

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY, REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS, AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATION POLICY

1. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

1.1 Statement of principle

1.1.1 The University's statement of Equal Opportunities and Monitoring reads as follows:

'...the University is committed to promoting equality and social justice. We wish to ensure that access to higher education is widened to enable more people to enjoy the opportunity it offers. These principles apply to all members of the University, both staff and students alike.'

This statement, suitably modified, forms the basis of LCME's Equal Opportunities policy. Furthermore, entry for the examinations is available, and assessment is carried out, on an equal and fair basis to all candidates, regardless of origin, status or background.

1.1.2 This policy aims to ensure that LCM Examinations (LCME) complies, in all procedures related to candidates, reps, examiners, and office staff, with the relevant legislation in this area. It is designed to prevent any instances of direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

1.2 Eligibility for examination

1.2.1 Candidates of any age may enter for examination. The exception is for Diplomas in Teaching, where minimum age requirements are detailed in the syllabus.

1.2.2 Candidates must have attained any pre-requisite qualifications (approved prior learning) as detailed in the syllabus, at the time of entry. (Proof of certification will be required for qualifications not awarded by LCME).

1.2.3 There are no other restrictions on entry.

1.2.4 Space will be given on entry forms for candidates to include all information necessary to confirm their eligibility for examination.

1.3 Equality of access to examinations

1.3.1 Criteria by which applicants are accepted for examination, and assessed, will be:

- fair
- consistently applied
- open
- congruent with the University Equal Opportunities Policy

1.3.2 In no circumstances will any candidate be accepted for, or rejected from, examination, either wholly or partly on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, class, or employment status.

- 1.3.3 In carrying out assessment and awarding marks, the sole point of reference for examiners is the degree of mastery demonstrated by the candidate in relation to the tasks set for the examination. Any evidence that assessment has been affected by other factors, such as those listed in 1.3.2 above, constitutes grounds for appeal (see Section 1.5 below), and will be treated with the utmost seriousness.
- 1.3.4 Candidates will need to be aware that all examinations are conducted using English as the language of communication.
- 1.3.5 Documents, publications and syllabuses produced by LCME will use inclusive language and avoid stereotyping.

1.4 Staff responsibility

- 1.4.1 The centre representative, who collates entries locally, is responsible for ensuring that equality of access is maintained at the local centre level. However, the centre representative has no responsibility for accepting or rejecting entries on any grounds whatsoever; their role is purely administrative. Any such concerns should be referred in the first instance to the Senior Examinations Officer, who may in turn refer to the relevant Chief Examiner.
- 1.4.2 Entries are collected online and collated by the centre representative in conjunction with the Senior Examinations Officer. At this stage, any concerns about eligibility arising from pre-requisite qualifications or minimum age requirements are referred to the relevant Chief Examiner for adjudication.
- 1.4.3 To deal fairly with candidates and in order to avoid discrimination, staff need:
- clear policy and guidelines to work to, supported by staff development
 - knowledge of the syllabus and application literature
 - to be aware of the relevant legislation
 - a network of sources of information and help – named contacts in the LCME office, the University and beyond
 - at all stages to be helpful and courteous
- 1.4.4 Ultimate responsibility for maintaining equality of access, and for monitoring this policy, rests with the Head of Examinations. Appropriate action will be taken against any member of staff who is shown to have compromised LCM's policy as set out in this document.

1.5 Enquiries and appeals regarding equality of opportunity

- 1.5.1 Enquiries may be made by candidates either prior to application for examination, or after an application for examination has been rejected, and/or in relation to the conduct of an examination or the mark awarded.
- 1.5.2 Enquiries regarding equality of access and eligibility for examination prior to the examination taking place are dealt with in the first instance by the Senior Examinations Officer. If the enquiry cannot be resolved, it is referred to the relevant Chief Examiner.
- 1.5.3 Enquiries regarding assessments already carried out are subject to the standard Enquiries and Appeals procedure.

