

General Examinations Policy Contents

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Date of next review

July 2021

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 document is not intended to reiterate the numerous regulations pertaining to the actual running and implementation of examinations as laid down by the JCQ. Queries relating to examination regulations can be found in the documents listed in section 13. Staff involved with this aspect of examinations should be fully conversant with these regulations and are recommended to consult the documents listed. Any reference to mandatory procedures are therefore only for clarification or to explain why our policy may differ from the mandatory instructions issued by JCQ.

This exam policy will be reviewed annually by the senior leadership team.

1. Exam responsibilities

Head of centre

Has overall responsibility for the school as an exam centre:

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

Exams officer

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

- advises the senior leadership team, subject and class teachers 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.
- Organises the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams.
- 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 SLT, any appeals/re-mark requests.
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.

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.
- Accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the exams officer.

Teachers

- Notification of access arrangements (as soon as possible after the start of the course).
- Submission of candidates' names to heads of department/school/curriculum.

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.

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.

Identifying Candidates in exams and declaration of work.

- Candidates must understand coursework regulations and sign a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.

- Candidates are to be escorted to the exam room by subject teachers for identification into the exam room.

Separate Invigilation

All students with access arrangements are to be invigilated separately.

Students needing readers with a ratio of 1 to 3 to be separated from students requiring scribes who need 1 to 1 invigilation.

Students needing a smaller environment as identified by Senco must also be invigilated separate to other students, with a ratio of 1 invigilator to a maximum of 10 Students.

Students that turn up to school on exam days with an injury and cannot physically enter the main exam area are to be invigilated separately also.

2. The statutory tests and qualifications offered

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

CATS and NFER plus qualifications offered are GCE, GCSE, IGCSE, Entry Level, Vocational, ECDL and BTEC courses.

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.

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

3. Exam seasons and timetables

3.1 Exam seasons

Internal exams are scheduled throughout the academic year.

External exams are scheduled in November, January, May and June. The timing of internal exams will be reviewed annually in consultation with and by agreement with the leadership.

All internal exams are held under external exam conditions. Where internal exams are timetabled in classrooms, invigilators should observe exam conditions as closely as possible.

3.2 Timetables

Once confirmed, the exams officer will circulate the exam timetables for internal exams and external exams. Copies of external exam timetables will also be shared online via the school website.

4. Entries, entry details and late entries

4.1 Entries

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the Subject Leaders and the subject teachers.

Candidates, or parents/carers, can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal. Requests will be discussed with the Leadership Team and Subject Leaders.

The centre does not accept entries from external candidates excluding A-Level candidates and coursework/practical examinations. Where the centre will be hosting an examination of its own on the day requested, external candidates are asked to seek alternative provision.

Where a student is registered as commencing a course an entry in that subject is an expectation. If for any reason an entry is deemed inappropriate this must be discussed and agreed with the subject leader and the appropriate member of the Leadership Team who provides professional support for that learning team. Withdrawing an entry would be regarded as exceptional.

4.2 Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to Subject Leaders.

Late entries are authorised by the subject leaders.

5. Exam fees

The centre will pay all normal exam fees on behalf of candidates.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by centre.

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 or where learning team leaders have approved the alterations.

Staff are asked to bear in mind the very large sums of money that are involved with late entries and amendments. Subject leaders should therefore vet applications for late entries and amendments with this point borne in mind to avoid departments being financially penalised.

6. Special needs and access arrangements

6.1 Special needs

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the SENCO. Subject staff and subject leaders should communicate any concerns they have regarding to the access of their students to the exams officer where the SENCO has failed to identify that student as requiring special considerations.

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 can be granted during the course and in the exam.

6.2 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 who will use separate rooms for candidates needing a reader, candidates needing a scribe and candidates needing to use word processors.

6.2 Continued: The use of Word processors

Students are identified by Senco and trained up in the use of a Word processor. Senco/Exams officer hold on file a statement for each student using a Word processor, and shows history of need.

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

Where a reader is required whether for one or more students, an invigilator must also be present.

6.3 Students with Emotional and Behavioural Issues

Where provision for students to sit away from the main body of students is required, staff must ensure that permission to accommodate students has been sought and approved by the exams officer. Applications for students to sit away from the main exam hall should be made to the exams officer at least six weeks prior to the examination. It is essential that staff adhere to this rule to avoid the exams officer being forced to make last minute arrangements. The scope for mistakes being made in relation to the issuance of correctly tiered papers and also in relation to the implementation of examination protocol is clearly increased in such instances.

