**Appeals Policy and Procedure**

**Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy and Procedure**

**Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure**

**Appeals Policy and Procedure**

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**1. Scope**

1.01 This policy and procedure details how a learner registered on a HOPEFIELDS product can appeal against a judgement or decision made by HOPEFIELDS. This policy and procedure is applicable to decisions regarding HOPEFIELDS qualifications, non-regulated courses and endorsed programmes.

**1.02 This document does not apply to decisions regarding Centre, qualification or staff approval applications. The decisions made by HOPEFIELDS regarding these applications cannot be appealed.**

1.03 If an appellant is managed by or registered with a HOPEFIELDS subsidiary or Delivery Partner, then they must contact that organisation directly regarding their appeal. The organisation will follow this policy and procedure and respond to appeal applications on behalf of HOPEFIELDS. Individuals who are affected by this should replace references to HOPEFIELDS with the relevant subsidiary or Delivery Partner throughout this document.

1.04 The intended audience for this document is:

a)  HOPEFIELDS Directors.

b)  HOPEFIELDS core, sub-contracted and associate staff, including External Quality Assurers (EQAs).

c)  All staff of HOPEFIELDS subsidiaries and Delivery Partners associated with HOPEFIELDS provision.

d)  All staff in HOPEFIELDS recognised and partner centres.

e) Learners registered on a HOPEFIELDS qualification or non-regulated course or programme.

f)  Qualification Regulators.

g)  Industry Regulators.

**2. Purpose**

2.01 The purpose of this document is to:

a)  Ensure that decisions made by HOPEFIELDS are applied fairly, consistently and based on valid judgements.

b)  Outline the judgements or decisions made by HOPEFIELDS which can be appealed.

c)  Outline the procedure for how an individual can appeal against an applicable decision or judgement.

d)  Outline the potential outcomes following HOPEFIELDS review of an appeal.

e)  Satisfy the Conditions of Recognition by the various Qualification Regulators.

**3. Policy**

3.01 HOPEFIELDS aim to ensure that all of the decisions made by its staff and representatives are fair, consistent, based on valid judgements and are in line with HOPEFIELDS’s policies and procedures. The Appeals Policy and Procedure allow for a learner to submit an appeal where they believe that HOPEFIELDS has not applied its policies or procedures properly, fairly or consistently.

3.02 Where a learner wishes to appeal a decision made by a Centre, the learner must appeal and exhaust the Centre’s own appeals procedure first. HOPEFIELDS can only hear appeals regarding the delivery and assessment activities of HOPEFIELDS products and cannot hear appeals regarding other factors, such as Centre fees.

3.03 HOPEFIELDS cannot accept appeals from third parties, such as employers or a relative of a learner, unless the learner is in exceptional circumstances. These individuals may wish to refer to the HOPEFIELDS Complaints Policy and Procedure. Where it is deemed acceptable by HOPEFIELDS, the appellant will be requested to provide written confirmation of the learner’s wishes to be represented in the appeal to allow it to be heard.

3.04 Under this policy, learners can appeal to HOPEFIELDS regarding decisions made surrounding the training, assessment and quality assurance of HOPEFIELDS regulated qualifications, non-regulated provision and endorsed programmes. This includes, but may not be limited to, decisions or judgements regarding:

a)  The examination result of a learner

b)  A Centre-marked assessment.

c)  HOPEFIELDS moderation2 or verification3 of a Centre marked assessment.

d)  An application for reasonable adjustment or special consideration.

e)  Validity of a HOPEFIELDS assessment.

f)  Application of a Sanction, including Centre withdrawal. Please note that centres cannot appeal Sanctions which have been applied for inactivity or for financial reasons.

3.05 If an individual wishes to appeal a decision made by HOPEFIELDS which is outside of the types above, the individual should contact HOPEFILEDS in the first instance for advice on whether an appeal can be heard. In the majority of cases, the HOPEFIELDS Complaints Policy and Procedure will apply instead.

**I. Appeal Reviewers**

3.06 HOPEFIELDS offers a **2-stage** appeals procedure. The first stage must be completed before progression to the second stage. The two stages are referred to as:

a) **Stage 1 – Appeal.** This is the first stage of the appeal process and will allow for HOPEFIELDS to conduct its own review of the appellant’s case.

b) **Stage 2 – Independent Review.** This stage allows for there to be an independent assessment of the appellant’s case.

3.07 At Stage 1 of the appeal procedure, HOPEFIELDS will ensure that the decision maker is an appropriate and competent individual who was not involved in the making of the original decision.

3.08 At Stage 2 of the appeal procedure, the appeal will be heard by at least two individuals. The first will be a member of the HOPEFIELDS Quality Assurance Committee, who was not involved in the making of the original decision or in Stage 1 of the appeal procedure. The second individual will be an independent reviewer who is not an employee or Assessor of HOPEFIELDS, or otherwise connected to it, outside of their role in reviewing the appeal.

3.09 At both stages of the appeal procedure, HOPEFIELDS will carefully select its appeal reviewers to ensure that no decision regarding an appeal is made by an individual who has a personal interest in its outcome. This will be ensured and monitored through the HOPEFIELDS Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure.

**II. Applicable Fees**

3.10 There are applicable fees at both stages of the appeal procedure. A full list of fees can be found within the HOPEFIELDS Fees and Charges document, available on the HOPEFIELDS website. HOPEFIELDS is not responsible for any loss of income or any other monetary ramification that may occur for the appellant, or for their business, before, during or after the appeals procedure. All fees paid for by the appellant are non-refundable, unless their appeal is upheld at any stage or if it is deemed as not in scope. In this case, the appeal fee will be refunded.

3.11 Upon receipt of an appeal, HOPEFIELDS will request that the appropriate payment is made from the appellant. For centres, HOPEFIELDS will produce an invoice in line with its standard invoicing procedure. Learners should contact the HOPEFIELDS Finance Team for further information and guidance regarding available payment options.

3.12 The appeal will not be reviewed by HOPEFIELDS until confirmation has been received from the HOPEFIELDS Finance Team that the appropriate appeal fee payment has been made. Please note that timescales in this policy will not be adhered to where there is a delay in, or failure of, payment. Any new timescales will be communicated to the appellant via email from the Quality Assurance Team once payment has been received.

**4. Stage 1 – Appeals Regarding Examination Results**

4.01 To submit an appeal at Stage 1, the appellant must email HOPEFIELDS detailing the nature of the appeal **within 20 working days** of the examination result being issued. The email must be submitted to info@hopefieldseducation.co.uk

4.02 Regarding written examinations, there are two types of appeal available:

a)  Remark of script – a subject expert, differing from the original marker, will re-mark the script.

**OR**

b)  An individual feedback report and remark of script – a subject expert will review the learner’s examination and will provide a comprehensive feedback report on areas of strength and outline areas for learning and development. The feedback will not provide feedback on responses to individual questions. The learner’s script will also be re- marked.

4.03 In submitting their appeal, the appellant must:

a)  State the reason(s) for their appeal.

b)  Be aware that their appeal may result in their result/grade being lowered.

c)  Provide the original certificate (where one has been issued) or a copy of the official notification of results from HOPEFIELDS

d)  ***Centre only:*** Provide a signed declaration by the learner confirming their wishes to appeal.

e)  ***Learner only:*** Provide a copy of photographic identification.

4.04 HOPEFIELDS will provide acknowledgement to the appellant within **5 working days** of receipt of their appeal.

4.05 HOPEFIELDS will aim to respond to all appeals **within 20 working days** from its acknowledgement, however, there may be instances where this is not possible. Where timeframes are required to be extended by HOPEFIELDS, the appellant will be informed of the new timeframes by HOPEFIELDS via email.

4.06 There are three possible outcomes to the appeal regarding an examination result:

a)  The examination result is confirmed.

b)  The examination result is upgraded, for example, from a fail to pass. HOPEFIELDS will amend its records and, where applicable, will issue any due certificates. HOPEFIELDS will issue a refund of the appeal charge.

c)  The examination result is downgraded. The revoking of a certificate will depend on the new examination result.

4.07 If the original result is downgraded or ratified, then the appellant may wish to progress their appeal to **Stage 2**. HOPEFIELDS will provide the appellant with instructions regarding appealing at Stage 2 in the correspondence from the outcome of Stage 1. For further information, refer to Section 6.

a)  For written examinations: An individual feedback report – a subject expert will review the learner’s examination and will provide a comprehensive feedback report on areas of strength and outline areas for learning and development (charges apply).

b)  For Multiple-choice examinations: A free administration check of multiple-choice examinations where this is not electronically marked.

**5. Stage1–All Other Appeals**

5.01 Dependent on the circumstances regarding an appeal, HOPEFIELDS may be able to provide a learner with clarification or evidence to support their original decision. The provision of this information may negate the need for an appeal and therefore individuals should contact HOPEFIELDS in the first instance to see if the issue can be informally resolved.

5.02 If the individual is still not satisfied, they can submit an appeal at Stage 1 to HOPEFIELDS (see 3.04). To submit an appeal at Stage 1, the appellant must email the HOPEFIELDS in the first instance **within 20 working days** of the decision being made. If appealing by email, the email must be submitted to info@hopefieldseducation.co.uk.

5.03 Where a learner wishes to appeal to HOPEFIELDS following their exhaustion of a Centre’s own appeals procedure, they must submit their Stage 1 appeal to HOPEFIELDS **within 10 working days** of the appeal decision being communicated to them by the Centre.

5.04 In submitting their appeal, the appellant must:

a)  State the reason(s) for their appeal.

b)  ***Centre only:*** Provide a signed declaration by the learner confirming their wishes to appeal.

c)  ***Learner only:*** Provide a copy of photographic identification.

d)  ***Learner only:*** Provide the written outcome of the Centre’s internal appeals procedure.

5.05 In all cases, HOPEFIELDS will provide acknowledgement to the appellant within **5 working days** of receipt of their appeal. At this point, HOPEFIELDS will confirm whether the appeal is in or out of scope. If an appeal is deemed not in scope, HOPEFIELDS will write to the appellant providing the reasons why it cannot be reviewed. If an appeal is deemed out of scope, the appeal fee will be refunded.

5.06 Upon receipt of the appeal, HOPEFIELDS may request further information or supporting evidence to be supplied by the appellant. If this is the case, HOPEFIELDS will confirm this to the appellant upon its email acknowledgement and provide a deadline for the submission of the requested information. The appeal will not be considered by HOPEFIELDS until the required supporting evidence or information has been submitted. If the information is not submitted within the deadline provided by HOPEFIELDS, the appeal will be automatically rejected.

5.07 HOPEFIELDS will aim to respond to all appeals **within 20 working days** from its acknowledgement, however, there may be instances where this is not possible due to the circumstances regarding the appeal. Where timeframes are required to be extended by HOPEFIELDS, the appellant will be informed of the new timeframes by HOPEFIELDS via email.

5.08 In all cases, a decision letter will be provided to the appellant (via email), which will contain written confirmation of how HOPEFIELDS came to its decision in reviewing the appeal.

5.09 There are two possible outcomes to an appeal:

a)  The original decision is ratified.

b)  The original decision is amended. HOPEFIELDS will take the appropriate action dependent on the outcome to reflect the new decision and will issue a refund of the appeal fee paid. Refer to Section 7 for further information.

5.10 If the original decision is ratified, then the Learner may wisht o progress their appeal to **Stage2**. HOPEFIELDS will provide the appellant with instructions regarding appealing at Stage 2 in the outcome letter provided. For further information, please refer to section 6.

**6. Stage2–Independent Review Panel**

6.01 Stage 2 is only available to individuals who have exhausted Stage 1 of the appeal procedure. At Stage 2, appeals are reviewed by an Independent Review Panel. The Independent Review Panel ensures there is an independent review for the appeal if the appellant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

6.02 All appeals at Stage 2 must be submitted to HOPEFIELDS **within 10 working days** of the appellant receiving the outcome of the Stage 1 appeal.

6.03 In submitting their appeal, the appellant must:

a) State the basis for their appeal.
b) Provide the documentary evidence that they are relying upon for the decision made by HOPEFIELDS to be overturned.
c) Detail how they believe HOPEFIELDS did not make a fair or valid judgement, or did not follow its own policies and procedures during the Stage 1 appeal.

6.04 HOPEFIELDS will provide acknowledgement to the appellant within **5 working days** of receipt of their appeal. In its acknowledgment of the appeal, HOPEFIELDS will confirm whether the appeal is in or out of scope. HOPEFIELDS will also inform the appellant of the individual(s) who will be presenting the case to the Independent Review Panel on behalf of HOPEFIELDS.