For the purposes of this document, 'staff' refers to examiners and centre representatives, as well as Examinations Department staff employed or contracted by UWL.

1.6 Confidentiality

- 1.6.1 Information given by candidates at the time of application will be treated in confidence. The University is subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

1.6.2 Information will be collected only regarding aspects of the individual which have a specific bearing on eligibility for examination, or which are required for certification, or which are required for compliance with criteria laid down by the regulatory authorities.

1.7 Examiners and representatives

1.7.1 Criteria by which examiners and representatives are appointed will be:

- fair
- consistently applied
- open
- congruent with the University Equal Opportunities Policy

1.7.2 In no circumstances will any examiner or representative be denied appointment, or prevented from carrying out their duties, either wholly or partly on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, class, or employment status.

1.8 Office staff

1.8.1 Staff working in the LCME office, whether employed or otherwise contracted by UWL, are subject to the University Equal Opportunities Policy (available from the HR office, or via the UWL Intranet).

2. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

2.1 Introduction and general guidelines

2.1.1 LCME is particularly sensitive to candidates with particular needs, and encourages them to enter for examinations.

2.1.2 Where necessary, the needs of candidates are addressed on a case-by-case basis, and all appropriate and reasonable steps are taken to ensure that any special requirements which they may have are put into place, while at the same time maintaining the full rigour of the examination itself.

2.1.3 Information about particular needs must be made available to LCME at the time of entry. This should be in the form of a written explanation of the candidate's requirements, along with a request for any particular alteration to standard examination procedure as appropriate. Documentary evidence relating to the candidate's requirement from an authorised source, such as a doctor, psychotherapist or psychologist, etc., must also be included. Such information will be treated by LCME as confidential, and will not be divulged to outside sources.

2.1.4 It should be noted that, if such information is not included at the time of entry, LCME cannot guarantee to ensure that appropriate procedures are put in place.

2.1.5 Information, requests and documentary evidence must be submitted for each subsequent entry of the same candidate in order for appropriate provision to be put in place.

2.1.6 Reasonable adjustments will be determined prior to examination. Assessment will always be carried out purely in relation to the degree of mastery demonstrated by the candidate in the examination.

2.1.7 Further correspondence about reasonable adjustments should be addressed to the Chief Examiner in Music, or the Chief Examiner in Drama and Communication, as appropriate.

2.2 Practical Examinations

2.2.1 General

2.2.1.1 Copyright law must be adhered to in the case of photocopied music or texts, or alternative editions. Copies may need to be destroyed after the examination.

2.2.1.2 Certain questions in discussion and aural test components may be tailored to the needs of candidates' understanding if there is clear evidence of their difficulties in conceptualising certain terms or ideas.

2.2.1.3 In music examinations, candidates who are unable to offer any of Components 1, 3, 4 or 5 may use the Recital option or elect to take Leisure Play examinations, where these components are not required.

2.2.2 Blind and partially sighted candidates

2.2.2.1 Sightreading/unseen extracts, and extracts used in the music aural tests, may be given using photo-enlarged or otherwise modified print (including the use of different colours of print and/or background, reverse black/white printing, etc.). Teachers, parents/guardians or candidates should advise LCME of the preferred format, enclosing a specimen if possible.

2.2.2.2 In the performance component of music, drama and communication or spoken English exams, candidates may use their own specially prepared copies of the music/text, including Braille versions, provided the original published editions are also available in the examination room.

2.2.2.3 In music exams, candidates may elect for the sightreading test to be replaced by a memory test. In this, the examiner will play a short extract of music three times, which the candidate is required to play back on their instrument. Specimen tests are available from the LCME office.

2.2.2.4 In music exams, the questions in the discussion will be asked with reference to the scores used by the candidate (Braille music, modified stave notation or any individual system). Candidates playing by ear will still be expected to demonstrate a working knowledge of the symbols used in stave notation, appropriate to the grade. The candidate may be requested to respond by playing/singing.