Where unavoidable last minute arrangements have been made it is especially important that the exams officer is consulted where students are given alternative accommodation for exams. This is because there are certain requirements relating to notices to candidates and the preparation of the examination room that must be strictly adhered to.

The same is also true for the off site provision of examinations to accommodate students on alternative pathways, phobic students, M.E sufferers etc. In such cases invigilation/examination rules must be strictly adhered to.

6.4 Specific Instructions Relating to the Provision of Exam Papers to Students sitting exams away from the main body of students.

Where students will be sitting examinations in rooms other than the main exam hall staff responsible for those students should collect students and papers from the Exams Office.

Students: All students who have been seated in alternate rooms will be informed of this by the exams officer prior to the exam.

Collection of papers: Provision of papers for students seated in alternative venues will take place from the exams office. **NO** papers should be removed from the main exam hall. Papers should be collected ten minutes before the start time for the exam. The exam papers will have been extracted from the sealed exam packets and the exams officer will have entered the students' names onto the front of each paper to ensure that there are no mistakes made in relation to papers with different tiers.

Starting the exam in alternate rooms: Staff supervising exams in alternate rooms should start the exam as close as possible to the agreed start time. Staff should confirm that the relevant warning notices are displayed and that an exam clock is visible. Warning notices normally comprise

- Warning about use of mobile phones.
- Silence exam in progress.
- No entry – exam in progress
- Instructions to candidates
- Clock

Return of papers: papers should be returned immediately the exam ends to the exams officer in the exams office along with all other materials provided for the examination.

Staff supporting students sitting exams in alternate venues should not need to enter the main exam room, however, in the event that students fail to turn up for their examination one or two members of staff should visit the main exam room to confirm that the missing students have not entered the main examination hall erroneously.

7. Estimated grades

Estimated grades

The subject leaders will submit estimated grades to the exams officer when requested by the exams officer.

8. Managing invigilators and Students on exam days

8.1 Managing invigilators

External invigilators will be used for internal exams and external exams.

The recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams Officer who has responsibility

for the allocation of staffing for examinations. All invigilators will attend a full training session provided by the Exams Officer before performing any duties relating to examinations.

Securing the necessary (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the centre administration.

(DBS) fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre.

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the exams officer.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the centre administration.

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 Examinations Officer and a delegated person , will start all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Subject Leaders must be available and Subject staff may be present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates, confirmation of tier entry. They must not advise on which questions are to be attempted. One or more members of the leadership team will be available to assist with the entry and exit of students to and from exams.

8.3 Candidate Behaviour

Candidates must adhere to exam rules and regulations at all times. Candidates must not turn around or speak to any other candidate in the exam room. Candidates must not bring into the exam room any materials or notes that are not required for the exam. Any breach of the rules will be dealt with by a member of SLT and if necessary the candidate will be removed.

8.4 Students arriving late on examination day. See Examination guidance for students and parents. For students more than an hour late the exams officer will follow exam board procedures and complete necessary forms and submit to exam board with the examination paper.

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 at the end of the exam session.

Students who are late to an exam should proceed to the designated venue where they may or may not be allowed to sit the exam dependent upon the current regulations cited by JCQ. The lead invigilator or exams officer will deal with late attenders. In any case, late arrivals must be reported to the exams officer.

Where invigilators are concerned at potential malpractice, the matter must be reported immediately to the exams officer.

Staff are reminded that mobile phones should be switched off and not to silent. This is especially important when tape recordings or CD are being used in the exam room since mobile phones can interfere with the amplifier circuitry.

In the event of a fire drill staff are to follow the requirements stated on warning notices in each room. All staff should be familiar with the relevant escape routes and procedures for reporting fires. This policy does not seek to replace that outlined in current health and safety policy guidelines, however the following points will be adhered to in the event of a fire during an examination.

- Papers will be collected in by invigilation staff where the number of candidates is low (e.g. when candidates sit exams in a classroom). Where larger numbers of candidates are present papers will be left face down on the desks.
- Students will be removed from the building in an orderly manner and wherever possible they will be monitored by invigilation staff and excluded from other students for the duration of the removal from the examination room.
- Invigilation staff will note the time of exit and allow candidates the full period of time available to them to sit the exam on return to the examination room. The exam officer will notify the relevant authorities of the interruption.
- It will be the responsibility of the invigilation staff to confirm with the exams officer whether or not they consider the security of the paper to have been seriously compromised by the interruption.
- Invigilation staff will oversee the orderly return of students to the exam room once the all clear has been received.