6.05 The appellant will be invited to represent themselves and may wish to nominate another individual to attend the panel meeting with them for support.

6.06 Both parties must limit those in attendance to two individuals, unless there are specific requests from the Independent Review Panel for witnesses to attend.

**I. Independent Review Panel Arrangements**

6.07 Prior to the meeting of the Independent Appeal Panel, the Quality Assurance Team will request all supporting evidence from the appellant and the representative from HOPEFIELDS to be electronically submitted to them so that this can be collated for the panel meeting. A deadline, alongside instructions for submission, will be provided by HOPEFIELDS.

6.08 Any supporting evidence that both parties wish to submit to the panel for their review must be submitted in line with the Quality Assurance Team’s request. Any new evidence will not be considered or reviewed after this point, including during the meeting of the Independent Review Panel. The information provided by both parties must only reference the decision being appealed. Appeal applications which raise matters that are not relevant or are in addition to matters integral to the decision being appealed will not be considered.

6.09 Once the Quality Assurance Team has confirmed that all evidence has been received and an appropriate date for the panel is agreed, there must be no further contact between the HOPEFIELDS appellant contact and the appellant until the meeting of the Independent Review Panel.

**II. Meeting of the Independent Review Panel**

6.10 Within **30 working days** of the acknowledgement to the appellant, the Independent Review Panel will meet to review the appeal. Both parties will be invited to attend the meeting, which, for a timely review, will usually be via teleconference.

6.11 The purpose of the Independent Review Panel is to review and consider the evidence provided from both parties to establish whether HOPEFIELDS followed its own policies and procedures properly and fairly at Stage 1 of the appeal process. The panel meeting provides an opportunity for the Independent Review Panel to hear the case from both parties and for this reason, both parties must be in attendance. If the appellant fails to attend, HOPEFIELDS will cease to hear the appeal any further and the original decision will stand.

6.12 The Independent Review Panel is not a court of law and therefore neither party requires legal representation. If either party wishes to be accompanied by a lawyer, the Quality Assurance Team must be notified at least **10 working days** prior to the meeting to allow them to inform the other party, so that they have the opportunity to seek legal advice or representation if they wish to.

**III. Independent Review Panel Decision**

6.13 HOPEFIELDS will confirm the Independent Review Panel’s decision in writing within **5 working days** of the panel meeting. A rationale for the panel’s decision will be provided. There are two possible outcomes to the appeal:

a)  The decision is ratified.

b)  The decision is overturned. HOPEFIELDS will amend its records to reflect the updated decision. HOPEFIELDS will issue a refund of the Stage 1 and 2 appeal fees paid.

6.14 In all cases, the Independent Review Panel’s decision is the final decision made by HOPEFIELDS regarding the appeal. Should the appellant not be satisfied with HOPEFIELDS’s response to their appeal, they may wish to contact the Qualification Regulators. Information on how to do this will be included in the outcome correspondence sent to the appellant.

**7. Reviewing Approach**

7.01 Where the outcome of an appeal has identified a failure in HOPEFIELDS policy, procedure or system, HOPEFIELDS will review the failure to determine whether an Adverse Effect has occurred. Where this is the case, the relevant Qualification Regulator(s) will be informed.

7.02 Under the direction of the Responsible Officer, HOPEFIELDS will identify, review and correct any other decision or judgement that may have occurred or been affected due to the identified failure of its policy, procedure or system. Where this is the case, HOPEFIELDS will contact affected learners to inform them of the action being taken by HOPEFIELDS to mitigate the Adverse Effect. HOPEFIELDS will also take all reasonable measures to implement changes and improvements to prevent a similar re-occurrence.

7.03 Where weaknesses in its policies, procedures or systems are identified rather than failures, HOPEFIELDS will consider the implementation of quality improvement and strengthening measures, where this is possible and appropriate. For this reason, the outcome of all appeals will be reported to the HOPEFIELDS Quality Assurance Committee in order for HOPEFIELDS’s approach to be kept under review and for any lessons-learned exercised to be completed.

**8. Document Control**

8.01 This policy is maintained by the Quality Assurance Team and will be reviewed and updated where necessary to reflect updated legislation, customer feedback, improvements of operation and changes to the regulatory environment. If you have any queries regarding the contents or the use of this policy, please contact the Quality Assurance Team directly on info@hopefieldseducation.co.uk.

8.02 All HOPEFIELDS policies and procedures are signed off by the HOPEFIELDS Responsible Officer.

**Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy and Procedure**

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**Appendix 1 – HOPEFIELDS Permissions Table**

**Appendix 2 – Types of Reasonable Adjustments**

**1. Scope**

1.01 This policy and procedure outlines the requirements for the consideration and implementation of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations for learners studying on a HOPEFIELDS product.

1.02 This policy applies to all HOPEFIELDS approved Centres, including those who are based or work internationally. For international centres, although the specific references to UK legislation will not apply, the required practices outlined in this policy and procedure must still be adhered to.

1.03 The intended audience for this document is:

a)  HOPEFIELDS Directors.

b)  HOPEFIELDS core, sub-contracted and associate staff, including External Quality Assurers (EQAs).

c)  All staff of HOPEFIELDS Delivery Partners associated with HOPEFIELDS provision.

d)  All staff in HOPEFIELDS approved and partner centres.

e)  Learners.

f)  Qualification Regulators.

g)  Industry Regulators.

**2. Purpose**

2.01 The purpose of this document is to:

a)  Inform centres of HOPEFIELDS’s policy regarding Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations.

b)  Provide guidance and support to approved centres on the principles of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations.

c)  Provide information to centres on the implementation of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations, including when and how to request approval from HOPEFIELDS.

d)  Satisfy the Conditions of Recognition regarding the use of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations by the various Qualification Regulators.

**3. Definitions**

3.01 A **Reasonable Adjustment** is an action taken to ensure equal access to an assessment. Under the Equality Act 2010, education and training providers (including Awarding Organisations) have a duty to make Reasonable Adjustments for learners who have a disability or difficulty so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage in accessing an assessment. Examples of a Reasonable Adjustment are, but are not limited to:

a)  Amending usual assessment arrangements, for example allowing a learner extra time to complete the assessment.

b)  Adapting the format of assessment materials, such as providing materials in Braille.

c)  Providing assistance during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or a reader.

d)  Re-organising the assessment room, such as providing a learner with a separate room for an assessment away from other learners.

e)  Changing the assessment method, for example from a written to a speaking assessment.

f) Using assistive technology, such as screen-reading or voice activated software.

3.02 A **Special Consideration** is an access arrangement taken when a learner’s assessment performance is affected by unforeseen circumstances which are out of their control. This includes learners who are suffering from a temporary illness or condition, or who were or would be otherwise disadvantaged at the time of their assessment. A Special Consideration can be requested, approved and applied both before and after an assessment has taken place.

**4. Regulation and Responsibilities**

**I. Regulation**

4.01 The Equality Act 2010 requires education organisations, including Awarding Organisations and centres, to make Reasonable Adjustments to assessment arrangements to prevent learners who are disabled from having a disadvantage in completing their assessment in comparison to learners who

are not disabled. For this reason, both HOPEFIELDS and its approved centres must ensure that its staff members involved in the consideration, approval and application of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations are aware of their responsibilities under Equalities Law, ensuring they maintain up-to-date knowledge of any changes.

4.02 The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability includes substantial and long-term sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, mental health difficulties and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes and cancer.

4.03 Centres must also consider learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Children and young people have SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special education provision to be made for them, as defined in the ‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’. Children and young people with a disability do not necessarily have SEN, however, there is a significant overlap between disabled young people and those with SEN.

4.04 The Conditions of Recognition, set out by the various Qualification Regulators within the UK, state that Awarding Organisations must take all reasonable steps to remove any disadvantage to learners in accessing an assessment which is unjustifiable, and to maintain records of any disadvantage which it believes is justifiable, alongside the reasons why.

**I. HOPEFIELDS Responsibilities**

4.05 HOPEFIELDS has a responsibility to ensure that the process of assessment is robust and fair and allows each individual learner to show what they know and what they can do, without circumventing the assessment criteria or invalidating the requirements of the qualification or the qualification’s assessment strategy.

4.06 Although HOPEFIELDS has a duty to ensure that the integrity of their products are maintained at all times, HOPEFIELDS, its Delivery Partners and its approved centres have a duty to ensure that the rights of learners in accessing qualifications and units are upheld by allowing them to access every assessment in a way which is most appropriate to their individual needs.

4.07 Although not covered by the Qualification Regulators Conditions, HOPEFIELDS extends its policy and procedures regarding Reasonable Adjustments to also include its non-regulated products, such as its Endorsed Programmes and Assured Courses.

**II. Centre Responsibilities**

4.08 As a requirement of HOPEFIELDS Centre approval, centres must adhere to the relevant legislation regarding Reasonable Adjustments as well as to follow this policy and procedure and any associated documents. Centres confirm their adherence to this by signing the HOPEFIELDS Centre Agreement and Terms and Conditions. Therefore, Centre staff must familiarise themselves with HOPEFIELDS requirements and the regulations of the HOPEFIELDS products within their Centre’s provision.

4.09 Centres should take all reasonable steps to promote an inclusive atmosphere that provides equality of access to learners who may be placed at a disadvantage due to a disability or difficulty. This includes ensuring the accessibility of the Centre’s training and assessment venues, as far as possible, as well as allowing engagement with the training and assessment itself. Centres must take all possible and practical steps to ensure that there is an avenue for learners to disclose their individual learning needs to the Centre, which must be reviewed to determine whether a Reasonable Adjustment may be required.

4.10 To meet their responsibilities regarding Reasonable Adjustments, a Centre must have its own Access to Fair Assessment Policy. HOPEFIELDS has produced guidance on what the Access to Fair Assessment Policy should contain within the HOPEFIELDS Quality Assurance Manual. Centres must ensure that all staff who advise or guide potential learners are aware of the Centre’s Access to Fair Assessment Policy. Centre staff must have had training to make them aware of the impact of a learning difficultly or disability in relation to a learner accessing an assessment and where a Reasonable Adjustment may be required.

4.11 All Reasonable Adjustments must be considered through a formal, standardised process. Dependent on the type of assessment, centres may be required to submit an application for Reasonable Adjustment to HOPEFIELDS for approval, or may be able to nominate an appropriately appointed individual, or team of individuals, to approve Reasonable Adjustments internally. HOPEFIELDS has produced a permissions table which outlines which types of assessments require HOPEFIELDS approval and which can be at the discretion of the Centre (see Appendix 1).

4.12 It is important that centres ensure that the individual learner is involved where a Reasonable Adjustment is being considered. The learner must be aware of, and consent to, the submission of the application of the Reasonable Adjustment to HOPEFIELDS, prior to it being made. This includes ensuring that the learner is aware of the submission of any supporting evidence to HOPEFIELDS to support the Centre’s Reasonable Adjustment application and how this information will be used and stored by HOPEFIELDS.

4.13 In all cases where a Reasonable Adjustment is being considered, the Centre must ensure that they keep a full record of the application and supporting evidence for internal quality assurance and external quality assurance purposes. A record of a Reasonable Adjustment consideration and application must be stored by the Centre for a period of at least 7 years from the learner’s induction at the Centre. The Centre must store the application itself, alongside all supporting evidence, for a period of at least 3 years. HOPEFIELDS will adhere to the same timescales regarding storage of evidence.

4.14 As part of the HOPEFIELDS Risk-Based Approach to Centre Quality Monitoring Policy and Procedure, the EQA will review Centre practices regarding Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations, ensuring that adjustments are appropriate and applied effectively.

4.15 Centres must ensure that they have an effective internal appeal process in place to allow a learner to query or appeal any decision taken by the Centre to not allow a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration to be considered or applied. Centres must also ensure that learners are made aware of their right to appeal to HOPEFIELDS once they have exhausted the Centre’s own internal appeals policy. For further information, please refer to the HOPEFIELDS Appeals Policy and Procedure.

4.16 Centres must note that they are responsible for any charges regarding the application and implementation of a Reasonable Adjustment. In line with the Equality Act 2010, centres are not permitted and must not seek payment from a learner for an application or implementation of a Reasonable Adjustment. To do so would breach 5a. of the HOPEFIELDS Centre Agreement and Terms and Conditions.

**III. Health and Safety**

4.17 There are no circumstances where the health and safety of a learner should be compromised for training or assessment. All centres must ensure that the relevant health and safety legislation is followed at all times. Appropriate risk assessments must be carried out by the Centre prior to the delivery of any training or assessment to identify and mitigate any risks regarding the Centre’s delivery and assessment model.

