

Exam Policy

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The purpose of this exam policy is:

- to ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of candidates
- to ensure the operation of an efficient exam system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the centre's exam processes to read, understand and implement this policy.

This exam policy will be reviewed annually.

This exam policy will be reviewed by the Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum), the exams officer and TLA Governors.

1. Exam responsibilities

Head of centre / principal

Overall responsibility for the school/college as an exam centre:

- advises on appeals and re-marks
- the head of centre is responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice. Refer to the JCQ document *Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments*.

Exams office manager / exams officer

Manages the administration of public and internal exams and analysis of exam results:

- advises the senior leadership team, subject and class tutors and other relevant support staff on annual exam timetables and application procedures as set by the various exam boards
- oversees the production and distribution to staff, governors and candidates of an annual calendar for all exams in which candidates will be involved and communicates regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events
- ensures that candidates and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the exam timetable that will affect them
- consults with teaching staff to ensure that necessary coursework is completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines
- provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries
- receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts
- administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration using the JCQ *Access arrangements and special considerations regulations* and *Guidance relating to candidates who are eligible for adjustments in examinations*
- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes

- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges
- line manages and organises the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams
- arranges with the Head of Department for the submission of candidates' coursework marks and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule.
- passes returned coursework back to the Head of Departments
- arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the SLT, any appeals/re-mark requests
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.

Deputy head / vice principal

- Organisation of teaching and learning.
- External validation of courses followed at key stage 4 / post-16.
- Prepares and presents reports to the SLT showing results achieved in relation to expected grades and comparable data for previous years, indicating where future procedural improvements might be made

Heads of department

- Guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exam entries or amendments to entries.
- Involvement in post-results procedures.
- Accurate completion of coursework mark sheets and declaration sheets.
- Submission of candidates' coursework marks and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule.
- Accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the exams officer.

Head of careers

- Guidance and careers information.

Teachers

- Notification of access arrangements (as soon as possible after the start of the course).
- Submission of candidate names to heads of department / faculty.

SENCO

- Administration of access arrangements.
- Identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements.
- Provision of additional support — with spelling, reading, mathematics, dyslexia or essential skills, hearing impairment, English for speakers of other languages, IT equipment — to help candidates achieve their course aims.

Lead invigilator/invigilators

- Collection of exam papers and other material from the exams office before the start of the exam.
- Collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and their return to the exams office.

Candidates

- Confirmation of entries.
- Understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.

Administrative staff

- Support for the input of data.
- Posting of exam papers.

2. The statutory tests and qualifications offered

The statutory tests and qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the head of centre and the senior leadership team.

The statutory tests and qualifications offered are Entry Level, GCSE, Applied GCSE, AS level, A levels and Btec.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus for that year. If there has been a change of syllabus from the previous year, the exams office must be informed immediately.

At key stage 3

All candidates will take English, mathematics and science and ICT (from 2008). The school will consider the use of intervention or booster strategies in connection with any candidates who are unlikely to attain the minimum level.

Decisions on whether candidates should not take an individual subject or all NCTs will be taken in consultation with the candidates, parents/carers and the subject teachers.

At key stage 4

All candidates will be entitled, and enabled, to achieve an entry for qualifications from an external awarding body.

At post-16

It is expected that AS modules will be completed during year 12.

3. Exam seasons and timetables

3.1 Exam seasons

Internal exams are scheduled in November.

External exams are scheduled in November, January, March, May and June.

All internal exams are held under external exam conditions.

Which exam series are used in the centre is decided by the head of centre and the senior leadership team.

3.2 Timetables

The exams officer will circulate the exam timetables for both external and internal exams once these are confirmed.

4. Entries, entry details, late entries and retakes

4.1 Entries

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the heads of department.

The centre accepts external entries from former candidates only.

4.2 Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department via email and post.

Late entries are authorised by heads of department.

4.3 Retakes

Candidates are allowed 1 retake per subject in GCSE.

Candidates are allowed to retake AS/A2 examinations in negotiation with the Head of Department/Head of Sixth Form.

All retakes will be paid for by the student - exceptions – Year 12 students will have their first retake fee for GCSE Maths or English paid for by the School.

All retake decisions will be made in consultation with the candidates, subject teachers and the heads of department.

The School will allow students who wish to retake to enter external exams as 'private paying candidates' but only on the understanding that such entries do not affect the School's overall external examination performance.

(See also section 5: Exam fees)

5. Exam fees

GCSE initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

AS initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

A2 initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the departments.

Candidates or departments will not be charged for changes of tier, withdrawals made by the proper procedures or alterations arising from administrative processes, provided these are made within the time allowed by the awarding bodies.

Reimbursement will be sought from candidates who fail to sit an exam or meet the necessary coursework requirements.

This fees reimbursement policy will be communicated in writing to candidates and parents/carers at the start of GCSE and post-16 courses.

Retake fees for first and any subsequent retakes are paid by the candidates. A £2 internal administration fee is added onto the Board entry fee. Exceptions – Year 12 students will have their first retake fee for GCSE Maths or English paid for by the School.

(See also section 4.3: Retakes)

Candidates must pay the fee for an enquiry about a result, should the centre not uphold the enquiry and the candidate insist on pursuing the enquiry.

(See also section 11.2: Enquiries about results [EARs])

In special circumstances, provision for fee payment may be sought from the Welfare Fund.

6. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), special needs and access arrangements

6.1 DDA

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 extends the application of the DDA to general qualifications. All exam centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law.

6.2 Special needs

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the SENCO.

The SENCO will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an exam, and the date of that exam. The SENCO can then inform individual staff of

any special arrangements that individual candidates may be granted during the course and in the exam.