2.2.2.5 In music exams, aural tests involving the reading of music notation will be provided in the candidate's preferred score format (Braille music, modified stave notation or any individual system). For those playing purely by ear, tests may be adapted to be administered aurally.

2.2.2.6 Where possible, special arrangements may be made for lighting in the examination room.

2.2.2.7 Candidates can expect examiners to be clear in their verbal directions, and to be prepared to assist them in moving around the room if requested. Alternatively, a suitable person, such as a parent or teacher, may be allowed to be present in the examination room to escort the candidate. Such a person may take no active part in the examination process. This concession may at no stage be used as the basis of any complaint or appeal in respect of the examination.

2.2.2.8 Extra time of not more than 25% may be allotted where necessary.

2.2.3 Deaf and hard of hearing candidates

2.2.3.1 A sign-language interpreter may be allowed to be present in the examination room. Such a person may take no active part in the examination process. This concession may at no stage be used as the basis of any complaint or appeal in respect of the examination.

2.2.3.2 In music exams, aural tests may be pre-recorded using certain instrumental or synthesised timbres and/or at a higher volume and/or at alternative pitches.

2.2.3.3 The examiner may be forewarned about the need to speak clearly and distinctly at an appropriate volume, to look directly at the candidate when speaking in order to facilitate lip-reading, and to repeat instructions if requested to do so by the candidate.

2.2.3.4 Instructions from the examiner may be written rather than spoken.

2.2.3.5 It is not the policy of LCME to remove or replace the aural tests in music exams.

2.2.3.6 Extra time of not more than 25% may be allotted where necessary.

2.2.4 Dyslexic and dyspraxic candidates

2.2.4.1 Sightreading/unseen extracts, and extracts used in the music aural tests, may be given using photo-enlarged or otherwise modified print (including the use of different colours, reverse black/white printing, etc.). Teachers, parents/guardians or candidates should advise LCME of the preferred format, enclosing a specimen if possible.

2.2.4.2 In the performance component of music exams, or the corresponding component of drama & communication exams, candidates may use their own specially prepared copies of the music, provided the original editions of the music are also available in the examination room.

2.2.4.3 In music exams, candidates may elect for the sightreading test to be replaced by a memory test. In this, the examiner will play a short extract of music three times, which the candidate is required to play back on their instrument. Specimen tests are available from the LCME office.

2.2.4.4 In music exams, where candidates use individually-prepared scores (modified stave notation, photo-enlarged, or any other individual system), the questions in the discussion will be asked with reference to these scores. Candidates playing by ear will still be expected to demonstrate a working knowledge of the symbols used in stave notation, appropriate to the grade. Those elements of the aural tests which involve the candidate reading from printed music may be adapted accordingly.

2.2.4.5 Special arrangements may be made for lighting in the examination room.

2.2.4.6 The examiner may be forewarned about the need to speak clearly and distinctly at an appropriate volume, and to repeat instructions if requested to do so by the candidate, or if the candidate does not respond initially to the instruction.

2.2.4.7 A suitable person, such as a parent or teacher, may be allowed to be present in the examination room. Such a person may take no active part in the examination process. This concession may at no stage be used as the basis of any complaint or appeal in respect of the examination.

2.2.4.8 Extra time of not more than 25% may be allotted where necessary.

2.2.5 Candidates with behavioural difficulties, learning difficulties or Attention Deficit Disorder

2.2.5.1 The examiner may be forewarned about the need to speak clearly and distinctly at an appropriate volume, and to repeat instructions if requested to do so by the candidate, or if the candidate does not respond initially to the instruction.

2.2.5.2 A suitable person, such as a parent or teacher, may be allowed to be present in the examination room. Such a person may take no active part in the examination process. However, they may repeat questions or instructions given by the examiner, and they may reassure or comfort the candidate if necessary. This concession may at no stage be used as the basis of any complaint or appeal in respect of the examination.