4.18 Where there are concerns whether an individual learner’s disability or difficulty may have health and safety implications for themselves or others, a suitably qualified Centre staff member, designated by the Head of Organisation, must carry out a tailored risk assessment related to the learner’s particular circumstances. The risk assessment must identify the risks associated with the particular training or assessment activity but must also take account of any Reasonable Adjustments or Special

Considerations which may be able to be put in place to remove or reduce the risk. Where a risk assessment reveals that it is not safe for a learner to fulfil the requirements of an assessment, alternative assessment arrangements must be made, where qualification requirements allow this.

4.19 Centres must contact HOPEFIELDS to discuss individual cases where further clarification is necessary. Assumptions must not be made about a disability or difficulty posing a health and safety risk, but the health and safety of all learners and others must always be of paramount importance.

**5. Principles for Making Reasonable Adjustments**

5.01 The following principles must be followed by the Centre when reviewing whether a Reasonable Adjustment is required and is appropriate for a learner regarding their completion of an assessment. A Reasonable Adjustment must:

a)  Be based on the individual needs of the learner.

b)  Reflect the learner’s usual way of working.

c)  Enable the learner to produce evidence of equal vigour to meet the specified assessment criteria, regardless of process or method used.

d)  Not give the learner an unfair advantage or disadvantage in comparison to other learners.

e)  Not cause, or create the potential of, an instance of learner or Centre malpractice or maladministration.

f)  Not be prohibited by, or does not invalidate, HOPEFIELDS assessment requirements.

g)  Be in place and have had the required approval (either within the Centre or by HOPEFIELDS dependent on the assessment and adjustment type) in writing before any assessment takes place.

h) Allow the evidence generated by the learner to be successfully internally quality assured by the Centre and externally quality assured by HOPEFIELDS.

5.02 When considering whether an adjustment to assessment is appropriate, centres must ensure that adjustments do not compensate for a learner’s lack of knowledge and skills. Although it may be possible to change the delivery or process of an assessment, competency standards must remain unchanged. As vocational qualifications may lead to employment, achievement of such

qualifications must give a realistic indication to the potential employer of what the holder of the certificate can do. Therefore, it is important that a learner with an adjustment is able to cope with the content of the assessment and is able to work at the level required.

5.03 Any adjustment to assessment must not provide an unfair advantage or disadvantage to the learner. The achievement of the assessment for a learner who had an adjustment to assessment must have the same credibility as that of any other learner.

5.04 Any adjustment to assessment must reflect the individual needs of the learner and the learner’s normal way of working, providing this does not affect what is being assessed in any way. The learner should have experience and practice in the use of the adjustment.

5.05 A Centre should not assume that the same adjustment will be required by the learner for all assessments. Different qualifications and different methods of assessments can make different demands on the learner. Therefore, it is important that the learner is consulted with throughout the training and assessment processes.

**IV. Internally Set Assessments**

5.06 The majority of HOPEFIELDS assessments are assessed through internally set assessments, such as through a portfolio of evidence, a Centre-devised assessment or coursework. With these types of assessments, the Centre has flexibility in adapting assessment methodologies (as long as they still meet HOPEFIELDS requirements) to allow a learner to meet the specified assessment criteria in any way that is valid.

5.07 Centres are advised to adopt a flexible approach in providing learners with alternative ways of accessing and completing assessment. The flexibility on internally set assessments allows a Centre to be responsive to an individual learner’s needs and to choose an assessment method that will allow them to demonstrate attainment. A learner’s varying needs must be identified, considered and recorded during the learner’s induction and initial assessment with the Centre.

5.08 In designing and setting internally set assessments, the Centre’s Internal Quality Assurer is responsible for carrying out the pre-verification of assessment tasks before their use. This activity should ensure that the assessment is valid and in line with HOPEFIELDS requirements, as well as ensuring that the assessment activity is accessible to learners of varying needs.

5.09 Wherever relevant, differentiation of an assessment activity should be planned for any learner who may have differing needs to the rest of a cohort. For example, a written question and answer

task may be designed by the Centre to fulfil a knowledge-based assessment criteria, which may be adapted to a verbal question and answer assessment where a learner has low- level writing skills, where written skills are not being assessed as part of the assessment.

5.10 The learner must fulfil the demands of the assessment criteria consistently over a period of time, regardless of method used to obtain evidence. The assessment criteria must not be amended or omitted, although the actual assessment can pose questions to learners in a way which relates particularly to the learner’s workplace, employer or circumstance, as long as the integrity of the assessment criteria is not compromised.

5.11 While Assessors, Internal Quality Assurers and External Quality Assurers usually prefer to see a portfolio made up of evidence which is varied, the Centre may be required to accept a more restricted variety of evidence as a means of enabling access. This must be determined on an individual learner basis through initial assessment and consideration of Reasonable Adjustment. The Centre is encouraged to discuss this with their Internal Quality Assurer and External Quality Assurer at an early stage.

5.12 Centres are advised to contact HOPEFIELDS to discuss alternative assessment arrangements where they are unsure if they meet the above requirements.

5.13 In line with the HOPEFIELDS Permissions Table (Appendix 1), Reasonable Adjustments for internally set assessments can be requested, approved and applied at the Centre’s discretion, without the need for HOPEFIELDS approval. A formal record of all Reasonable Adjustment applications must be kept for internal quality assurance and external quality assurance purposes.

**V. Externally Set Assessments**

5.14 Externally set assessments can either be internally or externally assessed. Whether the assessment is internally or internally assessed will determine whether approval is required from HOPEFIELDS to apply certain types of adjustments.

5.15 Assessments which are externally set and internally assessed are created and provided by HOPEFIELDS but are marked internally by Assessors within a Centre. Typical examples of this type of assessment are:

a)  Entry Level Functional Skills assessments for English, ICT and Mathematics.

b)  The Speaking, Listening and Communication component of Functional Skills English at Level 1 and Level 2.

c)  Any qualification that has a ‘benchmark’ assessment activity that a centre may be planning to use. The benchmark assessment will be created and provided by HOPEFIELDS.

5.16 Assessments which are externally set and assessed are those that are created, provided and marked by HOPEFIELDS. This covers both paper-based and online assessments, such as Security and Construction knowledge tests and Functional Skills Mathematics, Reading and Writing assessments at Level 1 and Level 2.

5.17 In all cases where an assessment is externally set by HOPEFIELDS, centres must ensure that, as standard, assessments are sat and assessed in line with HOPEFIELDS requirements. In these assessments, the method of assessment is more rigidly determined and therefore there may be a greater need for adjustments to standard assessment arrangements to provide access to some learners.

5.18 Where an adjustment to assessment conditions or format may be required due to a learner’s individual needs or disabilities, the Centre must consult the HOPEFIELDS Permission Table to determine whether the request can be applied at the Centre’s discretion or whether the request must be approved by HOPEFIELDS.

5.19 Assessments that are undertaken for Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level can be carried out in non-examination conditions; the assessment time, however, must be adhered to and the assessment must be kept securely until such time that the assessment time has been achieved and the assessment completed before being submitted for IQA and EQA purposes. All assessment documentation must be retained and stored in line with HOPEFIELDS requirements.

**6. Supporting Evidence**

6.01 Any application for a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration must be supported by valid and sufficient evidence. In order to ensure that any adjustment to assessment will only provide the learner with the necessary assistance without giving the learner an unfair advantage over others, the Centre must be clear about the extent to which the learner is affected by the disability or difficulty.

6.02 Where the Centre can verify evidence of the disability or difficulty and where the implications are clear, such as for a learner with physical difficulties, or a hearing/sight impairment, the Centre does not need to provide further evidence.

6.03 Where the implications of the difficulty are more complex or not visible, such as for learning or mental health difficulties, the Centre will have to provide additional evidence of the effect of the impairment on the learner’s performance in the assessment. Any of the following types of evidence would be acceptable. The Centre should decide which of these will best assist understanding of the learner’s situation:

a)  Evidence of assessment of the learner’s needs made within the Centre by an appropriate and specialised individual with responsibility in this area, such as learning support staff, teaching staff, Tutor/Trainers, Assessors and other specialist staff. Information from previous centres attended by the learner may also be included.

b)  History of provision within the Centre. This should include information about the support received by the learner during the learning or training programme and during formative assessments. Evidence of the way in which the learner’s needs are being met during the learning programme must be documented for audit purposes.

c)  Written evidence produced by independent, authoritative specialists. This could take the form of medical, psychological or professional reports or assessments.

6.04 Centres can use a learner’s completion of a Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) In order to evidence the requirement for a Reasonable Adjustment. The completion of the test may be included as part of the Centre’s initial assessment process in determining if and what adjustments to assessments are required for the learner.

6.05 A learner with a Statement of Special Educational Need does not automatically qualify for Reasonable Adjustment. It is the Centre’s responsibility to ensure that all applications for Reasonable Adjustments are based on the individual need of the learner in relation to the individual assessment and that the evidence in support of the application is valid and sufficient.

6.06 It is important that centres provide full documentary evidence supporting their Reasonable Adjustment request and that the evidence must in fact show a need for an adjustment to be applied. Evidence must be reviewed and authorised as valid and sufficient for supporting adjustment to assessment by a member of Centre staff with delegated authority, such as a Tutor or a staff member qualified in assessing special educational needs.

**7. Reasonable Adjustment Procedure**

7.01 The type of Reasonable Adjustment being requested and the type of assessment in which the adjustment relates to will determine whether prior approval from HOPEFIELDS is required for the Reasonable Adjustment to be implemented or whether this can be at the Centre’s direction. In all cases, the process for applying a Reasonable Adjustment should follow the below steps:

a)  Identify the adjustment – A member of Centre staff with delegated authority, such as a Tutor or a staff member qualified in assessing special educational needs, should identify the required adjustment for the learner. The adjustment must meet the principles outlined in this policy.

b)  Gather evidence – Ensure that there is valid and sufficient evidence to support the adjustment.

c)  Agree adjustment – The adjustment must be agreed both with the learner and with the Centre’s Internal Quality Assurer, prior to it being requested or implemented.

d)  Complete request form – The HOPEFIELDS Reasonable Adjustment Request Form must be fully completed by the Centre’s designated individual. An individual form is required for each learner.

e)  Check permission – Review the HOPFIELDS Permissions Table to determine whether the Reasonable Adjustment requires HOPEFIELDS approval prior to its implementation, or whether it can be applied at the discretion of the Centre.

7.02 Where, according to the HOPEFIELDS permissions table, a Reasonable Adjustment is **Centre Permitted**:

a)  The completed form must be signed by the Head of Organisation, or Centre staff member with delegated authority to approve Reasonable Adjustments. This must be completed at least **5 working days** prior to the assessment taking place.

b)  The completed form must be stored alongside the learner’s assessment evidence and be available for external quality assurance purposes. The form and supporting evidence must be provided to HOPEFIELDS upon request.

7.03 Where, according to the HOPFIELDS Permissions Table, a Reasonable Adjustment **requires HOPEFIELDS approval**:

a)  The completed form must be sent to info@hopefieldseducation.co.uk (or Delivery Partner equivalent) at least **10 working days** prior to the date of the learner’s first assessment where the adjustment would apply.

b)  HOPEFIELDS will review the application and provide its response within **5 working days** of receipt. The Centre must store a copy of HOPEFIELDS outcome alongside the learner’s assessment evidence.

c)  Where a learner is studying a course which is less than 10 working days in duration, the Centre must contact HOPEFIELDS as soon as they establish an adjustment will be required. HOPEFIELDS will still require a completed form to be submitted and the adjustment cannot be carried out until HOPEFIELDS approval has been provided.

7.04 Whether they are approved by HOPEFIELDS or a Centre, requests for Reasonable Adjustments must be thoroughly reviewed and a decision made dependent on the individual circumstances of the application. Where an adjustment is rejected, HOPEFIELDS will provide a clear rationale to the Centre for its decision and where appropriate, will provide alternative adjustments that may be offered to the learner.

7.05 An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves excessive or unreasonable costs, timescales or demands that could affect the security or integrity of an assessment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

7.06 Where approved, the assessment produced by a learner with a Reasonable Adjustment applied must be marked or assessed in the same way as work created by learners without adjustments.

**8. Special Consideration**

8.01 A Special Consideration is an adjustment to allow attainment to be demonstrated by a learner who has been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury, indisposition or adverse circumstances.

8.02 A Special Consideration may be applicable if:

a)  Performance in the assessment is, or would be, affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner. For example, a recent illness, accident, bereavement or serious disturbance during the assessment.

b)  Alternative assessment arrangements that were agreed in advance of the assessment proved to be inappropriate or inadequate.

c)  Part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances beyond control of the learner.

d)  There is a sufficient difference between the part of the assessment to which Special Consideration is applied and other parts of the qualification that have been achieved to infer that the learner could have performed more successfully in the assessment.

