

# Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers



## WCSM AWARDING ORGANISATION CUSTOMER SERVICE STATEMENT

This statement is written for the benefit of students who are studying for and taking WCSM qualifications. It outlines the services that students can expect, from the Examination and Registration Department of the Association of British Dispensing Opticians ("ABDO") who will conduct the examinations on behalf of WCSM.

**As announced in March 2019, the last main sitting of WCSM examinations will be in December 2019, with 3 resit opportunities provided after that, up to 31 March 2021.**

The WCSM aims to reach the highest standards possible in awarding professional qualifications.

The WCSM and its agents aim to provide an efficient, accurate and friendly service in all areas of this activity.

## **WCSM qualifications**

For all information about WCSM qualifications please telephone or e-mail Linda Pogson or Sarah Curtis in the ABDO Examinations & Registration team:

Tel: 01227 732925

Email: [lpogson@abdo.org.uk](mailto:lpogson@abdo.org.uk)

[scurtis@abdo.org.uk](mailto:scurtis@abdo.org.uk)

ABDO can provide:

- examination syllabuses, application forms, fees, contact information, and guidance information.
- updates and other relevant information.
- administrative support for enquiries regarding matters relating to the Examinations Department.
- relevant information on qualifications, syllabuses, practical guidelines, as appropriate.
- a definitive website where examination and fee information can be accessed.
- a monitoring service on all aspects of practical examinations by visiting external examination locations.
- questionnaires to students relating to the services provided.
- the opportunity for students to feedback to WCSM on Examination and Registration matters.
- information on how students can sit theory/practical examinations overseas at an independent venue.

## **Equal Opportunities**

WCSM is committed to giving everyone who wants to gain a qualification an equal opportunity to access qualifications and be assessed, in line with current UK legislation and EU directives. Action will be taken to:

- promote practice and procedures that give equal opportunities to everyone, regardless of their age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity
- remove direct and indirect practices and procedures that discriminate unfairly
- widen access to our qualifications to ensure that people who are under-represented can be encouraged and included
- set qualification standards according to equal opportunities best practice

Acting on behalf of WCSM, ABDO will deliver:

- advice that is sensitive to candidates' needs
- assessments that do not discriminate against anyone
- documents that are easily understood, and that do not reflect a stereotyped, offensive or biased attitude
- promotional material that reflects the diversity of candidates
- quality assurance that applies fair processes

- information to candidates about how to obtain and use the Equal Opportunities Policy and the Complaints and Appeals Procedure
- Units, qualifications designed, developed and regularly reviewed to ensure that they will:
  - be explicit about what is to be assessed
  - include assessment that is fit for purpose
  - allow where possible a variety of forms of assessment
  - be free from offensive or stereotypical language and images
- assessment that will make reasonable adjustments for candidates with particular assessment requirements and, where appropriate, grant special considerations for disability or unforeseen circumstances such as sudden illness.

The administration of WCSM examinations will ensure that there will be no discrimination in respect of the protected characteristics listed above.

A copy of this policy will be issued to all examiners and moderators, and is readily available to anyone else who might want one by contacting the ABDO Examinations Office.

WCSM, as the Awarding Organisation, will review the effectiveness of this policy annually.

### **Communications**

ABDO's Examination offices are open from 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday (excluding UK public holidays) to answer any queries directly. An answering service is available and all calls will be picked up the next working day. (For telephone numbers and email details, see above).

Most of the standard information about WCSM Qualifications and Examinations can be found on the ABDO website - [www.abdo.org.uk](http://www.abdo.org.uk).

Syllabi in the form of qualifications handbooks are available from the WCSM website: [www.spectaclemakers.com](http://www.spectaclemakers.com)

### **Fees & Invoicing**

Details on current fees may be obtained from the ABDO Examinations Office.

Tel: 01227 732925 Email: [lpogson@abdo.org.uk](mailto:lpogson@abdo.org.uk)

Fees for examinations will be due when candidates register for an examination or assessment.

### **Recognition of Prior Learning**

RPL may relate to other qualifications or units previously achieved from WCSM qualifications, experience undertaken in the workplace or even as a volunteer.

Candidates who wish to claim RPL will need to complete an application form which is available from the ABDO Examinations Office. RPL will only be considered for awards achieved during the previous five years, and the claim needs to match the unit for which they are claiming exemption. The subject matter must also be directly relevant.

Once the application form has been completed, ABDO Examinations Office will review the claim, referring to the WCSM, and respond to the candidate within 14 days.

If transferring credits from another WCSM qualification or ABDO programme, then there is no fee. However, claims for RPL from qualifications accredited by another Awarding Organisation may incur a £50 administrative fee.

## **Applications**

Application forms for WCSM examinations will be available on the ABDO website at least three months prior to the examination date. Forms will automatically be sent to those known to be studying on a course of preparatory training through ABDO College.

All application forms should be returned, with payment for the examination fee, to the Examinations Office at ABDO no later than two months before the date of the examination.

Applications will be acknowledged within fourteen days and each candidate will receive a copy of this leaflet as well as a copy of the *WCSM Examination Handbook & Regulations*.

## **Examination Venues and Online Assessment**

It is the Awarding Organisation's general policy to try to reduce the cost to candidates and/or their employers of sitting its examinations by offering the option of e-assessment from within the candidate's own workplace, subject to confirmation of systems capability. This is available for all examinations other than Level 4 Diplomas.

For Level 4 Diplomas and for candidates who do not have internet access or support to be able to take examinations online, examinations will be offered where there is sufficient "local" demand and a suitable venue. Candidates are warned that there is no guarantee that examinations will be held in any venue other than London or, for practical examinations, Godmersham Park.

