the appropriate exam board. Details of the procedures and the fees involved are available from the exams officer and the process should be started as soon as possible after consultation with the Subject Leader concerned. If the results have serious implications for the student's future plans then advice should be sought from the careers service.

When do students receive certificates?

Students will receive their BTEC certificates on Results Day. All other certificates will be given to students on Presentation Evening in November 2015. It is very important that you collect your certificates after the Presentation Evening if you are unable to attend. Certificates are only retained for one year after which they will be destroyed. Replacement certificates are available by direct application to the exam boards by the candidate. The exam boards will require proof of identity such as an original birth certificate and a substantial fee, currently £35.00, per certificate.

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