

EXAM POLICY

Contents

1. **Exam responsibilities**
2. **The statutory tests and qualifications offered**
3. **Exam seasons and timetables**
4. **Entries, entry details, late entries and retakes**
5. **Exam fees**
6. **The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), special needs and access arrangements**
7. **Estimated grades**
8. **Managing invigilators and exam days**
9. **Candidates, clash candidates and special consideration**
10. **Coursework and appeals against internal assessments**
11. **Results, enquiries about results (EARs) and access to scripts (ATS)**
12. **Certificates**
13. **Controlled Assessment Guidelines**
14. **Controlled Assessment Risk Management Process**

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 head, senior leadership team, exams officer and the governors.

1. Exam responsibilities

Head of centre

Overall responsibility for the school 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 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/controlled assessment are 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 the senior exams invigilator in organising the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams.
- 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.
- Submits candidates' coursework/controlled assessment marks, tracks despatch and stores returned coursework/controlled assessment 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.

Deputy head

- Organisation of teaching and learning.
- External validation of courses followed at key stage 4 / post-16.

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.

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.

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 and signing of entries.
- Understanding coursework/controlled assessment regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework/controlled assessment 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, deputy heads, heads of department, head of sixth form and the senior leadership team.

The statutory tests and qualifications offered are NCT's, GCSE's, A level's, Key skills, AVCE's, GNVQ's and BTec Nationals and NVQ's.

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 by 24/09/2010.

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, where applicable.

3. Exam seasons and timetables

3.1 Exam seasons

Internal exams are scheduled as per the school calendar.

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

All internal exams are held under external exam conditions for Years 10, 11 and post 16.

Which exam series are used in the centre is decided by the head of centre, deputy head, head of sixth form, heads of department 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 head of sixth form, heads of department and the headteacher and Senior Management Team.

A candidate or parent/carer can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal, within reason.

The centre does accept entries from external candidates.

4.2 Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department via noticeboard, email and individual memo's.

Late entries are authorised by exams officer and deputy head.

4.3 Retakes

Retake decisions will be made in consultation with the candidates, subject teachers, head of post-16, deputy head and the heads of department.

(See also section 5: Exam fees)

5. Exam fees

All 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/controlled assessment requirements.

This fees reimbursement policy will be communicated in writing to candidates and parents/carers at the start of KS4 and post-16 courses.

Retake fees for first and any subsequent retakes are paid by the candidates.

(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])

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 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 with the SENCO.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the Exams Officer with the SENCO.

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 external and internal 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 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 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 are to be attempted.

In practical exams subject teachers should 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.

In the case of an erratum notice from the awarding body, the exam officer/secretary will issue advise to the candidates personally or will delegate this to another suitable person.

9. Candidates, clash candidates 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.

9.2 Clash candidates

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/Controlled Assessment

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/controlled assessment 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 subject teachers and 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/controlled assessment 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 (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 / by post to their home addresses (candidates to provide sae).

Arrangements for the school to be open on results days are made by the head of centre.

The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the head of centre.

The centre aggregates at the end of year 13 for AS grades, not at the end of year 12.

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. If a candidate requires this against the advice of subject staff, they 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 presented in person and collected and signed for.

Certificates may not be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, without clear written consent from the candidate.

Certificates are not withheld from candidates who owe fees.
The centre retains certificates for one year.

13. Controlled Assessment Guidelines

Senior leadership team and Exams Officer

- Accountable for the safe and secure conduct of controlled assessments. Ensure assessments comply with JCQ guidelines and awarding bodies' subject-specific instructions.
- At the start of the academic year, begin coordinating with heads of department/subject to schedule controlled assessments. (It is advisable that controlled assessments be spread throughout the academic years of key stage 4).
- Map overall resource management requirements for the year. As part of this resolve:
 - clashes/ problems over the timing or operation of controlled assessments.
 - issues arising from the need for particular facilities (rooms, IT networks, time out of school etc.)
- Ensure that all staff involved have a calendar of events
- Create, publish and update an internal appeals policy for controlled assessments.

Heads of department/faculty

- Decide on the awarding body and specification for a particular GCSE.
- Ensure that at least 40% of overall assessment (controlled and/or external assessment) is taken in the exam series in which the qualification is certificated, to satisfy the terminal assessment requirement in accordance with the awarding body specification.
- Standardise internally the marking of all teachers involved in assessing an internally assessed component.

- Ensure that individual teachers understand their responsibilities with regard to controlled assessment.
- Ensure that individual teachers understand the requirements of the awarding body's specification and are familiar with the relevant teachers' notes, and any other subject specific instructions.
- Where appropriate, develop new assessment tasks or contextualize sample awarding body assessment tasks to meet local circumstances, in line with awarding body specifications and control requirements.

