



LEARNER HANDBOOK

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1. INTRODUCTION

The International Federation of Aromatherapists (IFA) awards qualifications as an Awarding Body and is also the Professional Body for aromatherapists, established in 1985. We are a charity set up in the public interest, whose purpose is the preservation of health and wellbeing by advancing the knowledge, practice of and expertise in aromatherapy by education, teaching and training through our curriculum content delivered by our approved centres. In our capacity as an Awarding Body, the IFA protects the interests of learners by providing a range of Approved Centres, external examinations and examiners. We set the standards that Centres are required to meet in order to be displayed on the register. We monitor Centres' performance and investigate complaints should a Centre fall below those standards and work proactively to improve their performance.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this handbook is to specify the role of the IFA in relation to learners. Learners are required to adhere to the protocol contained within this handbook in all dealings with the IFA. The handbook also provides learners with helpful information and guidance to be referred to throughout their studies.

3. QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATIONS

- a) Approved Centres' will teach all components of the course as specified in the course overview found on the IFA's website. Learners may be exempt from repeating a particular module under the Recognition of Prior Learning and Exemption Policy.
- b) Learners may purchase a copy of the relevant syllabus from the IFA shop, once they have logged into the IFA website.
- c) The specifications for each IFA Qualification(s) is published on the IFA's website including the assessment criteria and compulsory coursework.
- a) All IFA Qualifications(s) are assessed through external and internal assessments. Learners can obtain detailed information regarding examination procedures from their chosen Centre.

4. APPROVED CENTRES

All IFA Approved Centres appear on the IFA's Approved Provider directory on the IFA website. The directory displays the Centre's business name, inspected and approved training venue address, which Qualification(s) they deliver, the names of the teachers at the Centre and the Centre's contact details.

5. CENTRE RESPONSIBILITIES TO LEARNER

Your chosen Centre will ensure that you understand your responsibilities in relation to the Centre and the Centre's responsibilities in relation to you, as the learner.

The Centre will provide you with:

- a contract or agreement;
- information of Qualification(s) delivery/timetable;
- access to their internal complaints and appeals policies and other relevant policies and procedures.

6. THE IFA'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO LEARNERS

- a) For the avoidance of doubt, a learner's contract exists with the Centre not the IFA. The IFA will not get involved in any financial arrangements or agreements between the Centre and learner.
- b) The IFA's role is to regulate Centres' performance and investigate any concerns if a Centre underperforms and apply action reports and/or sanctions to isolate an issue to ensure learners are not adversely affected.
- c) The IFA will monitor Centres' performance through examination results, other monitoring activities and spot checks.
- d) Learners can view the Approval Criteria for Centres on the IFA's website.
- e) If a Centre, voluntarily or not, withdraws from delivering IFA Qualification(s) the IFA will take every reasonable step to protect the interests of learners as per the IFA's Transfer Policy.

7. ADDITIONAL IFA QUALIFICATION(S)

In our efforts to encourage learners to expand their qualification portfolio, experience and knowledge, learners who register on additional IFA Qualification(s) will not be required to pay the cost of student membership for that additional qualification. Please bring this to your tutor's attention upon enrolment. The IFA's curriculum also allows for transferal of credits (representing knowledge gained) so learners do not need to repeat units, as per the IFA's Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy.

8. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY & DIVERSITY

- a) The IFA aims to make its Qualification(s) as accessible as possible.
- b) Centres will comply with the IFA's Equality Opportunity and Diversity Policy and Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy and treat all learners fairly and equally; and ensure that learners can expect a fair and accessible route to an IFA Qualification(s) irrespective of disability, gender, race, age, marriage or civil partnership, sexual orientation, religion or beliefs.

9. DATA PROTECTION

- a) The IFA will protect learners data as per the IFA's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Policy.

- b) Centres will also have their own data protection policy, complementary to the IFA's Data Protection Policy.

10. RETENTION OF RECORDS

- a) The IFA will retain learners data and copies of assessment/examination results on its system, as per the IFA's Data Retention & Disposal Policy.
- b) Centres will also have their own data retention and disposal policy complementary to the IFA's Data Protection Policy.