2.2.5.3 Extra time of not more than 25% may be allotted where necessary.

2.2.6 Candidates whose first language is not English

2.2.6.1 The examiner may be forewarned about the need to speak clearly and distinctly at an appropriate volume, and to repeat instructions if requested to do so by the candidate, or if the candidate does not respond initially to the instruction.

2.2.6.2 For music examinations only, an interpreter may be allowed to be present in the examination room. The interpreter may translate the examiner's requests and instructions, and the candidate's spoken responses. Other than this, they may take no further active part in the examination procedure. This concession may at no stage be used as the basis of any complaint or appeal in respect of the examination.

2.2.6.3 Extra time of not more than 25% may be allotted where necessary.

2.2.7 Candidates requiring wheelchair access

2.2.7.1 Every effort will be made to accommodate such candidates. Candidates will need to liaise directly with the centre representative.

2.2.7.2 Extra time of not more than 25% may be allotted where necessary.

2.3 Written examinations

2.3.1 Examination papers may be prepared using a variety of formats, including photo-enlarged or reduced print, different fonts, colours, print styles, Braille, etc. Teachers, parents/guardians or candidates should advise LCME of the preferred format, enclosing a specimen if possible.

2.3.2 Candidates may answer questions using a laptop computer (for music exams, the use of music notation software, as well as word-processing software, will be necessary). Arrangements must be made for the candidate to either print out the answers and hand them in to the invigilator, or email the answers as file attachments directly to the LCME office, before leaving the examination venue.

2.3.3 Candidates who require to speak their responses to an amanuensis may do so in a separate room with a separate invigilator. The amanuensis may not be the candidate's teacher or a relative. All graphic responses and symbols should be described clearly to the amanuensis, rather than referred to by their name. The amanuensis is required to remain strictly neutral, and the invigilator is required to ensure this.

2.3.4 Arrangements may be made for candidates to take their examination in a room separate from other candidates.

2.3.5 Special arrangements may be made for lighting in the examination room.

2.3.6 A suitable person, such as a parent or teacher, may be allowed to be present in the examination room to escort and/or reassure the candidate. Such a person may take no active part in the examination process; nor may they disturb other candidates. This concession may at no stage be used as the basis of any complaint or appeal in respect of the examination.

2.3.7 The invigilator may be forewarned about the need to speak clearly and distinctly at an appropriate volume, and to repeat instructions if requested to do so by the candidate, or if the candidate does not respond initially to the instruction.

2.3.8 Every effort will be made to accommodate candidates who require wheelchair access. Candidates will need to liaise directly with the centre representative.

2.3.9 Extra time of not more than 25% may be allotted where necessary.

3. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS POLICY

- 3.1 Candidates who are unable to take an examination at the scheduled time, for medical reasons, are invited to submit a signed doctor's letter or other medical evidence indicating the reason, and accompanied by the attendance notice, to the Senior Examinations Officer. The letter must be submitted within two weeks of the examination date, and must make clear that the candidate was incapacitated on the day of the scheduled examination. The candidate will then be permitted to re-enter for the same examination on payment of half the current fee.
- 3.2 Candidates who are unable to take an examination due to an unforeseen event with serious emotional implications, such as family bereavement or illness, separation from a partner, etc., are invited to write a letter, accompanied by the attendance notice, to the Senior Examinations Officer, indicating the reason, and enclosing documentary evidence if possible, within two weeks of the examination date. On consideration of their case, the candidate may be permitted to re-enter for the same examination on payment of half the current fee, or in exceptional circumstances for no fee at the discretion of the Head of Examinations.
- 3.3 Candidates who are unwell, or suffering from emotional stress, on the day of the examination, but elect to take the exam nonetheless, cannot be granted any special consideration in terms of assessment. Candidates who fail to complete an examination will not normally be given the opportunity to complete it at a later stage. Components of an examination which are not attempted will be awarded 0, and an aegrotat award will not be made.
- 3.4 Candidates should be aware that centre representatives are under no obligation to re-timetable examinations as a result of illness, bereavement etc. On no account should examiners be approached directly about such matters.