8.03 A Special Consideration is **not** applicable where:

a)  The Centre does not supply any evidence that the learner has been affected, or would be affected, at the time of the assessment by a particular condition.

b)  Any part of the assessment is missed, or will be missed, due to personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absences.

c)  Preparations for an assessment is affected by difficulties during the course, such as disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes or shortages in staff or industrial disputes.

8.04 A Special Consideration must not provide the learner with an unfair advantage over other learners in accessing an assessment. A Special Consideration must also not inaccurately reflect a learner’s knowledge and competency in their ability, under usual circumstances, to complete the assessment.

8.05 To ensure the validity of assessment and maintain competency standards, HOPEFIELDS will only consider a Special Consideration in exceptional circumstances. Dependent on the nature of the assessment or qualification in which a Special Consideration is being sought, HOPEFIELDS may be able to adjust a learner’s mark for an assessment, adjust the arrangements for accessing an assessment where a learner does not have a disability or difficulty or carry over/defer the relevant assessment fee to allow the learner to take their assessment in the future without further charge to the Centre.

8.06 For assessments within qualifications which are license linked, HOPEFIELDS will only consider a deferred assessment to a future date without incurrence of a fee or adjustments to improve access to assessment. For assessments which are not license linked, HOPEFIELDS can also consider an adjustment to a learner’s mark in an assessment. In these cases, only a 10% maximum increase will be permitted. The decision to approve and apply a Special Consideration will be made by HOPEFIELDS

dependent on the individual circumstances of the learner and the particular requirements of the assessment in question.

8.07 HOPEFIELDS cannot exempt learners from assessment due to a Special Consideration, although it may be able to offer alternative assessment methods to allow a learner to demonstrate attainment. Centres are encouraged to contact HOPEFIELDS for further advice and to discuss individual circumstances.

8.08 In all cases where a Special Consideration is being considered, the Centre must ensure that they keep a full record of the application and supporting evidence for internal quality assurance and external quality assurance purposes. A record of each Special Consideration application must be stored by the Centre for a period of at least 7 years from the learner’s induction at the Centre. The Centre must store the application itself, alongside all supporting evidence, for a period of at least 3 years. HOPEFIELDS will adhere to the same timescales regarding storage of evidence.

8.09 Centres must ensure that any application for Special Consideration is both necessary, fair and based on valid evidence. All requests for Special Consideration **must be approved by HOPEFIELDS prior to any implementation**. To apply for a Special Consideration:

a)  The completed Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Application Form must be sent to info@hopefieldseducation.co.uk (or Delivery Partner equivalent) as soon as the need is identified, but no later than **5 working days** after the assessment took place, or was due to take place. The application must be signed and dated by the Head of Organisation, or Centre staff member with delegated authority, prior to its submission to HOPEFIELDS.

b)  HOPEFIELDS will review the application and provide its response within **5 working days** of receipt. The Centre must store a copy of HOPEFIELDS outcome alongside the learner’s assessment evidence.

8.10 If the application for Special Consideration is approved by HOPEFIELDS, the learner’s performance will be reviewed in the light of available evidence. It should be noted that a successful application of Special Consideration will not necessarily change a learner’s result.

8.11 Where a Special Consideration application is rejected, HOPEFIELDS will provide a clear rationale to the Centre for its decision and where appropriate, will provide alternative adjustments that may be offered to the learner.

**9. Malpractice**

9.01 Centres must be aware that a failure to comply with this policy and procedure and guidance provided from HOPEFIELDS regarding Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations will constitute as malpractice. This includes:

a) Putting in place arrangements without seeking prior approval from HOPEFIELDS, where this is required.

b)  Exceeding the allowances agreed with HOPEFIELDS.

c)  Agreeing delegated adjustments that are not supported by evidence.

d)  Failing to maintain records of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations for audit.

9.02 Where malpractice is suspected or identified, cases will be investigated by HOPEFIELDS in line with the HOPEFIELDS Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure.

**10.Reviewing Approach**

10.01 Both HOPEFIELDS and its approved centres must keep their arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations under review to evaluate their effectiveness. This includes reviewing the outcomes of external quality assurance activities, the outcomes of any appeals regarding decisions and judgements, analysis of application data and volumes and responding to feedback from internal and external stakeholders.

10.02 As part of its Centre monitoring activities, centres must be able to present evidence to demonstrate how they are keeping their approach under review and how any necessary improvements or changes have been implemented and communicated to all relevant parties.

**11. Appeals**

11.01 Learners must be aware of their right to access the Centre’s appeals and complaints procedures if they are not satisfied with the Centre’s consideration or implementation of a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration. If a learner wishes to appeal a Centre’s decision regarding the application of a Reasonable Adjustment, they will need to exhaust the Centre’s own appeals procedure first before being able to raise their appeal to HOPEFIELDS directly.

11.02 Centres also have a right to appeal a decision or judgement made by HOPEFIELDS regarding a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration application they have made. For further information, refer to the HOPEFIELDS Appeals Policy and Procedure, available on the HOPEFIELDS website.

**12.Document Control**

12.01 This policy is maintained by the Quality Assurance Team and will be reviewed and updated where necessary to reflect updated legislation, customer feedback, improvements of operation and changes to the regulatory environment. If you have any queries regarding the contents or the use of this policy, please contact the Quality Assurance Team directly on info@hopefieldseducation.co.uk.

12.02 All HOPEFIELDS policies and procedures are signed off by the HOPEFIELDS Responsible Officer.

**Appendix 1 – HOPEFIELDS Permissions Table**

The Permissions Table lists the most commonly requested adjustments to standard assessment arrangements. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list and centres have a duty to seek advice from HOPEFIELDS in any case where they do not consider that they have the necessary expertise to judge whether a Reasonable Adjustment is needed, and/or how it should be applied.

Please note that many of these reasonable adjustments are dependent on the content of the Qualification Specification and the skills or knowledge being assessed.

**KEY: CD - Reasonable Adjustment permitted at the discretion of the Centre AO - Apply to HOPEFIELDS for permission**





**Appendix 2 – Types of Reasonable Adjustments**

This appendix details the most commonly requested Reasonable Adjustments to standard assessment arrangements and is not intended to be a comprehensive list. Centres have a duty to seek advice from HOPEFIELDS in any case where they believe other adjustments may be required.

**1. Modification to the Presentation of Assessment Material**

**I. Enlarged Material and Material on Coloured Paper**

Dependent on the mode of assessment, both centres and HOPEFIELDS (check permissions table) are able to provide modified assessment materials such as in an enlarged format or on coloured paper. In all cases, the Centre is responsible for ensuring the security of modified assessment materials and they must be handled and stored in line with HOPEFIELDS requirements.

Where an assessment is paper-based and printed by the Centre, following approval, HOPEFIELDS will delegate the responsibility of creating the modified assessment materials to the Centre, such as printing on A3 paper instead of A4, or using coloured paper rather than white. In these instances, the Centre takes full responsibility for the confidentiality of the assessment materials as well as the accuracy of the modification. A learner will not be penalised for any errors in their work due to an inaccurate enlargement of the assessment material by the Centre. For this reason, assessment materials which contain scale diagrams cannot be enlarged.

Where an assessment is taken online, HOPEFIELDS’s online testing platforms can accommodate some modifications to assessment materials, dependent on the exam type. Please contact HOPEFIELDS for further guidance.

Where assessments are internally set, the Centre is responsible for providing the modified assessment material to the learner. The Centre is also responsible for ensuring any equipment such as electronic devices and resources required for the learner to access the modified assessment material (other than the material itself) is provided to the learner to facilitate assessment.

**II. Language Modified Assessment Material**

Dependent on the assessment, language modified assessment material may be able to be provided. In all cases, technical language may not be modified. The modified version of the assessment material must contain the same questions as the standard version and the same answers will be expected from the learner. This may be appropriate in a listening assessment where a transcript of the test may be provided, which can be read to the learner by a live speaker to allow the learner to lip-read the text.

Where required, the Centre must contact HOPEFIELDS as soon as the adjustment has been identified to request the Reasonable Adjustment. For these types of adjustments, HOPEFIELDS requires a greater period of notice to HOPEFIELDS to review the Centre’s application than the standard 10 working days prior to the planned learner’s assessment. For this reason, centres must contact HOPEFIELDS as soon as the need has been identified for modified assessment materials with their Reasonable Adjustment application.

**III. Assessment Material in Audio Format**

Where there is evidence of need, assessment material may be provided in audio format as long as

reading is not a competency being assessed or if the material has visual material that is crucial to the completion of the assessment, such as illustrations, tables or diagrams.

Where required, the Centre must contact HOPEFIELDS as soon as the adjustment has been identified to request the Reasonable Adjustment. For these types of adjustments, HOPEFIELDS requires a greater period of notice to HOPEFIELDS to review the Centre’s application than the standard 10 working days prior to the planned learner’s assessment. For this reason, centres must contact HOPEFIELDS as soon as the need has been identified for modified assessment materials with their Reasonable Adjustment application.

**IV. Assessment Material and Responses in Braille**

Examination material may be provided in Braille for a blind or visually impaired learner. Where permitted, the material will be modified to remove any visual content prior to brailing, with the possibility of diagrams being produced as tactile diagrams, where possible.

Where there is evidence of need, a learner may be permitted to present their responses in Braille In these cases, the Centre must provide an authenticated transcript of the learner’s responses for assessment/marking and for external quality assurance purposes. HOPEFIELDS places the responsibility on the Centre to ensure that the transcript is an accurate reflection of the learner’s responses.

Where required, the Centre must contact HOPEFIELDS as soon as the adjustment has been identified to request the Reasonable Adjustment. For these types of adjustments, HOPEFIELDS requires a greater period of notice to HOPEFIELDS to review the Centre’s application than the standard 10 working days prior to the planned learner’s assessment. For this reason, centres must contact HOPEFIELDS as soon as the need has been identified for modified assessment materials with their Reasonable Adjustment application.

**2. Assessment Conditions**

**I. Extra Time**

Where assessment activities are time constrained, a learner may be allowed extra time to complete the assessment if they have a disability or difficulty which affects their speed of processing. The amount of extra time must reflect the extent to which the completion of the assessment will be affected by the learner’s difficulty. Unlimited extra time is not permitted. It is the Centre’s responsibility to specify the amount of extra time a learner will need, using the extra time required during formative assessments as a guide.

Extra time will not be permitted where the timing of a completion of a task or a practical activity is a key part of meeting the relevant assessment criteria, such as a typing speed test. This also applies to group assessments where a learner’s performance is required to be assessed in conjunction with other learners.

Centres must ensure that the learner is comfortable and medically fit to sit extended assessments and must consider if supervised rest breaks may also be required, which may be requested/implemented in conjunction with an extra time adjustment.

**II. Supervised Rest Break**

A supervised rest break may be taken either in our outside of the assessment room. The duration of the break will not be deducted from the overall assessment time and therefore centres must consider whether a supervised rest break may be more appropriate for a learner than extra time would be.

The Centre must be aware that, during a supervised rest break, the learner is still under assessment conditions and that the HOPEFIELDS Examination and Invigilation Policy and Procedure still applies at all times. Centres must ensure the security and confidentiality of all HOPEFIELDS assessment materials and must not leave either the learner or assessment materials unsupervised at any point. The Centre must also ensure that assessment materials are not removed from the assessment room until the assessment has been completed and they have been securely sealed for storage/despatch to HOPEFIELDS.

A supervised rest break will not be permitted where speed or time is a component of what is being assessed, although, if there is a natural break in assessment (such as in between tasks), then supervised rest breaks are allowed.

**3. Rooms and Venues**

**I. Organisation of the Assessment Room**

Centres are able to consider and implement minor changes to the usual organisation of an assessment room when considering a learner’s individual needs. This may allow particular learners with both learning difficulties and disabilities in equally accessing assessment.

Examples of minor changes to assessment facilities include, but are not limited to:

**II.**

a)  A learner with a visual impairment may benefit from sitting near a window so that they have good lighting.

b)  A learner with a hearing impairment may benefit from sitting near the front of the assessment room.

c)  A learner with a learning disability, such as one on the autism spectrum, may benefit from having visual/noise stimuli, such as a ticking clock, removed from the assessment room.

d)  A learner with a physical disability may benefit from using chairs with armrests or adjustable heights.