Examinations for qualifications accredited to the Scottish Credits & Qualifications Framework will only be held in Scotland.

## **Requests for Special Considerations**

Claims for Special Considerations may be submitted for unforeseen circumstances that create a disadvantage on the day of the examination and create a disadvantage for the candidate (e.g. a bereavement, temporary illness, traffic accident, domestic emergency, problems/faults at the examination venue).

A candidate who arrives at an examination venue more than 30 minutes after the start of the examination will normally be denied entry. If the Awarding Organisation subsequently judges that there were mitigating circumstances behind that late arrival, it may, after reviewing the evidence, allow the candidate to sit the examination at the next available opportunity free of charge. Requests for such consideration must be sent to the ABDO Examinations Office within 7 days of the examination.

A candidate who attends and completes the examination on time, but feels that his or her performance was impaired by an unforeseen and unforeseeable change in personal circumstances occurring before the examination that seriously affected his or her ability to prepare for it, should inform the Awarding Organisation within 7 days after the examination. Such an application must be accompanied by supporting evidence, including where appropriate, documentation from the employer and/or GP.

Receipt of a claim for special consideration will be acknowledged immediately, and the Awarding Organisation will endeavour to provide a definitive response within a month, and preferably alongside publication of the examination results.

### **Requests for Reasonable Adjustments**

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

1. Requests for adjustments to the assessment process or conditions should be requested on the 'Reasonable Adjustments' form and forwarded to the Head of Examinations & Registration, ABDO Examinations Office.
2. Requests must be received within 28 days of the examination.
3. All requests are reviewed and assessed by the Head of Examinations and Registration in consultation with the Awarding Organisation.

The Application Form should be signed by the student with the justification attached, (e.g. statement by the GP, consultant, optometrist or other appropriately qualified professional practitioner).

### **Enquiries**

Enquiries regarding all aspects of the WCSM's qualifications, or the Awarding Organisation's policies and procedures, specific examination results, including requests for a review of marking or a requests for "feedback" from an examiner on answers submitted must be lodged with the ABDO Examinations Office within six weeks of the results being notified.

All enquiries will be acknowledged upon receipt. There is a fee of £35 for any feedback requests. It is the Awarding Organisation's policy that all enquiries should be answered within a month of receipt of any fee payable.

### **Complaints**

If you wish to make a complaint regarding the Awarding Body's processes or procedures or ABDO Examinations' conduct during the examinations, your complaint should be sent in writing (by post or by email) to the Head of Examinations and Registration at ABDO. It should clearly state the nature of the complaint. Once received it will be acknowledged within 48 hours.

It is the Awarding Organisation's policy that a definitive answer will be given to each complaint within a month.

### **Who to contact:**

Mark Chandler – Head of Examinations & Registration  
01227 732920 Email: [mchandler@abdo.org.uk](mailto:mchandler@abdo.org.uk)

### **Appeals**

Typically, appeals will focus on whether or not the Awarding Organisation's procedures were consistent, and were applied correctly and fairly.

An appeal against examination results must set out the grounds for the appeal clearly and in detail and, if it has not been preceded by an enquiry, it should be lodged with the ABDO Examinations Office within a month of the results being notified. A fee of £35 will be payable on receipt, which will be refunded if the appeal is upheld.

It is the Awarding Organisation's policy that a definitive answer will be given to each appeal within a month of receipt of the fee payable.

Enquiries, complaints and appeals can only be accepted in relation to examinations and the conduct of WCSM as an Awarding Organisation and ABDO Examinations as its provider of registration and administration services. WCSM cannot respond to any issues relating to training, over which it has no control. Candidates are reminded that WCSM does not approve or endorse any specific training course and examination results can only be based on WCSM assessments. No account will be taken of marks for coursework undertaken during training with any third party provider.

### **Results and certificates**

The Awarding Organisation will endeavour to send out results of examinations 7 weeks after the date of the examination. For Level 4 Diplomas, this will be usually be the date of the practical assessment.

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

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

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

Certificates are currently produced once a year, in October, and will be sent out by post or presented in person. Further details of arrangements for presentation will accompany examination results.

### **Replacement of Incorrect or Damaged Certificates**

Requests for replacement certificates must be made to The Administrator, WCSM, Apothecaries' Hall, London EC4V 6EL. An administrative charge of £30 will be payable. Replacements are issued within one month of receiving the request and payment.

### **Replacement of lost Certificates and changes of name/gender identification**

A request to replace a lost certificate or change the name on a certificate will be acknowledged immediately, but no action will be taken until the Awarding Organisation has obtained proof of the claimant's identity and satisfied itself as to the circumstances. Requests must be made to The Administrator, WCSM, Apothecaries' Hall, London EC4V 6EL. An administrative charge of £30 will be payable.

### **Subject Access Requests under GDPR**

Under the General Data Protection Regulation, you can ask to see information held about you by ABDO Examinations and WCSM.

Please note that there are certain exemptions in relation to examinations scripts and marks. For more information, see the Privacy Statement and information issued by WCSM and ABDO Examinations.

### **Further contact details**

If you wish to comment on this statement or any service offered by the WCSM, or in regards to the examinations conducted on our behalf by ABDO, then please contact the following:

Mark Chandler – Head of Examinations & Registration  
01227 732920 Email: [mchandler@abdo.org.uk](mailto:mchandler@abdo.org.uk)

Nickie Chapman - WCSM Administrator  
020 7236 2932 Email: [administrator@spectaclemakers.com](mailto:administrator@spectaclemakers.com)