Online Assessment Policy

Introduction

In response to the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown requirements, this policy has been developed so that the semester 1 sitting of the examinations can be conducted. This policy may be updated as new information and experience becomes available and will be revised once the current crisis is over. This policy aims to reflect the intention that the examinations proceed on a basis that protects the integrity of the assessment while being sensitive to the challenges associated with implementing online assessment with specific reference to access to the required technology and an adequate location for examinations to be undertaken. All communication to members is available on the ASSA website for ease of reference. This include frequently asked questions.

Governance

The Board of Examiners is the approving authority of the policy as recommended by the Education Board appointed by the Council. The ASSA office is responsible for the implementation of the policy. Assessments will only be marked where the conditions of the policy are met. The results released by the Board of Examiners will be final. Candidates that have not attempted the assessment will be marked as absent and a deferral can be requested were this was as a result of an incident as defined in this policy.

The policy aims to enable ASSA to fulfil its commitment in providing education through online assessment within acceptable education governance standards taking into consideration mitigating circumstances for candidates leading up to and during the online examination.

Conduct

Candidates are subject to the professional guidance and disciplinary procedures of ASSA. Misconduct or cheating during an examination is a serious offense that will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee for further investigation.

Candidates are required to complete the assessment without any assistance from another individual or individuals and may not help another individual or individuals in completing their assessment. Candidates that are aware of cheating have a responsibility to report this or risk being found complicit to the act.

Candidates may not access any notes, material, software and/or website content in any form that is not explicitly permitted during the assessment. Candidates will be allowed to have a clean exam pad to be used as scrap paper during the assessment. Candidates are required to destroy all information as it relates to the examination immediately after the examination is complete.

Assessment Method

The Principal Examiner of each subject, in consultation with the Education Board, is responsible to ensure that the assessment method applied is effective and that it provides candidates with a test environment for fair assessment. The candidate experience and operational risks, including but not limited to fraud risk, are carefully considered for each subject in selecting the most appropriate assessment method. The assessment method is therefore adaptive and subject dependent.

Candidates need to access the online examination through the ASSA Learning platform. In addition to this, candidates will be required to access a proctoring service as contracted by ASSA using various techniques and

methods to invigilate the examinations online. Candidates may be required to accept third party policies where this is relevant to continue with the assessment.

Assessment instructions will be sent to candidates and must be read with due care. It is essential that candidates participate in the preparation sessions that will be scheduled in advance of the actual assessment to become familiar with the software and the overall experience that can be expected on the day of assessment.

Time Allocation

The Principal Examiner for each subject determines the time allocation of the assessment. The Principal Examiner will determine the amount of additional time to be allocated per assessment where there is enough reason to do so based on the assessment method. Candidates with approved extra-time will retain the additional time granted. Candidates are strongly recommended to follow the guidance around reading time that will be detailed in the examination instructions and should use this time for the purpose it is intended for. Candidates who login late will not be granted any extra time for the time they have lost. The assessment end-time will remain unchanged for these candidates. It is important to note that the submission of online assessments must be completed within the time allocated. Candidates will not be permitted to submit assessment material after the end-time of the exam.

Technology

It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that technology requirements as recommended are in good working order prior to the assessment. Candidates must access and practice the software that they will be required to use prior to the examination and make sure that any restrictions to access the assessment are addressed in advance of the assessment. This must be performed in the same technical and physical environment that the actual assessment will be performed to minimise the risk of something not working. Candidates may be required to have head and shoulders visible on a webcam with a microphone turned on. Candidates are responsible to save work regularly during the assessment. Candidates are responsible for uploading the correct content for submission of the assessment in the format, size and location as communicated. Once the assessment is submitted it cannot be changed or retracted. Files that are uploaded and password protected will not be considered for assessment.

Candidates are allowed the use of only one electronic device for the purpose of accessing and completing the assessment. Dual screening is not allowed. An external keyboard and mouse are allowed. A mobile device is allowed only for assessments that require the scanning and uploading of written content in which instance the device must be switched off or be in airplane mode and only accessed at the end of the assessment time for the purpose that it is allowed.

Candidates who do not have access to technology must contact the ASSA office to request a voucher for the rental of equipment that will be provided at no charge to the candidate at the main centres of Johannesburg and Cape Town.