6.3 Access arrangements

Making special arrangements for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of the SENCO and the exams officer.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the exams officer.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the exams officer.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the exams officer.

7. Estimated grades

Estimated grades

The heads of department will submit estimated grades to the exams officer when requested by the exams officer.

8. Managing invigilators and exam days

8.1 Managing invigilators

External invigilators will be used for exam supervision. They will be used for all exams.

The recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the exams office.

Securing the necessary Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the centre administration.

CRB fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre.

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the exams office.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the Deputy Head.

8.2 Exam days

The exams officer will book all exam rooms after liaison with other users and make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials available for the invigilator.

Site management is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms.

The lead invigilator will start all exams in accordance with JCO guidelines.

Candidates must be aware of the JCQ 'Warning to Candidates', a copy of which is posted inside and outside of each examinations room.

During examinations, candidates must follow any instructions given to them by the Examinations Officer, member of the Examinations Office staff or any Invigilator present.

The possession of a mobile phone in an examination room, whether switched on or not, is an offence under JCQ regulation I.C.E. 9.3. School policy is that mobile phones should not be brought into the examination room. Any student who does bring a mobile phone or other electronic equipment into the examination room, will be asked to declare it at the beginning of the exam. It will then be removed from their possession and returned at the end of the exam. Failure to observe this regulation will result in the loss of all results for the exam.

Subject staff may be present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates but must not advise on which questions are to be attempted.

In practical exams subject teachers may be on hand in case of any technical difficulties.

Exam papers must not be read by subject teachers or removed from the exam room before the end of a session. Papers will be distributed to heads of department/faculty at the end of the exam session.

9. Candidates, candidates with exam clashes and special consideration

9.1 Candidates

The centre's published rules on acceptable dress, behaviour and candidates' use of mobile phones and all electronic devices apply at all times.

Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Candidates may leave the exam room for a genuine purpose requiring an immediate return to the exam room, in which case a member of staff must accompany them.

The exams officer will attempt to contact any candidate who is not present at the start of an exam and deal with them in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

9.2 Candidates with exam clashes

The exams officer will be responsible as necessary for identifying escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight stays.

9.3 Special consideration

Should a candidate be too ill to sit an exam, suffer bereavement or other trauma or be taken ill during the exam itself, it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre, or the exam invigilator, to that effect.

Any special consideration claim must be supported by appropriate evidence within five days of the exam, for example a letter from the candidate's doctor.

The exams officer will then forward a completed special consideration form to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the exam.

10. Coursework and appeals against internal assessments

10.1 Coursework

Candidates must be aware of the regulations regarding the submission of coursework, particularly those relating to the proper acknowledgement of sources. Failure to do so can result in the Awarding Bodies or the JCQ setting penalties which can include official reprimands, loss of examination marks or in extreme cases the loss of all examination results and banning from future examinations.

Work submitted by the candidate for assessment must be authenticated as original work according to the guidance issued by the Joint Council.

At the beginning of the course, candidates will be given written guidance about the Awarding Bodies regulations on the production of coursework and the school's deadlines for submission.

Within each department, candidates will be given adequate and appropriate time to produce the coursework.

Internal assessments will be conducted by staff who have an appropriate level of knowledge, understanding and skill.

The consistency of the internal assessment will be secured through the departmental mark scheme or marking criteria and internal standardization, as necessary.

The staff responsible for internal standardization of a subject will attend any training sessions given by the relevant Awarding Body.

Candidates who have to prepare portfolios should do so by the end of the course or centre-defined date.

Heads of department will ensure all coursework is ready for despatch at the correct time and the exams officer will keep a record of what has been sent when and to whom.

Marks for all internally assessed work are provided to the exams office by the heads of department.

10.2 Appeals against internal assessments

The centre is obliged to publish a separate procedure on this subject, which is available from the exams office.

The main points are:

- appeals will only be entertained if they apply to the process leading to an assessment. There is no appeal against the mark or grade awarded
- candidates may appeal if they feel their coursework has been assessed unfairly, inconsistently or not in accordance with the specification for the qualification
- appeals should be made in writing by 31 May to the head of centre (or other nominee) who will decide whether the process used conformed to the necessary requirements
- the head of centre's findings will be notified in writing, copied to the exams officer and recorded for awarding body inspection.

11. Results, enquiries about results (EARs) and access to scripts (ATS)

11.1 Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days in person at the centre or if previously arranged, by post to their home addresses (candidates to provide sae).

Arrangements for the school to be open on results days are made by the senior leader.

The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the senior leader.

The centre aggregates at the end of year 12 for AS grades.

11.2 EARs

EARs may be requested by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking.

When the centre does not uphold an EAR, a candidate may apply to have an enquiry carried out. The candidate will be charged.
(See section 5: Exam fees)

11.3 ATS

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of papers within three days' scrutiny of the results.

If a result is queried, the exams officer, teaching staff and head of centre will investigate the feasibility of asking for a re-mark at the centre's expense.

Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates must be obtained.

GCSE re-marks cannot be applied for once a script has been returned.

12. Certificates

Certificates are collected and signed for or can be posted if the student provides a SAE with the appropriate postage on. Certificates are not posted by recorded delivery.

Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, provided they have been authorised to do so.

Certificates are not withheld from candidates who owe fees.

The centre retains certificates for two years.

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Head of centre

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Exams officer

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Date

The policy is next due for review on 01/09/2012.



GLOSSARY

ATS Access To Scripts

CRB Criminal Records Bureau check

DDA Disability Discrimination Act

EAR Enquiry About Results

I.C.E Instructions for Conducting Exams, published by JCQ

JCQ Joint Council Qualifications

SLT Senior Leadership Team