11. LEARNER MEMBERSHIP

- a) All learners enrolled on an IFA Qualification will be registered with the IFA as a student member by their Centre.
- b) Learners must provide their tutor with their full name, DOB, personal address, email, telephone number and a passport sized head shot picture in JPG format (for student ID cards) and provide consent for the IFA to process this information.
- c) The learner must also provide certificates as evidence to their Centre if they are applying for:
 - Reasonable adjustment or Special Consideration e.g. details of any disability, learning difficulties, allergies to particular essential oils etc.
 - Exemption
 - The Professional Essential Oils Therapy Diploma Course (having met the prerequisite requirement)
- d) All members are bound by the Member Terms and Conditions and entitled to the benefits afforded to them during their membership term.
- e) The expiry date specified on the student ID card shows the maximum amount of time that learners have to complete an IFA Qualification.
- f) If a learner requires an extension to their membership they may be required to complete the Special Consideration Form.
- g) Once a learner has graduated (passed the IFA externally invigilated examinations) student membership will automatically lapse and they will no longer be a student.
- h) Learners' student membership confirmation will be sent to the Centre with the student ID card. Learners must bring their student ID card to IFA externally invigilated examinations as proof of identity.

- i) Centres may choose whether the student registration fee is included in their overall course fee or whether they require learners to pay for this in addition. Learners should confirm this with their chosen Centre if they are in any doubt.

12. LEARNER SUPPORT AREA

- a) Once registered as a member, learners can access the learner support area by signing into the IFA's website.
- b) Learners' individual sign in details are provided on each student's confirmation letter, which will be distributed to learners by their Centre.
- c) All registered learners will receive the Aromatherapy Times magazine which will be sent to the learner's personal address as recorded on file. The only exception to this rule is for those who reside in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan. To assist our learners in these countries we supply a translated digital version online in the learner support area alongside the digital version of the English copy. The spring, summer and autumn editions are provided in digital format and only the winter edition will be sent by post.

13. CHANGE OF ADDRESS DETAILS

- a) Learners must inform their Centre if any of the information provided to the IFA changes, who will inform the IFA.
- b) If a learner requires a replacement student ID card e.g. due to a name change, loss or damage, this can be ordered from the IFA shop.

14. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- a) Your chosen Centre will advise you which IFA course is most appropriate to undertake and determine if there are any aspects of IFA Qualification(s) or training procedures that may need adaptation to support your special requirements.
- b) Learners with special needs will be supported in a way that eliminates or reduces as much as is practically possible any disadvantage caused by their disability.
- c) Learners with special needs should discuss with Centres regarding the equipment they require and agree the necessary arrangements between them.
- d) The IFA and its Centre's will apply reasonable adjustments as set out in its Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy.
- e) All applications for special considerations submitted, following the correct procedure, will be judged on a case by case basis.

15. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND EXEMPTION POLICY

- a) The IFA and its Centres will apply recognition of prior learning and exemptions as set out in its Recognition of Prior Learning and Exemption Policy.
- b) No individual may enter into an IFA examination without having been verified by an IFA approved Centre and registered with the IFA as a student member.

16. COMPULSORY COURSEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

- a) All learners must have completed the compulsory coursework assignments before entering an IFA externally invigilated examination (which contributes to the learners' overall grade) as specified in the Qualification(s) specifications.
- b) Penalty fees are applied to Centres who enter learners into examinations without completed coursework and for the Quality Assurance Assessors time to visit the IFA Head Office and an interpreter/translator if necessary to mark the work. Centres may or may not require learners to pay this fee. Learners should confirm this with their chosen Centre if they are in any doubt.

17. MOCK EXAMINATIONS

All learners must have successfully completed mock examinations set by their Centre before entering into an IFA externally invigilated examination.

18. CHEATING & PLAGIARISM

- a) All work produced by learners must be their own work.
- b) Learners are required to have read the IFA's Cheating and Plagiarism Policy, which describes what constitutes cheating and plagiarism.
- c) If a learner is found to have cheated in an externally invigilated examination they will automatically be failed/paper invalidated and will not be able to re-enter into examinations or become an IFA member in future.

19. IFA EXTERNALLY INVIGILATED EXAMINATIONS

- a) IFA qualifications are only awarded to those who have successfully completed the IFA externally invigilated examinations.
- b) Quality Assurance Assessors will visit Centres to conduct examinations.
- c) Learners will undertake the IFA examinations within one (1) year of completing an IFA course. If an extension is required, learners must complete the Special Considerations Form, provided by their Centre.

20. EXAMINATION PROCEDURE

- a) Learners will take their ID card to examinations as proof and validation of their identity.
- b) Learners will refer to their Centre for information regarding examination procedures and what to expect on the day.