**Separate Accommodation and Alternative Venues**

It may be necessary to accommodate the learner separately, within the Centre, from other learners taking their assessment at the same time if they are using readers, scribes, prompters or interpreters. This will enable the learner to focus on the assessment and obtain the required support from their facilitator without distraction for others who are not requiring the adjustment.

In all instances, the Centre must ensure that the confidentiality of assessment materials is maintained at all times and that any separate rooms which are used for learners who require the adjustment meet HOPEFIELDS examination venue requirements, as detailed within the HOPEFIELDS Examination and Invigilation Policy and Procedure.

In certain circumstances, the learner may be permitted to take an assessment at an alternative venue, for example at home or in a hospital. The Centre must ensure that the learner is medically fit to take the assessment. It is important that the regulations of the assessment regarding security, confidentiality and validity are met at all times. Therefore, centres must contact HOPEFIELDS in the first instance for approval prior to making any arrangements for alternative venues.

**4. Use of Mechanical, Electronic and Technological Aids**

**I. Aids and Assistive Technology**

Dependent on the type of assessment, centres are able to request the use of aids to assist learners in accessing an assessment. This includes coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles, CCTV and OCR scanners.

Use of assistive technology, such as speech/screen reading or voice activated software, may also benefit learners who have a disability or difficulty which affects their reading or speech, as long as this is not a competency being assessed. In these cases, the Centre must ensure that the learner has had sufficient practice in the use of the aid and that any electronics are in good working order. Where approved, the Centre is responsible for providing the aids to the learner and in training their Centre staff and Invigilators on their use.

In these cases, the Centre must ensure that the learner has had sufficient practice in the use of the aid and that any electronics are in good working order. The Centre is responsible for providing the aids to the learner, where approved and in training their Centre staff and Invigilators on their use.

The Centre must consider that where these adjustments are requested, whether the learner should be separately accommodated within the Centre to avoid disruption to other learners completing their assessment.

The Centre must consider that where these adjustments are requested, whether the learner should be separately accommodated within the Centre to avoid disruption to other learners completing their assessment.

**II. Use of Recording Devices to Present Responses**

Where there is evidence of need, the learner may be permitted to use electronic recording devices, for example a voice recorder or Dictaphone and for the assessment to be presented in CD, memory stick or cassette format. The use of recording devices is only permitted where there is no requirement for the learner to produce visual material or for writing assessments.

Where the learner’s responses are recorded electronically, the Centre must provide an authenticated transcript of the learner’s responses for assessment/marking and for external quality assurance purposes. HOPEFIELDS places the responsibility on the Centre to ensure that the transcript is an accurate reflection of the learner’s responses.

**III. Use of ICT to Present Responses**

A learner should be provided with the means to present their responses by the method most appropriate and familiar to them, as long as the use of methods will not invalidate the requirements of the assessment. The use of ICT is generally perceived to have a positive impact on helping learners to access assessment. The guidance given below relates to the use of ICT in written assessments.

ICT can normally be used for Centre-devised and portfolio work unless its use is expressly prohibited by the qualification specification. ICT in this context relates to word processors, PCs, laptops and other microprocessor-controlled devices producing output in text or other forms such as graphics and diagrams.

The use of ICT must not create a misleading impression of the learner’s attainment or confer an unfair advantage over other learners. Spelling and grammar checks must be disabled prior to the assessment taking place. Where assessment objectives cannot be fully met through the use of ICT, the Centre must consider and implement alternative arrangements/adjustments.

ICT must only be used if it is appropriate to the learner’s needs and if the learner is confident in its use, can use it effectively and if it reflects their normal ways of working. This includes ensuring that electronic devices are adapted for the needs of the learner and that enabling technologies, such as screen reading software and coloured backgrounds, are available.

**IV. Use of Dictionaries (Including Electronic and Bilingual)**

The use of any type of dictionaries can be allowed in all vocational assessments unless its use is expressly forbidden by the assessment requirements. Centres must consult with the qualification specification and guidance documents produced by HOPEFIELDS to confirm whether the use of a dictionary is permitted or not.

If permitted, the Centre must ensure that they check dictionaries prior to each use by a learner to ensure that they do not contain notes that would provide the learner with an unfair advantage in completion of their assessment.

Where permission is provided to use electronic dictionaries, the Centre must ensure that the equipment does not contain functionality which would provide the learner with an unfair advantage. If such functionality is present, it must be disabled prior to its use by a learner. If it cannot be disabled, it must not be used.

**5. Use of Access Facilitators**

**I. Reader**

A reader is a Centre staff member, who, where required, will read to the learner all or part of the assessment material and the learner’s written responses. For certain assessments, this may not be permitted or may be limited. For example, a reader can only read the questions in a Functional Skills Reading assessment and not the reading texts, as this is the skill being assessed. Centres must therefore ensure they consult the individual qualification specifications for further guidance.

Where there is evidence of need, a reader may be allowed in all assessments where reading or understanding of the written word is not an assessment requirement or the competency being assessed.

The Centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a reader will be an effective adjustment. For example, a learner may be more comfortable and accustomed to the use of speech/screen reading software or accessing the material in electronic format, in Braille or through Sign Language.

In all cases, the Centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a reader. The Centre should select the reader on the basis of their ability to work effectively with the learner. The reader must be able to read accurately and at a reasonable rate. The reader should not normally be the learner’s own Tutor or Assessor, except in circumstances where it is necessary to do so. In such cases, HOPEFIELDS must be consulted with. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a reader.

The Head of Organisation, or delegated representative, must approve the use of individuals as readers. Prior to their use, the Centre must provide the reader with clear instructions regarding what they are required and what they are not permitted to do. A separate Invigilator must be present where a reader is used to ensure that the guidance regarding readers is followed.

During an assessment, the reader:

a)  Must only read as requested by the learner. The learner may choose to read some parts of the assessment for themselves. The reader must repeat questions and/or instructions when requested by the learner.

b)  Must read accurately and articulate clearly.

c)  Must only read the exact wording (instructions and questions) and not provide meanings of words, rephrase or interpret any contents of the assessment.

d)  May not consult a dictionary.

e)  Must read, as often as requested, the responses by the learner, but must not act as a proof- reader.

f)  Must not advise the learner regarding which part of the assessment to complete, when to move onto other parts of the assessment or advise on the order in which the assessment must be completed.

g)  May enable a visually impaired learner to identify which piece of visual material relates to which question and may provide spellings of a word which appears on the assessment, where requested. The reader must not provide factual help to the learner nor offer any suggestion.

h)  Must refer any problems or issues during the assessment to the Invigilator.

A learner should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the reader and this should reflect the learner’s usual way of working. For a learner who requires both a reader and a scribe, the same person may act as both, as long as permission has been provided for both arrangements.

A learner using a reader must be accommodated separately within the Centre so as not to disturb other learners taking their assessment at the same time.

Where a learner is not eligible for the use of a reader, it may be helpful for the learner to read the questions aloud. In these circumstances the learner must be accommodated in a separate room so that other learners are not disturbed. Separate invigilation must be arranged in these cases. The Invigilator may not correct the reading of the learner.

**II. Scribe**

A scribe is an individual who, in an assessment, writes down or word processes a learner’s dictated responses. This includes the dictation of capital letters, punctuation, paragraphing, and the spelling of uncommon or technical words. Where there is evidence of need, a scribe may be allowed in all assessments where writing or typing is not the competency being assessed.

The Centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a scribe is an appropriate Reasonable Adjustment. As the effective use of a scribe requires a high level of communication skills from the learner, the Centre is advised to consider whether the learner would be more comfortable with the use of a computer, especially as the learner is more likely to use a word processer than a scribe in the workplace.

The use of a scribe must not affect the requirements of the assessment. In some cases, the writing of answers by the learner may be the skill being assessed and therefore a scribe would not be appropriate.

In all cases, the Centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a scribe. The Centre should select the scribe on the basis of their ability to work effectively with the learner and must be able to produce an accurate record of the learner’s responses, write legibly and/or word processes at a reasonable speed. The scribe should not normally be the learner’s own Tutor or Assessor, except in circumstances where it is necessary to do so. In such cases, HOPEFIELDS must be consulted with. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a scribe.

The Head of Organisation, or delegated representative, must approve the use of individuals as scribes. Prior to their use, the Centre must provide the scribe with clear instructions regarding what they are required and what they are not permitted to do. A separate Invigilator must be present where a scribe is used to ensure that the guidance regarding scribes is followed.

During an assessment, the scribe:

a)  Must consult with the learner regarding which aspects of the assessment they wish to have their responses scribed. The learner may choose to write some responses themselves.

b)  Must write down answers exactly as they are dictated. Where spelling accuracy and punctuation are a part of the competency being assessed, the scribe must follow explicit instructions provided by the learner. The scribe must not take the responsibility for the spelling of technical words.

c)  Must write a correction on a typescript or Braille sheet, if requested to do so by the learner.

d)  Must not give factual help or offer the learner any suggestions.

e)  Must not advise the learner regarding which part of the assessment to complete, when to move onto other parts of the assessment or advise on the order in which the assessment must be completed.

f)  May, at the learner’s request, read back what has been written, but no comment must be made about any part of the learner’s response.

g)  Must refer any problems or issues during the assessment to the Invigilator.

A learner should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the scribe and this should reflect the learner’s usual way of working. For a learner who requires both a reader and a scribe, the same person may at as both, as long as permission has been provided for both arrangements.

A learner using a scribe must be accommodated separately within the Centre as not to disturb other learners taking their assessment at the same time.

**III. Use of a Sign Language Interpreter (BSL or SSE)**

A Sign Language Interpreter is an individual who presents the questions in an assessment in Sign Language, without changing the meaning, adding additional information or explaining what the question requires. A Sign Language Interpreter may be required for hearing-impaired learners for whom this is their normal way of working.

British Sign Language (BSL) has its own grammatical structure and syntax, and, as a language, it is not dependent nor is it strongly related to spoken language. Any alternative language cannot be used as part of a Reasonable Adjustment, where specific skills in a language are being assessed. For example, BSL is prohibited in an assessment of the Speaking, Listening and Communication component of Functional Skills English qualifications.

Assessment material can be presented to a learner using BSL as long as the skills being assessed are not reading or listening skills. A BSL version of assessment material may be provided on a video recording of (or in addition to) the assessment material in written English.

Sign Supported English (SSE) is another form of Sign Language in Britain. SSE is not a language in itself as it uses the same signs as BSL, but they are used in the same order as spoken English. SSE is used to support spoken English.

In each case, it is the Centre’s responsibility to arrange for a Sign Language interpreter. The Centre must also consider whether additional adjustments such as extra time, or a separate assessment room, may also be required.

Where externally set, centres can request language modified assessment material from HOPEFIELDS, for learners who have BSL as their first language. Where this is the case, the Centre must submit their application for Reasonable Adjustment as soon as the need is identified for timescales for the provision of assessment material to be agreed.

**IV. Prompter**

A learner with a severe attention difficulty may benefit from the use of a prompter in timed assessments to draw their attention back to the assessment task. The Centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a prompter will be an effective adjustment. Where the problem is one of concentration, consideration should be given to allowing supervised rest breaks, rather than the use of a prompter.

In all cases, the Centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a prompter. The Centre should select the prompter on the basis of their ability to work effectively with the learner. The prompter should be sufficiently familiar with the learner to recognise when their attention is no longer on the assessment task and that they are not, for example, looking away from the assessment paper whilst thinking about their response. The prompter should not normally be the learner’s own Tutor or Assessor, except in circumstances where it is necessary to do so. In such cases, HOPEFIELDS must be consulted with. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a prompter.

The Head of Organisation, or delegated representative, must approve the use of individuals as prompters. Prior to their use, the Centre must provide the prompter with clear instructions regarding what they are required and what they are not permitted to do. A separate Invigilator must be present where a prompter is used to ensure that the guidance regarding prompters is followed.

During an assessment, the prompter:

a)  Must sit near enough to be able to observe the learner and to draw their attention back to the assessment, without being obtrusive. only read as requested by the learner.

b)  Must use an appropriate method of prompting to suit the individual needs of the learner. The method must be used by the prompter must be mutually agreed by the prompter and the learner

prior to the assessment, ensuring that the learner is comfortable with the method and that it is acceptable to the Centre. Methods used by the prompter may be a light tap on the learner’s arm or shoulder or a light tap on the learner’s desk (without touching the assessment material). Prompters should attempt to avoid verbal prompts if possible, however, it should be taken into consideration that some learners (such as a learner with emotional or behavioural vulnerability or sensitivity) may not be comfortable with a ‘light tap’ prompt and a verbal prompt may be more appropriate in these circumstances.

c) Must not advise the learner regarding which part of the assessment to complete, when to move onto other parts of the assessment or advise on the order in which the assessment must be completed.

d) Must refer any problems or issues during the assessment to the Invigilator.

