

Exam Policy

Date Policy was created: September 2020

Policy amended: April 2021 (page 7)

Date of next renewal: September 2021

The policy purpose

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.

The exam policy will be reviewed every year.

The exam policy will be reviewed by the Head of Centre, Trust Data Manager and Secondary Examinations Lead.

Exam responsibilities

Having overall responsibility for the school as an exam centre, the Head of Centres:

- Advises on appeals and re-marks.
- Is responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice. Refer to the JCQ document - Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments.

Secondary Examinations Lead/Exam Officers

Manages the administration of public and internal exams:

- Advises the Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Department and class tutors and other relevant support staff on annual exam timetables and application procedures as set by the various awarding bodies.
- 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.
- Organises Entries and ensures they are checked by HOD's before deadlines
- Receives checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts.
- Administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration using the JCQ publications Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration.
- Identifies and manages exam timetable clashes.
- Accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges.

- Line manages the invigilator team and organises the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams with the support of the HR department
- Submits candidates' coursework marks, tracks despatch and stores returned coursework and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule.
- Arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the Leadership Group, any appeals/re-mark requests.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Checking candidates are entered for the correct units and tiers
- Submission of candidate's names to Heads of Department of who they would like to apply for a post result enquiry for

The SENCo (SEN Coordinator) and/or Access Arrangements Coordinator is responsible for:

- Identification and testing of candidates, requirements for access arrangements at the end of year 9 so that their need is identified before they begin their GCSE course
- 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 are responsible for:

- 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 are responsible for:

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

Qualifications

Qualifications offered

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Leadership Group and are all approved by the Department for Education for teaching to 14-19 year olds.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus for that year. If there is to be a change of syllabus for the next year, the Exams Office must be informed by July 1st

Informing the Exams Office of changes to a syllabus is the responsibility of the Heads of Department and Senior Leadership Team.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken in consultation with the Candidates and Subject teachers.

Exam series and timetables

Exam seasons

Internal exams and assessments are scheduled in November.

External exams and assessments are scheduled in May and June, there may non GCSE exams throughout the year.

Year 11 mock exams are held under exam conditions, however end of year exams for other year groups may be held in their classrooms, and other internal exams held under external exam conditions.

The Head of Department decides which exam series they will enter their students in.

Some tests are offered on an on-demand basis

Timetable

Once confirmed, the Exams Officer will circulate the exam timetable for external exams.

Entries, Entry Details and Late Entries

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Candidates are confirmed in their exam entries by the Heads of Department and subject teachers.

Candidates or parents/carers cannot request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal directly to the Exams Officer and should instead consult with the students' teacher to discuss this. The final decision rests with the Head of Centre.

The Centre does not act as an exam centre for other organisations.

Entry deadlines are circulated to Heads of Department via email, briefing meeting, and internal post/pigeon hole.

Late entries are authorised by departments and the Exam Officer. The department will be charged the late fee charged by the exam board.

Retake decisions will be made in consultation with Candidates, Exams Officer and Heads of Department.

Exam Fees

Exam fees

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.

All exam entry fees are paid by the Centre.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the Departments. The Centre will pay late fees for candidates who are late entrants to the academy.

Fee reimbursements are sought from candidates who decide to sit an exam after the late entry/withdrawal deadline/fail to sit an exam/do not meet the necessary coursework requirements without medical evidence or evidence of other mitigating circumstances.

Equality Act

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All exam centre staff must ensure that the Centre meets the requirements of the Equality Act (2010).

The Equality Act (2010) introduced measures aimed at eliminating the discrimination often faced by disabled people. The main provisions of the Act give protection to disabled people in the areas of employment and education.

The centre will meet the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) by ensuring that the exams centre is accessible and improving candidate experience. This is the responsibility of the Head of Centre and Secondary Examinations Lead. Further details are available in the Trust Equality Policy.

Access Arrangements

The SEN Coordinator 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 SEN Coordinator can then inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates can be granted during the course and in the exam.