21. EXAMINATION DATES

- a) The IFA will provide Centres with various dates during a stipulated month on which a Quality Assurance Assessor is available and provide the Centre with a date(s) for examinations.
- b) Centres will inform learners of the date and time of their examinations once the IFA has agreed and confirmed this in writing.
- c) The IFA is not responsible for any loss or damage whether arising directly or indirectly from examination date delays or from being unable to accommodate learner's preferred date(s).

22. EXAMINATION LOCATION

- a) As a general rule all IFA externally invigilated examinations will be held at the Centre where the learner has trained.
- b) If, however, there is a large volume of examination candidates situated in one region, the IFA may stipulate a centralised location for theory examinations. Centres will inform learners of the venue in advance.
- c) A learner may take examinations at another IFA Approved Centre if the learner relocates during the examination period or if the Centre does not have the minimum amount of learners (6) to request a Quality Assurance Assessor visit to hold examinations at the Centre see point 25 'transfer'.

23. LANGUAGE OF THE ASSESSMENT

The IFA will work collaboratively with your chosen Centre to ensure assessments are undertaken in the learner's local language, to ensure learners are not disadvantaged.

24. EXAM CANCELLATION

- a) Centres schedule externally invigilated examinations with the IFA at least four (4) months in advance and will provide learners with enough notice to ensure attendance.
- b) Learners must inform their Centre as soon as possible if they are unable to attend an examination and complete the Candidate Cancellation Form, provided by their

Centre.

- c) No refund of examination fees will be granted for invalid reasons or non-attendance but the examination fee may be transferred for valid reasons. Learners should check with their Centre if the examination fee is included in their tuition fee.
- d) Valid and unavoidable reasons for cancellation include health issues, accident or family bereavement. Supportive evidence must be provided e.g. the relevant certificate. In this instance the learner will be re-entered into examinations at the next available opportunity. If a learner is seriously injured or impaired, the examination fee will automatically be refunded.

For the avoidance of doubt, pregnancy is not accepted as a reason to cancel a theory examination however, it will be accepted as a valid reason for cancellation of a practical examination.

- e) The maximum amount of times that a learner may be absent from an examination, regardless if it is for valid or invalid reason is three (3). After this time elapse the learner will be required to retake the course.
- f) Learners should not commit to examinations until all foreseeable circumstances have been taken into account.

25. TRANSFER

- a) Learners may request to transfer to another Approved Centre to undertake examinations if they are able to demonstrate the necessity.
- b) If a learner is absent from an examination or needs to resit an examination and does not want to wait until an examiner is next available in their country or region they may also transfer. In this instance examinations will take place at the other Centre's venue at the time the receiving Centre is holding examinations. Centres will arrange this in conjunction with learners and the other Centre between themselves as per the IFA Transfer Policy.
- c) Centres and learners are reminded to ensure there is another suitable Approved Centre to which learners can transfer.

Please note, the IFA cannot insist that a Centre receives another Centre's learners for examinations and this may not always be practically possible.

- d) Requests to transfer during training time due to learners being unsatisfied with the service provided at the Centre will follow the Complaints Policy.
- e) The IFA can assist learner's to transfer to another Centre to the maximum extent as specified in the IFA's Transfer Policy.

26. EXAMINATION RESULTS

- a) Centres are responsible for informing learners of their results.
- b) The IFA will dispatch examination results within eight (8) weeks of the examination. This time scale is necessary for marking, administration and translation where necessary.
- c) Centres are not permitted to contact the IFA within the eight (8) week timeframe regarding results.
- d) Learners who contact the IFA directly regarding examination results will be referred back to their Centre.

27. EXAMINATION CERTIFICATES

- a) Examination Certificates for successful learners will be dispatched in the post to Centre who will distribute them to learners.
- b) Certificates will not be issued until the learner has successfully completed and passed all examination and assessment components (not in part).
- c) Unsuccessful learners will be provided a letter confirming the examination(s) they need to retake in order to pass.
- d) For each successful graduate the IFA will also send an application form for IFA postgraduate membership. The IFA encourage learners to take up postgraduate membership which enables newly qualified aromatherapists to be registered on the IFA directory of therapists. This allows potential employers and clients check to verify a therapist's qualification.