A learner should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the prompter and this should reflect the learner’s usual way of working. A learner using a prompter may require separate accommodation within the Centre as not to disturb other learners taking their assessment at the same time, dependent on the method of prompting used.

**V. Practical Assistant**

A practical assistant is a person who, during an assessment, carries out practical tasks at the instruction of a learner. For example, turning a page of the question paper or guiding a learner using a Braille paper to the correct page they need. A practical assistant is not permitted where the completion of a task is a competency being assessed, such as during a practical assignment. The Centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a prompter will be an effective adjustment.

In all cases, the Centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a practical assistant. The Centre should select the practical assistant on the basis of their ability to work effectively with the learner. The practical assistant should be a person who is able to ensure the safety of the learner and be able to carry out their instructions accurately. The practical assistant should not normally be the learner’s own Tutor or Assessor, except in circumstances where it is necessary to do so. In such cases, HOPEFIELDS must be consulted with. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a practical assistant.

The Head of Organisation, or delegated representative, must approve the use of individuals as practical assistants. Prior to their use, the Centre must provide the practical assistant with clear

instructions regarding what they are required and what they are not permitted to do. A separate Invigilator must be present where a practical assistant is used to ensure that the guidance regarding practical assistants is followed.

During an assessment, the practical assistant:

a)  Must follow the instructions prepared by the Centre on the level and kind of assistance that can be given to the learner.

b)  Must ensure the safety of the learner and those surrounding them.

c)  Must carry out instruction exactly as they are given, unless to do so would be unsafe. If the practical assistant does not understand the learner’s instructions, they may ask for clarification but must not lead the learner in any way or attempt to interpret the learner’s wishes.

d)  Must not advise the learner regarding which part of the assessment to complete, when to move onto other parts of the assessment or advise on the order in which the assessment must be completed.

e)  Must refer any problems or issues during the assessment to the Invigilator.

A learner should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the practical assistant and this should reflect the learner’s usual way of working. A learner using a practical assistant may require separate accommodation within the Centre as not to disturb other learners taking their assessment at the same time.

**VI. Transcriber**

A transcriber is an individual who will produce a transcript to assist the Assessor in the assessment of a learner’s work. This adjustment may be used in the following circumstances:

a)  Where a learner’s handwriting is fairly illegible, but they are unable to use a computer or dictate responses (otherwise a scribe would be the preferred adjustment). The handwriting cannot be totally illegible as the transcriber would be unable to perform the task. It may not be allowed where writing by hand is the competency being assessed.

b)  Where the learner’s responses are produced in BSL, SSE or Braille.

The transcript must be produced by an appropriately appointed Centre staff member who is familiar with the learner’s handwriting, is fully competent in Braille (where applicable), or who has the required skills in BSL (where applicable). The Centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a transcriber.

The transcriber must:

a)  Produce the transcript in a separate copy of the assessment documentation, or on white paper, as appropriate.

b)  Either handwrite or word process the transcript. If handwritten, dark blue or black ink must be used. The use of pencil is not permitted. Any corrections to spelling on the verbatim transcript must be written in different colour ink (but not red, green or purple).

c)  For examinations, produce the transcript immediately after the examination under secure conditions.

d)  Not involve the learner in the production of the transcript.

e)  Either transcribe complete answers, or where only occasional words require transcription, transcribe on a photocopy of the learner’s work. The transcriber must not mark or annotate the learner’s original work under any circumstances.

f)  Usually complete a word-for-word transcription, i.e. an exact copy of what the learner has written. The transcriber must not insert or omit words, or alter their order. In assessments for English, Welsh or Irish (Gaelic) qualifications, any errors, including those of spelling, punctuation and grammar, must be transcribed as given by the learner and must not be corrected. Where language is not being assessed, the transcriber may correct the spelling of non-technical words.

g)  Must not transcribe/replicate diagrammatical material. Assessment of such material must be based on the learner’s work.

The Assessor will assess the learner’s work and will only refer to the transcript if it is impossible to decipher any part of the learner’s response(s). For responses produced in BSL, SSE or Braille, the Assessor may refer solely to the transcript. The transcript must be securely attached to the back of the learner’s work and be provided to the Assessor and HOPEFIELDS in the normal way. The production of the transcript must not delay the dispatch of the scripts to the Assessor/HOPEFIELDS.

**Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure**

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**1. Scope**

1.01  This policy and procedure details the responsibilities of HOPEFIELDS and its approved centres regarding malpractice and maladministration. This includes detailing the steps that individuals must take when reporting an actual or suspected occurrence of malpractice or maladministration to HOPEFIELDS as well as the actions that HOPEFIELDS will take upon receipt of the information.

1.02  The intended audience for this document is:

a)  HOPEFIELDS Directors and Board of Trustees.

b)  HOPEFIELDS core, sub-contracted and associate staff, including External Quality Assurers (EQAs).

c)  All staff of HOPEFIELDS Delivery Partners associated with HOPEFIELDS provision.

d) All staff in HOPEFIELDS recognised and partner centres.

e)  Qualification Regulators.

f)  Industry Regulators.

1.03 This policy and procedure is **not applicable to learners**. If a learner studying a HOPEFIELDS qualification wishes to report a potential instance of malpractice or maladministration to HOPEFIELDS, they should refer to the HOPEFIELDS External Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.

1.04  If a learner has been registered at an HOPEFIELDS Centre that has since had its HOPEFIELDS Centre status revoked due to malpractice or maladministration, they may wish to contact the HOPEFIELDS Quality Assurance Team for advice via email at info@hopefieldseducation.co.uk.

**2. Purpose**

2.01 The purpose of this document is to:

a)  Define to centres what constitutes as malpractice and maladministration.

b)  Outline to centres HOPEFIELDS’s policy and procedure for the identification and investigation

of suspected or proven cases of malpractice and maladministration.

c)  Outline the process of how HOPEFIELDS will respond to allegations of malpractice and maladministration.

d)  Outline the requirements for how centres must investigate suspected cases of malpractice and maladministration.

e)  Ensure that HOPEFIELDS meets the requirements of the Qualification Regulators regarding malpractice and maladministration.

f)  Minimise risks to the integrity of HOPEFIELDS qualifications and to protect learner interests.

**3. Malpractice and Maladministration Definitions and Types**

3.01 Malpractice is a deliberate or reckless act of an individual or business dishonestly claiming learning outcomes and/or units for learners through fraudulent or deceptive means. Malpractice is an act that does not comply with the Qualification Regulators’ conditions and compromises the authenticity, reliability and integrity of qualifications and/or units.

3.02 Malpractice can be conducted by centres, Centre staff and learners. To aid centres’ understanding of what constitutes as malpractice, HOPEFIELDS has provided examples below. The examples provided are separated and linked to the five sections of HOPEFIELDS’s Approval Criteria, as detailed within the HOPEFIELDS Quality Assurance Manual. Please note that the below examples do not provide an exhaustive list of what constitutes as malpractice.

3.03 **HOPEFIELDS reserves the right to investigate any incident which it believes may undermine the integrity of HOPEFIELDS qualifications or which may pose a risk to learners.**

**I. Centre Malpractice**

3.04  Examples of malpractice regarding **internal management and systems** include, but are not limited to:

a)  Failure to adhere to HOPEFIELDS’s suite of policies, procedures and associated documentation, including failure to notify HOPEFIELDS where instances of suspected or proven malpractice have been identified within the Centre.

b)  Failure to provide staff with adequate resources and support in order for them to perform their role effectively.

c)  Failure to appropriately induct and train staff members into their roles, including training on the Centre’s policies, procedures and systems.

d)  Failure to respond to requests for information as well as access to premises, individuals, records and learners when requested to do so by HOPEFIELDS.

e)  Failure to have an appropriate quality system in place to ensure quality and consistency across satellite centres, including having inadequate service level agreements (SLAs) in place with partner organisations.

f)  Deliberate falsification of records to claim certificates.

3.05  Examples of malpractice regarding **delivery staff, resources and equipment** include, but are not limited to:

a)  Having a workforce in place for the training and assessment of HOPEFIELDS qualifications which are not suitably qualified or experienced to perform their role.

b)  The deliberate submission of inaccurate CVs or invalid certificates to HOPEFIELDS during Centre, staff or qualification approval processes.

c)  Having practices that deliberately ignore or do not comply with the relevant health and safety legislations and directives regarding the Centre’s provision.

d)  Provision of learning resources and materials to learners which offer improper assistance or provide learners with an unfair advantage regarding their assessment of the qualification.

3.06  Examples of malpractice regarding **assessment and training** include, but are not limited to:

a)  Failure to implement a robust initial assessment process to ensure learners meet the minimum entry requirements for the qualification they are registered against, including having the appropriate levels of language abilities.

b)  Providing adjustments or special considerations to learners which have not been approved by HOPEFIELDS, where this is required.

c)  Excessive and improper direction from Assessors to learners during assessments on how to meet assessment criteria, including the provision of prompts or model answers.

d)  Deception through the manufacturing of learner evidence, records of observations, witness testimonies or any other assessment records.

e)  Failure to comply with requirements of accurate and safe retention and storage of learner evidence and assessment records.

3.07  Examples of malpractice regarding **internal quality assurance** include, but are not limited to:

a) Knowingly allowing claims for certification where there is no or insufficient evidence to support learner achievement.

b)  Manipulating or falsifying internal quality assurance records, such as records of portfolio sampling.

c)  Failure to appropriately respond to and investigate suspected cases of malpractice or maladministration, including the failure to notify HOPEFIELDS.

d)  Purposefully providing HOPEFIELDS with false or inaccurate information regarding Centre practices, including those regarding malpractice investigations.

3.08 Examples of malpractice regarding **external assessment arrangements** include, but are not limited to:

a)  Utilising live examination materials for any other reason than the controlled assessment of learners, including using live examination materials, for training, for mock examinations or for the creation of Centre assessment tools.

b)  Review of examination papers and questions by Tutors and Assessors involved in the delivery of the qualification.

c)  Failure to use appropriately trained and suitable invigilators for controlled assessments and examinations.

d)  Provision of improper assistance or invigilation during assessments, including provision of mark schemes, prompts or model answers. This also includes failure to address identified cases of collusion or plagiarism between learners during assessments.

e)  Failure to provide an appropriate environment conducive to fair assessment.

f)  Failure to retain secure storage of examination materials.

g)  Retention of completed examination papers, including the failure to send these securely to HOPEFIELDS no later than two working days after the examination date.

h)  Failure to conduct external assessments in line with HOPEFIELDS and qualification requirements, including failure to follow the HOPEFIELDS Invigilation Policy.

**II. Learner Malpractice**

3.09 Learner malpractice is malpractice committed by an enrolled learner at a Centre. Examples include, but are not limited to:

a)  Failure to acknowledge sources properly and/or copying from another learner’s work or notes (either electronically or in person) and submitting the work as if it were the learner’s own (also known as plagiarism).

b)  Collusion with others when an assessment must be completed by individual learners.

c)  Assuming the identity of another learner or having someone assume their identity during an assessment (also known as impersonation).

d)  Use of unauthorised aids or physical possession of unauthorised materials (including mobile phones, MP3 players, notes, etc.) in the examination room.

e)  Dissemination of secure examination and assessment material.

f)  Communication with other learners during controlled assessments.

g)  Providing a false declaration of authenticity regarding the completion of their assessment evidence.

**III. Maladministration**

3.10 **Maladministration** is an activity of poor practice that results in the Centre, or learner, not complying with the specific requirements for the delivery of a qualification. Maladministration is often a reflection of poor rather than improper practice and therefore may require HOPEFIELDS, or a Centre’s assigned EQA, to raise actions for quality improvement. Although some instances of maladministration may not require investigation by HOPEFIELDS, repeated cases and failure to respond and prevent further instances will then itself be escalated to constitute as malpractice.

Examples of inefficient administration that could result in maladministration include, but are not limited to:

a) Poor, but mostly compliant, invigilation of external assessments.
b) Failure to timely register learners, or registering a learner against the incorrect

qualification.
c) Failure to keep the Centre’s record up to date on HOPEFIELDS systems.
d) Issuing an incorrect certificate to a learner.
e) Failure to submit a timely claim for certification following internal confirmation of achievement.
f) Incorrect completion of HOPEFIELDS examinations and their associated documentation.

3.11 Where maladministration is conducted dishonestly or with intent by an individual, this in itself will be referred to and investigated as malpractice by HOPEFIELDS.