Candidates who experience technology failures during the assessment must continue as best they can under the circumstances. It is important to keep a log of these issues with supporting evidence where possible to strengthen the evidence when reporting this as an assessment incident after the assessment. The principal examiner will assess such incidents on their merits as set out below.

Location

Candidates are responsible for checking that the physical environment in which the assessment will be performed is quiet with adequate desk space and electrical points to complete the assessment. Candidates are not permitted to leave the assessment environment during the assessment. The assessment must be performed

in isolation of other people. Candidates may be required to show their physical environment to an online invigilator depending on the method of assessment that applies.

Where more than one candidate will be present in the same location, a fellow of ASSA or an IAA affiliated organisation must be present in the same location for the assessment. Such a location can include, but is not limited to, the place of work. This oversight will be in addition to the online invigilation that will apply. ASSA must be informed five working days before the date of assessment and the fellows will be required to sign a declaration in advance of the assessment and return this to ASSA to formalise the arrangement. It is the candidates' responsibility to ensure that the administration of this is completed timeously.

In the unfortunate event that a candidate is required to evacuate from the location during an assessment, no communication is permitted with anyone else during this period of absence from the assessment. The candidate is encouraged to return to the assessment and complete it as best possible following the evacuation and to then complete an incident report after the assessment.

Identification

Candidates may under no circumstances share their username and password with any person at any time. Sharing this information compromises your identity for the purpose of assessment.

Candidates may be required to positively identify themselves in person and by photographed identity at the beginning of an assessment. Candidates who are unable to fulfil the requirements on joining the assessment will be refused entry to the assessment. The assessment will not be marked if it has been completed or partially completed for whatsoever reason in this instance.

Candidates must not write their name on content provided for assessment. Examinations papers are assessed anonymously and for this purpose candidates must use their candidate number issued for the assessment.

Incidents

An assessment incident is a major unexpected event that is not in the control of the candidate that occurs at the time of assessment and that has a significant and material adverse effect on the candidate's performance of the assessment. This includes, but is not limited to technology failures, victim of crime and violence or medical emergencies. Candidates are expected to adjust for and manage to minimise the effect of any pre-existing conditions and circumstances.

Candidates will be required to complete the assessment incident report within five working days of the assessment. Outstanding evidence in support of the incident must be submitted no later than twenty working days after the date of the assessment. Information provided in support of evidencing the incident will be treated sensitively and will remain confidential. Mitigating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis by a panel considering the severity, duration and the time of the incident. The panel consists of the Chair of the Board of Examiners, the Principal Examiner and an Executive member of staff. Only candidates who have attempted the assessment are eligible for consideration of mitigating circumstances as it impacts the outcome of the assessment.

Recourse

Candidates can defer their registration for assessment to a next session if they do not have access to the necessary technology or if they are not comfortable with the software to be used. Candidates must apply for a refund before the date of assessment to be eligible for this late deregistration. Candidates have the right to appeal the outcome of an assessment in accordance with the appeal policy that is subject to counselling.

The Board of Examiners reserves the right to withhold the results of any one candidate or a cohort of candidates where there is an investigation pending that was referred to the Disciplinary Committee; or where an incident reported for mitigating circumstances is still under consideration.

Where the Board of Examiners become aware of incidents that affects a larger cohort of candidates, it will agree on the most appropriate course of action to minimise the effect on all the candidates. The Board of Examiners may declare the outcomes of an assessment to be null and void in exceptional circumstances that warrants such drastic action.

Reporting

All candidate assessment incidents must be reported to incident@actuarialsociety.org.za as soon as possible, but no later than five working days after the date of assessment. You must quote your candidate number in the subject line for ease of reference. Support from this mailbox will be limited to issues relating to the ASSA Learning system and incident reporting of the online examinations. Queries around the proctoring solution must be directed to the service provider through the chat line provided for this purpose. There is no guarantee that issues and incidents raised and reported can be resolved timeously for you to sit or complete the examination. You can apply for a refund in this instance.

Whistle Blowing

Persons who are aware of candidates who have cheated, plan to cheat or display suspicious behaviour can contact wels@actuarialsociety.org.za. Your identity will be protected. You will be required to furnish enough information to initiate an investigation.