9 Food and Drink in the Exam Room

- Under no circumstances is food or sweets of any kind allowed in the Exam room.
- Candidates can have a drink, however, the bottle/container must be clear see through plastic with no writing on it.
- Fizzy drinks are not allowed.

10. Candidates, clash candidates and special consideration

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

10.2 Clash candidates

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

10.3 Special consideration

Should a candidate be ill before an exam, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be taken ill during the exam itself or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, then 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 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.

11. Controlled Assessment - Coursework and appeals against internal assessments

11.1 Coursework

Candidates who have to prepare coursework should do so by the end of the course.

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

Marks for all internally assessed work and estimated grades are provided to the exams office by the subject teachers and the subject leaders.

11.2 Appeals against internal assessment and results.

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

Appeal forms are available from the exams officer, who will keep a log of all appeals made.

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 30 June to the head of centre.

- the head of centre's findings will be notified in writing, copied to the exams officer and recorded for awarding body inspection.

11.3 Remarks

Subject leaders can apply for remarks of examinations where the results are considered to be possibly erroneous and must seek the permission of the candidate prior to notifying the examinations officer of the request for a remark.

Candidates may also request remarks of examinations and should make their request to the examination officer. Candidates should be aware that whilst remarks can indeed result in an improvement in their mark they may also result in no change to the result or even a lower grade or mark. Candidates should first request a remark via the subject area. Where remarks are endorsed by the subject area, any fee levied will be honoured by the school. If candidates who request a remark fail to obtain the endorsement of the subject area the fee will be charged up front to the candidate

12. Malpractice

Malpractice means any act or practice which is a breach of the regulations governing exams, coursework or controlled assessment.

All centre staff must adhere strictly to the regulations otherwise they will be in breach of the regulations and will be subject to a malpractice investigation.

All students must ensure they produce all their own work and do not attempt to plagiarise another's work or to introduce unauthorised materials into an exam or controlled assessment session with the intention of gaining an advantage. All suspected acts of malpractice will be investigated and reported to the appropriate awarding body.

Reporting Procedures

If malpractice is suspected the examinations officer must be informed immediately.

Where malpractice is suspected the following procedures will be followed regardless of whether it is against a pupil or a member of staff:

- An investigation will be undertaken by the head of centre/examinations officer which will involve questioning the person(s) involved and any other people with information about the incident
- Where necessary written statements will be obtained
- If the investigation highlights, there is a case to answer then the relevant examination board will be informed immediately
- The individuals concerned will be told what evidence there is to support the allegation and be given the opportunity to provide a written statement in response to the allegation
- The individuals concerned will be informed of the outcome once a decision is received from the examination board and given a copy of the written communication

Appeals

An appeal against the penalties arising from the malpractice decisions can be sent to the examination board.

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

13.1 Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results day in person at the centre.

Arrangements for the school to be open on results day are made by the exams officer in conjunction with the leadership and site management teams.

The provision of staff on results day is the responsibility of the exams officer in conjunction with Professional Assistant to the Head teacher.

13.2 Enquiries About Results- (Students and Staff to speak to Exams Officer) Students need to initially speak to the head of subject, any concerns about any mark/grade is to be discussed with the Exams Officer this will be considered and any request put to the appropriate Exam Board **once a signed consent form has been completed.**

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DEADLINE FOR EAR'S IS 20TH SEPTEMBER. Ideally students need to approach a member of staff at least 2-3 days before but have right upto 20th.

(EARs) may be requested by centre staff or students if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking or if a student has missed a certain grade by 1 or 2 marks.

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.

When the centre does not uphold 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.

13.3 Access to Scripts

After the release of results, candidates may ask to request the return of papers, all forms are available from the exams officer.

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.

14. Certificates

Certificates are collected and signed for.

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

Replacement certificates are only issued if a candidate agrees to pay the costs incurred although the majority of boards will not provide reprints.

The centre retains certificates for Ten years.

15. Other Important Documents

Staff should familiarise themselves with the following documents where the regulation pertain to their duties. Copies are available from the Exams Officer.

- JCQ Access Arrangements and Special Considerations – Regulations and Guidance.
- JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations.

Principal

Exams officer

Lorraine Bradley

Mrs J Southorn

Date

The policy has been checked and updated on 07/09/20 next date for review is on 30/07/2021.