**4. Preventing Occurrences of Malpractice and Maladministration**

**I. HOPEFIELDS Responsibilities**

4.01 HOPEFIELDS will take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of malpractice and maladministration. This includes having policies and procedures in place which reduce the risk of malpractice and maladministration from occurring during the development, delivery and award of its qualifications, as well as ensuring that these policies and procedures are consistently followed by both HOPEFIELDS and its approved centres.

4.02 HOPEFIELDS recognises the impact and potential repercussions that can occur if the integrity of its qualifications and assessments are compromised. HOPEFIELDS will ensure that all instances of alleged or suspected malpractice are investigated. HOPEFIELDS will take the necessary action to maintain the integrity of its qualifications and assessments.

4.03 Regarding malpractice and maladministration, HOPEFIELDS is responsible for:

a)  Taking all reasonable steps to prevent occurrences.

b)  Holding an up to date and published policy and procedure for the investigation of suspected and alleged occurrences.

c)  Conducting rigorous investigations by appropriate, competent staff, who have no personal interest in the outcome.

d)  Reviewing Centre arrangements, in line with the HOPEFIELDS Risk-Based Approach to Centre Quality Monitoring Policy and Procedure.

e)  Providing guidance to centres regarding how to best prevent and investigate occurrences.

f)  Taking appropriate and proportionate action following the identification of an occurrence. This includes the application of Sanctions against centres.

g)  Informing other Awarding Organisations where occurrences may affect that organisation.

h)  Reporting occurrences to Qualification and Industry Regulators, where an Adverse Effect has occurred, or is likely to occur.

i)  Reporting occurrences to the police, where it is believed a criminal act has been committed, including incidents of fraud.

j)  Informing funding bodies or other quality auditing bodies (e.g. ESFA, IFATE), where appropriate.

4.04 The HOPEFIELDS Responsible Officer will ensure that investigations into malpractice and maladministration conducted by the Quality Assurance Team are thorough and that the appropriate action is taken against centres, where this is applicable. The process of individual investigations is overseen by a manager within the Quality Assurance Team.

4.05 The outcomes of all investigations conducted by the Quality Assurance Team will be reported to the HOPEFIELDS Responsible Officer and the HOPEFIELDS Board of Trustees.

4.06 Where a Centre is managed by a HOPEFIELDS Delivery Partner, HOPEFIELDS will delegate its responsibilities regarding malpractice and maladministration to that Delivery Partner’s Quality

Assurance Team. The Delivery Partner will use their own internal procedure for investigating incidents, which will be closely aligned to HOPEFIELDS’s own procedures. The outcomes of investigations will be shared periodically with the HOPEFIELDS Quality Assurance Team for review.

4.07 HOPEFIELDS will always aim to work within the timeframes detailed within this policy, however, there may be instances where this is not possible due to the circumstances regarding the incident. Where timeframes are required to be extended by HOPEFIELDS, the Centre will be informed of new timeframes by HOPEFIELDS in writing.

**II. External Quality Assurer Responsibilities**

4.08 It is the responsibility of HOPEFIELDS’s EQAs who discover suspected malpractice or maladministration during a monitoring activity to report these concerns to the Quality Assurance Team immediately. The EQAs findings will be documented on the External Quality Assurance Report completed during the monitoring activity, or through the provision of a written statement to the HOPEFIELDS Quality Assurance Team.

4.09  The EQA’s role is to provide accurate and detailed information regarding the allegation, but to not make judgements regarding whether malpractice has in fact occurred. The HOPEFIELDS Quality Assurance Team will follow its own procedures for the investigation into malpractice and maladministration to draw its own conclusions.

**III. Centre Responsibilities**

4.10  A condition of gaining and retaining HOPEFIELDS Centre Approval is that centres must have a published malpractice and maladministration policy and procedure. Guidance on what should be included in this policy is detailed within the HOPEFIELDS Quality Assurance Manual.

4.11  The Head of Organisation and Quality Assurance Contact(s) within the Centre are responsible for being fully conversant with HOPEFIELDS’s policy and procedure regarding malpractice and maladministration. The Centre must ensure that all staff and learners are aware of their individual responsibilities in terms of preventing and dealing with instances of malpractice and maladministration.

4.12  The Centre must ensure that all individuals involved in their administration processes and in its delivery of HOPEFIELDS qualifications receive a thorough induction, which includes promoting ways of working to prevent malpractice and maladministration from occurring. Individuals must understand

the level of responsibility they hold regarding malpractice and maladministration as well as understanding the consequences of failing to carry out their responsibilities appropriately.

4.13  To prevent the occurrence of malpractice and maladministration, the **Head of Organisation and/or Quality Assurance Contact(s)** must ensure that:

a) The Centre has developed its own policies and procedures regarding preventing, identifying and responding to suspected and proven occurrences of malpractice and maladministration.

b)  That the policies and procedures for malpractice and maladministration are reviewed annually to ensure they remain accurate and fit for purpose.

c)  Centre staff understand the importance of adhering to the qualification delivery and assessment requirements of each qualification that they are approved to deliver.

d)  Centre staff have an appropriate secure area for storage of assessment instruments, qualification papers and marking guidance (including IT) and for secure retention of learner evidence, assessment and internal quality assurance records in line with HOPEFIELDS requirements. This should be supported by clear security measures.

e)  There is clear guidance for Centre staff regarding the conducting and supervision of examinations and controlled assessments and that this is in line with the HOPEFIELDS Invigilation Policy.

f)  Malpractice and maladministration features in the Centre’s risk assessment and self- assessment activities.

g)  That all Centre staff are provided with clear instructions and are sufficiently trained on what to do if they suspect that a case of malpractice or maladministration has occurred.

h)  The Centre’s assessment strategies have been designed in a way to limit the risk of incidents of malpractice and maladministration from occurring.

4.15 To prevent occurrences of malpractice and maladministration, **all Centre staff involved with the delivery of HOPEFIELDS qualifications** must:

a)  Take all reasonable steps to prevent instances of malpractice and maladministration from occurring.

b)  Comply with the published HOPEFIELDS Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure at all times.

c)  Provide learners with information regarding malpractice and maladministration during their induction, including detailing the potential penalties for conducting such acts.

d)  Remain vigilant to possible instances of malpractice and maladministration.

e)  Notify HOPEFIELDS of any incidents of malpractice and maladministration.

f)  Assist and co-operate with HOPEFIELDS during investigations into malpractice and maladministration.

**IV. Providing Information to Learners**

4.16  It is the Centre’s responsibility to ensure that an explanation of malpractice and maladministration forms a part of each learner’s induction at their Centre. All learners should receive an explanation, including examples, of malpractice and maladministration, as well as being informed of the consequences of them committing such acts. In providing information, a learner’s individual needs should be considered and therefore it may be provided in different formats dependent on the learner. Centres are encouraged to include a group discussion involving learners regarding malpractice and maladministration, where incidents and their consequences are discussed.

4.17 Learners must be made aware that malpractice and maladministration also includes the use of technology and that malpractice and maladministration can occur in:

a)  The compilation of portfolios of internal assessment evidence.

b)  The presentation of practical work.

c)  The preparation and authentication of coursework.

d)  Individual conduct during internal and external assessments.

4.18 Learners should be asked to confirm their understanding of malpractice and maladministration in writing. The evidence of this should be included within each learner’s induction documents.

4.19 To reinforce the learners’ understanding of malpractice and maladministration, they should receive regular reminders from Centre staff during their course. This should include displayed reminders in prominent locations throughout the learning environment, in addition to being reminded before the start of an examination/formal assessment and prior to the submission of a completed portfolio.

**5. Identification of Malpractice and Maladministration**

5.01 Occurrences of malpractice and maladministration can be identified in a number of ways. It is important, both for HOPEFIELDS and for centres, to recognise and take into consideration the various processes that may allow incidents of malpractice and maladministration to occur.

5.02 Malpractice and maladministration may be identified by:

a)  Ongoing quality assurance activity and monitoring, for example during internal quality assurance activities.

b)  Issues raised during invigilation or assessment activities.

c)  Intelligence, complaints or feedback received from staff, learners, employers or members of the public.

5.03  Centre staff must understand and follow both HOPEFIELDS’ and their individual Centre’s processes and procedures for dealing with suspected and actual cases of malpractice,

5.04  Where centres become aware of poor practice that constitutes as **maladministration**, they should follow the Centre’s own internal policy and procedure for dealing with such incidents. A quality improvement plan should be discussed and implemented internally to prevent further instances. The details of the maladministration should be shared by the Centre to their allocated HOPEFIELDS EQA upon their next external monitoring activity.

5.05 Where **maladministration** has been performed dishonestly by a learner or a staff member, or if the incident has a potential to cause a risk to the integrity of HOPEFIELDS qualifications or to the interests of learners, centres must inform HOPEFIELDS immediately. This will be treated and referred to as malpractice by HOPEFIELDS.

5.06 In all cases where centres become aware of suspected or proven **malpractice,** they must notify HOPEFIELDS immediately.

**I. Notification to HOPEFIELDS**

5.07  Centres should ensure that HOPEFIELDS are promptly notified where malpractice has been identified or where it is believed malpractice may have occurred within their Centre. This includes where allegations of malpractice are notified to the Centre by a third party or a ‘whistleblower’. Failure to timely notify HOPEFIELDS will lead to sanctions being applied against the Centre.

5.08  Notifications of suspected or proven malpractice should be sent to the HOPEFIELDS Quality Assurance Team by completing the HOPEFIELDS Notification of Suspected or Proven Malpractice Form, which can be found on the HOPEFIELDS website here: <https://www.HOPEFIELDS.org.uk/support/quality-assurance/>.

Centres should complete the form and send, via read receipt email, to assurance@HOPEFIELDS.org.uk. The submission of the form must be completed, or endorsed by the lead internal quality assurance contact/quality manager within the Centre.

5.09  If suspected or proven malpractice or maladministration is found by a HOPEFIELDS External Quality Assurer during a monitoring activity, they will inform the HOPEFIELDS Quality Assurance Team, or Delivery Partner equivalent, on the day of the identification.

**II. How Allegations will be Investigated**

5.10  Once notification of suspected malpractice is received by HOPEFIELDS, the Quality Assurance Team will consider how the matter will be investigated. A summary of the investigation process is illustrated in the diagram below:

5.11 Within **2 working days** of the receipt of the notification, a member of the Quality Assurance Team will be allocated to the investigation as the Investigating Officer. This individual will have general oversight and coordination of the investigation process.

5.12 The Investigating Officer will take one of the below courses of action:

a)  **Ask the Centre to conduct an internal centre investigation into the allegation**. If it is deemed that the Centre was not complicit in the act of malpractice, the Investigating Officer may instruct the Centre to conduct their own initial investigation into the allegation. HOPEFIELDS may apply Sanctions where it is deemed necessary. Please refer to section 6.

b)  **Place the Centre under HOPEFIELDS investigation**. The Quality Assurance Team will place the Centre under HOPEFIELDS investigation if:

It is deemed by the Quality Assurance Team that the Centre was, or may be, complicit with the incident.

1. If the intended Investigation Contact within the Centre is deemed by HOPEFIELDS to have a personal interest in the outcome of the investigation.
2. The Centre’s own policy for dealing with malpractice or maladministration was not followed or was not effective in dealing with the alleged case.

IV. The Centre failed to promptly notify HOPEFIELDS when the case was identified. It is deemed that there is the potential for an Adverse Effect.

V. Evidence of proven malpractice has been identified.

5.13  If HOPEFIELDS identifies malpractice or receives notification of suspected malpractice in a Centre, it may not immediately inform the Centre to ensure that the investigation outcome is not impeded.

5.14  In all cases, HOPEFIELDS may impose Sanctions on a Centre prior or during an investigation to minimise further risk or the potential for an Adverse Effect. Where this is the case, the Quality Assurance Team will inform the Centre of the Sanction at its discretion.

**6. Procedure for Internal Centre Investigation**

6.01  Within **5 working days** of the notification of malpractice being received, the allocated HOPEFIELDS Investigating Officer will communicate what actions must be taken by the Centre during their investigation. The Investigating Officer will allocate an Investigation Contact within the Centre, who must manage the investigation internally.

6.02  The Centre Investigation Contact must report the findings of their investigation to info@hopefieldseducation.co.uk within the stated timescales using the HOPEFIELDS Investigation Report by Approved Centre. This template will be provided to the Investigation Contact by the HOPEFIELDS Quality Assurance Team at the start of the Centre’s investigation.

6.03  The Investigating Officer will provide the Centre Investigation Contact with clear guidelines of what the investigation must cover, what facts must be established and how enquiries should be conducted.