A candidate's access arrangements requirement is determined by the SEN Coordinator.

Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring candidates have access arrangements for their subject's controlled assessments.

Making access arrangements for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of the Exams Office and SEN Coordinator.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the Exams Office and SEN Coordinator.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Exams Office. Access candidates will be roomed separately where possible.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the Exams Team and SEN Coordinator.

Overseas students

Managing overseas students is the responsibility of the Exams Office.

Contingency planning

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the Secondary Examinations Lead and a detailed risk assessment has been produced.

Managing Invigilators

Managing invigilators

Support staff and External staff are used to invigilate examinations.

Invigilators will be used for internal exams and external exams.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Head of Centre, Exams Office and HR Department.

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

Malpractice and Maladministration

The Exams Office is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice and maladministration with the help of the Leadership Group and Head of Centre. Statements will be sought from all parties involved and all evidence sent to the relevant exam board, in line with JCQ documentation.

*** Specific challenges of delivery in 2021 with regard to the malpractice and maladministration of teacher assessed grades are:**

- *breaches of internal security*
- *deception*
- *improper assistance to students*
- *failure to appropriately authenticate a student's work*
- *over direction of students in preparation for common assessments*
- *allegations that centres submit grades not supported by evidence that they know to be inaccurate*
- *centres enter students who were not originally intending to certificate a grade in the Summer 2021 series*
- *failure to engage as requested with awarding organisations during the External Quality Assurance and appeal stages*
- *failure to keep appropriate records of decisions made and teacher assessed grades*

Exam days

The Exams Office will book all exam rooms after liaison with other users and make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials available for the invigilators.

Site management is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms.

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

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

In practical exams subject teachers will be needed in addition to invigilators.

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 24hrs after the exam end time, in line with JCQ regulations, by putting them in the HOD pigeon hole.

No coaching is allowed in the exam room.

Candidates

Candidates

The Centre's published rules on acceptable dress, behaviour and candidates use of mobile phones and other 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 are expected to stay for the full exam time at the discretion of the Exams Officer or lead invigilator. Access candidates are expected to use any extra time awarded to them.

Candidates may only leave the exam room for a genuine purpose and are required to return immediately to the exam room. They must be accompanied by a member of staff agreed by the Exams Officer at all times.

The Exams Officer is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day or subsequently.

Clash Candidates

The Exams Office will be responsible as necessary for supervising escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight supervision by parents if applicable.

Special Consideration

Should a candidate be ill before an exam, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be taken ill during the exam itself or be otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre, the Exams Officer, or the exam invigilator, to that effect.

The candidate must support any Special Consideration claim with appropriate evidence within three days of the exam, for example by providing a letter from the candidate's doctor.

The Exams Office will then forward a completed Special Consideration form to the relevant awarding body within the deadline given.

Non-examination assessments and appeals

Please refer to the Non-Examination Assessment Policy.

Results, Enquiries About Results (EARs) and Access to Scripts (ATS)

Results

Candidates will receive individual result slips on results days, either in person at the Centre or by post to their home address.

Arrangements for the Centre to be open on results days are made by the Exams Office in association with the site team and the Head of Centre.

The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the Exams Office.

EARs

EARs may be requested by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking. The candidates consent is required before any EAR is requested.

If a result is queried, the Exams Office, teaching staff and Head of Centre will investigate the feasibility of asking for a re-mark at the centre's expense.

When the centre does not support a candidate's or parent's request for an EAR, a candidate may apply to have an enquiry carried out. If a candidate requires this against the advice of subject staff, they will be charged the exam board's fee.

ATS

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of papers within three days' scrutiny of the results. Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. The consent of candidate must be obtained.

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

Certificates

Certificates

Certificates are presented in person and collected and signed for.

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

The Centre retains certificates for two years after which time they will be confidentially destroyed and will direct ex-candidates to the appropriate website if they have lost their certificates.