28. IFA QUALIFICATION(S)

- a) The IFA examination certificates provide learners with a transcript of study, showing the grade for each module of an IFA Qualification.
- b) The IFA currently regulates qualification providers and aromatherapists operating in 43 countries and the IFA qualifications are well known and recognised for high standards of training. Learners are advised however to contact the visa branch of the embassy of the country they wish to operate, in order to establish the criteria to work in their chosen country as this varies from country to country.
- c) Centres and the IFA will respond to any enquiries or requests for information from learners' potential employers or reference agents regarding what they have been taught.

29. REISSUING EXAMINATION CERTIFICATES

- a) If a learner loses or damages their examination certificate or changes their name, the learner must complete the Replacement Order Form which the Centre will provide to the IFA.
- b) Before any certificate is reissued the original certificate must be returned or evidence provided that it has been destroyed e.g. a picture of it torn up.
- c) Please note the IFA cannot reissue Diplomas or any other internal documentation provided to learners by their Centre. The learner must in this instance contact the Centre.

30. EXAMINATION FEEDBACK

- a) The IFA will not enter into discussion or correspondence on the subject of individual learner's examination results.
- b) Any learner who wishes to appeal their result will be referred to the IFA Appeals Policy available on the IFA's website. All appeals must be supported by the Centre.

31. RESUBMITTING COURSEWORK

- a) Where treatment evidence, case studies and assignments are verified by the Principal Teacher, but the IFA Quality Assurance Assessor examiner concludes that they do not meet the required standard, the Centre will be sent a referral report for the learner which will indicate the additional work which must be completed in order to pass.
- b) The learner will have up to eight (8) weeks to complete the additional work and submit to the IFA with the reassessment fee as per the Service Fee Policy. The Centre may or may not pay this fee on behalf of learners. Learners should confirm this with their Centre.
- c) The IFA will organise for an IFA Quality Assurance Assessor to attend the IFA Head Office to verify the additional work, which may take up to eight (8) weeks. We recommend that learners resubmit their coursework as soon as possible, as certificates will not be released until verified.
- d) Examination certificates will not be released until all compulsory coursework components and IFA externally invigilated examinations are successfully completed and verified.

32. EXAMINATION FAILURE

If a learner fails an examination, they will be required to re-sit the examination.

33. RESITTING EXAMINATIONS

- a) Re-sits must be taken within one (1) year of the original examination.
- b) If the learner cannot re-sit the examination in the one (1) year time frame, for example due to a medical reason, they should complete the Special Considerations Form and provide to their Centre.
- c) A learner may re-sit an IFA examination a maximum of three (3) times. If the learner has not passes after the third resit, the learner must retake the course and reapply for examination after the respective period.
- d) Learners are reminded to leave an appropriate amount of time for further study before re-entering a learner into examinations.
- e) Re-sits will take place at the Centre's next convened examination date or alternatively the learner may transfer to another Centre in accordance with the Transfer Policy available on the IFA's website.

34. APPEALING AGAINST EXAMINATION RESULTS

- a) A learner may appeal thier examination result as per the IFA's Appeals Policy, available on the IFA website.
- b) Learners must ensure they are eligible to appeal as per the IFA's Appeals Policy. All appeals must be supported by their Centre.
- c) The IFA will review all appeals as set out in its Appeals Policy.

35. COMPLAINTS

- a) If a learner is dissatisfied with the service they have been provided by an IFA Approved Centre, the learner should inform the IFA, to enable appropriate action to be taken.
- b) The IFA takes complaints by learners very seriously and will undertake a full investigation, as per the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy - available on the IFA website.
- c) Please see the IFA's Complaints Policy, which describes the procedure to follow to raise a complaint with the IFA about an Approved Centre.

36. LIMITATION OF LIABILITY AND INDEMNITY

- a) The IFA shall have no liability to the learner, whether in contract, tort (including negligence), breach of statutory duty, or otherwise arising under or in connection with the learner's agreement with the Centre who are third parties to the IFA.

- b) The IFA shall not be liable to the learner for any loss of earnings or damages arising directly or indirectly from examination date delays or from being unable to accommodate preferred date(s) and times of delivery of examinations.
- c) The IFA's total liability for any claim or series of connected claims whether in contract, tort (including negligence), breach of statutory duty, or otherwise, for any loss of profit, or any indirect or consequential loss arising under or in connection with learners agreement with an Approved Centre shall be limited to a maximum sum equal to the student membership fee paid by the learner to the Centre within the period of twelve (12) months preceding the event giving rise to the claim (or the first of the series of connected claims).