6.04  The HOPEFIELDS Investigating Officer will continue to communicate with the Centre Investigation Contact throughout the investigation. The Centre Investigation Contact will be provided deadlines for the completion of their investigation as well as deadlines for any key pieces of information to be provided to the HOPEFIELDS Investigating Officer. These deadlines must be adhered to. Failure to meet agreed deadlines could result in Sanctions being applied or escalated.

6.05  The Centre Investigation Contact must ensure that they have been sufficiently trained in dealing with incidents of malpractice and maladministration before the investigation commences. The Centre Investigation Contact should liaise with their Head of Organisation to ensure that all staff members and learners involved are reminded of their responsibilities and rights, unless the Head of Organisation deems this to be inappropriate due to the circumstances. HOPEFIELDS should be notified if this is the case.

6.06  The Centre Investigation Contact must co-operate fully with HOPEFIELDS during the investigation process. Centres may refer to the HOPEFIELDS Malpractice Investigation Manual for further guidance**.** Failure to conduct investigations thoroughly will trigger the Centre to be taken under HOPEFIELDS investigation and Sanctions may be imposed.

**I. Action Following Centre Investigation**

6.07  The HOPEFIELDS Investigating Officer will review the Centre’s report to determine whether the investigation has been completed to a satisfactory standard. The Investigating Officer will also conduct a review of the evidence to identify and consider the risks of any Adverse Effects.

6.08  Following the completion of the report, the Investigating Officer may request that the Centre conducts further enquires based on the information provided. Centres will be notified of this within **5 working days** of the report being received. Centres must conduct these enquires in line with any deadlines provided.

6.09  Where the Investigating Officer is satisfied that the Centre’s investigation can be marked as complete, the Centre’s investigation report will be submitted to a manager within the Quality Assurance Team. The HOPEFIELDS Investigating Officer, in conjunction with the manager, will decide on the appropriate action to be taken and this will be communicated to the Centre within **10 working days** of the submission of the satisfactory report. HOPEFIELDS may decide to:

a)  Accept the outcomes of the investigation and determine no further action is required.

b)  Accept the outcomes of the investigation but provide the Centre with recommendations for quality improvement.

c)  Sanction the Centre in line with the HOPEFIELDS Risk-Based Approach to Centre Quality Monitoring Policy and Procedure.

d) Place the Centre under HOPEFIELDS investigation (refer to section 7).

6.10  Where the outcomes of the investigation are accepted and it has been deemed that no Adverse Effect has occurred, the incident will be logged on HOPEFIELDS’s internal systems and will be marked as closed. The confirmation that the investigation has been closed, in conjunction with any recommendations for quality improvement, will be provided to the Centre in writing by the Quality Assurance Team.

6.11 Where an Adverse Effect has been identified, HOPEFIELDS will apply the appropriate level of Sanction against the Centre. The Centre will be informed of any Sanctions applied within **10 working days** of their investigation report submission. The Centre may be provided with an Action Plan with specific deadline dates for their completion.

6.12 Where a case of malpractice or maladministration is upheld against a Learner, the Learner must be informed of their right to appeal to the Centre and ultimately to HOPEFIELDS when the Centre’s internal appeals processes have been exhausted.

6.13 Dependent on the review of the accumulated risk level regarding the Adverse Effect, HOPEFIELDS may decide to place the Centre under its own investigation. The Centre will be notified of this within **10 working days** of the Centre investigation report submission.

6.14 Centres must retain all documentation regarding their investigation for a minimum period of 7 years.

**7. Procedure for HOPEFIELDS Investigation**

7.01 Upon the decision to place the Centre under HOPEFIELDS investigation, the Investigating Officer, in conjunction with a manager within the Quality Assurance Team, will determine the best course of action to ensure that the investigation is conducted thoroughly and effectively. The Investigating Officer will ensure that individuals who have had direct engagement with the monitoring of the Centre, such as the Centre’s assigned EQA, remain independent from the investigation.

7.02 If there has been an Adverse Effect, or there is potential for an Adverse Effect, the Quality Assurance Team will promptly notify the relevant Qualification Regulator(s) and potentially other Awarding Organisations. The Regulators will be regularly updated with the progress of the investigation and upon its completion. The Regulator(s) may decide to manage the investigation themselves, in which case the Investigating Officer will conduct the investigation in consultation with the Regulator’s investigation contact.

7.03 During the investigation, the Quality Assurance Team may wish to speak to members of Centre staff or learners enrolled at the Centre. The Quality Assurance Team may also wish to arrange visits to Centre premises or request the provision of Centre records. Centres must provide every support to the Quality Assurance Team during the investigation. This includes the provision of access to staff, learners and resources, where requested.

7.04 It is at HOPEFIELDS’s discretion whether to inform the Centre of its plan for the investigation, including the details of the learners, staff members or records with which HOPEFIELDS require access. However, HOPEFIELDS will aim to provide the Centre with adequate notice to allow for any arrangements to take place, where HOPEFIELDS believes that this would not affect the outcome of the investigation.

7.05 In line with the HOPEFIELDS Fees and Charges, the Centre will be charged for any additional visits that they receive from HOPEFIELDS that are required as part of the investigation.

7.06 The Investigating Officer will initially document HOPEFIELDS’s findings on an internal investigation report. This report will be stored on HOPEFIELDS systems and will be shared with the relevant Qualification Regulator(s), where appropriate. This report will not usually be shared with centres but may be shared at HOPEFIELDS’s discretion.

7.07 The Investigating Officer, in conjunction with a manager within the Quality Assurance Team, will continue to conduct and report on the investigation until it is deemed that the case has been fully investigated. At this time, the Investigating Officer will submit the completed investigation report to a manager within the Quality Assurance Team for their review.

**I. Action Following HOPEFIELDS Investigation**

7.08 The Quality Assurance Team will review the completed investigation report to ensure accuracy and will conduct a review of all of the evidence regarding the case to determine whether the allegation has been upheld. The validity and credibility of evidence gathered will be considered.

7.09 The Centre will be notified of HOPEFIELDS’s decision in writing, as well as the details of any Sanctions or actions that have been applied to the Centre as a result of the investigation. For details of the potential action HOPEFIELDS may take, please refer to section 8.

7.10 If the allegation is not upheld, the Investigating Officer will inform the Centre and the appropriate Qualification Regulator(s), if the incident has been reported to them. The investigation will be marked as closed and no further action will be taken.

**8. Penalties for Cases of Malpractice**

8.01 If malpractice is identified, or if there is reasonable cause to believe malpractice has occurred, HOPEFIELDS will consider the required Sanction based on risk of, or the severity of any Adverse Effects. Based on this outcome, the Quality Assurance Team may:

a)  Recall any invalid certificates that have been identified.

b)  Apply/ratify the appropriate Sanction level against the Centre.

c)  Subject the Centre to further monitoring following the visit (if appropriate).

d)  Notify the Qualification Regulators, other Awarding Bodies and funding or other quality auditing bodies of the outcome of the investigation.

**I. Actions Taken Against Centres**

8.02 If cases of malpractice are proven following an investigation, the Quality Assurance Team will apply the appropriate level of Sanction against the Centre, in line with the HOPEFIELDS Risk-Based Approach to Centre Quality Monitoring Policy and Procedure. For any Sanction, which is not the removal of qualification or Centre Approval, the Quality Assurance Team will provide the Centre with an action plan to be followed for the Sanction to be removed or reduced. The action plan will also be shared with the Centre’s External Quality Assurer, who will also monitor action completion.

8.03 The Centre will be required to carry out all actions as outlined in the action plan by the deadlines provided. When all actions have been completed, the Centre will be monitored by their assigned External Quality Assurer according to any new risk ratings that have been applied. Failure to meet the given action plan may result in the escalation of a Sanction to a higher level, as detailed within the HOPEFIELDS Risk-Based Approach to Centre Quality Monitoring Policy and Procedure.

8.04 The Quality Assurance Team will promptly notify the relevant Regulators as soon as it believes that there is a likelihood for an Adverse Effect to occur, or if they believe one has already occurred. The Quality Assurance Team will also notify other Awarding Organisations under the A8.7 Condition of Recognition and will keep them updated of the investigation outcome.

**II. Actions Taken Against Centre Staff**

8.05 If it is identified that an individual has been involved in an instance of malpractice, HOPEFIELDS will take the appropriate action against the individual. These actions are, but not limited to:

a)  Training to be delivered by the Centre or by HOPEFIELDS for the individual.

b)  Subjected to further monitoring of their delivery of HOPEFIELDS qualifications.

c)  Temporary suspension of their approval to deliver some or all HOPEFIELDS qualifications.

d)  Permanent withdrawal of their approval to deliver some or all HOPEFIELDS qualifications.

8.06 HOPEFIELDS may instruct the Centre to take action against an individual within their Centre. These actions must be carried out as requested by the Quality Assurance Team. Failure to complete the actions may increase the level of Sanction against the Centre.

**III. Actions Taken Against Learners**

8.07 If it is identified that a learner has committed malpractice, HOPEFIELDS will take the appropriate action dependent on the circumstances and the nature of the qualification and the malpractice that has been identified. These actions are, but not limited to:

a)  Amendment of an assessment mark or grade.

b)  Disqualification from the completion of a qualification or unit.

c)  Revoking of an issued certificate.

8.08 If, during an investigation, it is identified that certificates claimed for by the Centre are invalid, the qualification achievement will be immediately removed from the learner’s record and the recalling of any issued certificates will be requested. HOPEFIELDS will inform the appropriate Regulators and any relevant third parties, such as the SIA or CSCS to inform them of the invalidation of the award.

8.09 When requested to do so, centres should make every effort to retrieve invalid certificates from learners and provide these to the Quality Assurance Team within **20 working days** of the request being made. Centres must also promptly share learner contact information with HOPEFIELDS when requested.

**9. Appeals**

9.01 If a Centre or a learner believes that this policy and procedure has not been applied consistently, accurately or fairly regarding their case, they can appeal the decisions made by HOPEFIELDS following the outcome of an investigation. Appeals must be made in writing to info@hopefieldseducation.co.uk.

9.02 Further details regarding making an appeal can be found in the HOPEFIELDS Appeals Policy and Procedure.

**10. Document Revision**

10.01 This policy is maintained by the Quality Assurance Team and will be reviewed and updated where necessary to reflect updated legislation, customer feedback, improvements of operation and changes to the regulatory environment. If you have any queries regarding the contents or the use of this policy, please contact the Quality Assurance Team directly on info@hopefieldseducation.co.uk.

10.02 HOPEFIELDS policies and procedures are signed off by the HOPEFIELDS Responsible Officer.

**Access to Fair Assessment Policy**

**Statement of Assessment**

•  We aim to provide a variety of qualifications which provide all students with the opportunity to achieve their full potential by the most appropriate and direct route.

•  Our Assessment Policy is based on the concepts of equality, diversity, clarity, consistency and openness.

•  We will endeavour to ensure that the assessment processes are implemented in a way which is fair and non-discriminatory.

**Access**

Students are made aware of the existence of this policy and have open access to it upon request.

All tutors are made aware of the contents and purpose of this policy.

This policy is reviewed annually and may be revised in response to feedback from students, tutors and external organisations.

**What students can expect from us**

•  We aim to ensure that all assessment of work is carried out fairly and in keeping with the awarding body’s requirements.

•  All portfolio-based work will be assessed fairly against the qualification standards and teachers involved will be fully trained.

•  Internal assessments will be carried out fairly and according to awarding body instructions.

•  Externally marked tests and exams will be according to the requirements of the awarding body.

Students can also expect:

•  To be fully inducted onto a new course and given information that can be shared with parents and carers.

•  Learning outcomes, performance criteria and other significant elements of learning and assessment to be made clear at the outset of the course and when assignments are set.

•  To be given appropriate assessment opportunities during the course with feedback provided on the quality of the work.

•  All work to be marked within two weeks of submission by the student.

•  Where equivalents and exemptions can be applied, we will ensure this is pursued with the relevant awarding body.

**Cheating and Plagiarism**

A fair assessment of a student’s work can only be made if that work is entirely the student’s own. Therefore, students can expect an awarding body to be informed if:

•  They are found guilty of copying, giving or sharing information or answers, unless part of a joint project

•  They use an unauthorised aid during a test or examination

•  They copy another student’s answers during a test or examination

•  They talk during a test or examination.

All allegations of cheating and plagiarism will lead to a full investigation which will follow the guidance of the relevant awarding body.

If a student feels he/she has been wrongly accused of cheating or plagiarism, they should be referred to the Complaints Policy.