Teaching staff

- Understand and comply with the general guidelines contained in the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting controlled assessments*.
- Understand and comply with the awarding body specification for conducting controlled assessments, including any subject-specific instructions, teachers' notes or additional information on the awarding body's website.
- Supply to the exams office details of all unit codes for controlled assessments.
- Obtain confidential materials/tasks set by awarding bodies in sufficient time to prepare for the assessment(s) and ensure that such materials are stored securely at all times.
- Supervise assessments (at the specified level of control). Undertake the tasks required under the regulations, only permitting assistance to students as the specification allows.
- Ensure that students and supervising teachers sign authentication forms on completion of an assessment.
- Mark internally assessed components using the mark schemes provided by the awarding body. Submit marks through the exams office to the awarding body when required, keeping a record of the marks awarded.
- Retain candidates' work securely between assessment sessions (if more than one).
- Post-completion, retain candidates' work securely until the closing date for enquiries about results. In the event that an enquiry is submitted, retain candidates work securely until the outcome of the enquiry and any subsequent appeal has been conveyed to the centre.
- Ask the appropriate special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) for any assistance required for the administration and management of access arrangements.

Exams officer

- Enter students for individual units, whether assessed by controlled assessment, external exam or on-screen test, before the deadline for final entries.
- Enter students' 'cash-in' codes for the terminal exam series.
- Where confidential materials are directly received by the exams office, to be responsible for receipt, safe storage and safe transmission, whether in CD or hard copy format.
- Download and distribute marksheets for teaching staff to use, and collect and send marksheets to awarding bodies before deadlines.
- On the few occasions where controlled assessment cannot be conducted in the classroom arrange suitable accommodation where controlled assessment can be carried out, at the direction of the senior leadership team.

Special educational needs coordinator/additional learning support

- Ensure access arrangements have been applied for.
- Work with teaching staff to ensure requirements for support staff are met.

Outlining staff responsibilities - Diploma principal learning controlled assessment

Senior leadership team, consortium management and lead assessor

- Accountable for the safe and secure conduct of controlled assessment, and ensure that it complies with both the JCQ general guidelines and awarding body instructions.
- Ensure procedures are in place to cover requirements for summative assessment – and that these are communicated to all relevant consortium staff.
- Map overall requirements for the year. Resolve any clashes/problems arising over the timing or operation of controlled assessments. Also any issues arising from the need for particular facilities (rooms, IT networks, time out of school etc.)
- Ensure that all staff involved have a calendar of events
- Create, publish and update an internal appeals policy for controlled assessments.

Domain assessors, line of learning leads, teaching staff and assessors

- Domain assessors and line of learning leads should decide on awarding body and specifications. (*In some cases this might be the responsibility of the consortium lead assessor depending on local circumstances*).
- Domain assessors must ensure that assessors understand controlled assessment requirements.
- Domain assessors and/or line of learning leads are responsible for ensuring that assessment tasks meet the requirements of the awarding body specifications, and for applying the relevant control requirements. (For example, by internally checking and approving assessments written by teaching staff and/or assessors, or ensuring they have been approved by the awarding body).
- Understand and comply with the general guidelines contained in the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting controlled assessments*.
- Understand and comply with the awarding body specification for conducting controlled assessments, including any line of learning, level and unit specific instructions, teachers' notes or additional information on the awarding body's website.
- Supply to the exams office details of all unit codes for controlled assessments.
- Where appropriate, obtain confidential materials/tasks set by the awarding bodies from the relevant exams office in sufficient time to make preparation for assessments.

- Develop new assessment tasks or contextualize sample awarding body assessment tasks to meet local circumstances, in line with awarding body specifications and control requirements.
- Follow the requirements for supervision as set out in the awarding body specification at the specified level of control, only permitting assistance to students as the specification allows.
- Domain assessors need to work with assessors to standardise the marking of internally assessed units for each line of learning.
- Where an assessor will not be supervising the controlled assessment, he or she **must** arrange for a suitable person to do so, in line with the awarding body specification.
- Ensure that learners and assessors sign authentication forms on completion of an assessment.
- Mark assessments according to the mark schemes and guidance provided by the awarding bodies. Submit the marks through the relevant exams office to awarding bodies when required, keeping a record of the marks awarded.
- Retain learners work securely between assessment sessions (if more than one).
- Post-completion, retain learners' work securely until the closing date for enquiries about results. In the event that an enquiry is submitted, retain learners' work securely until the outcome of the enquiry and any subsequent appeal has been conveyed to the centre
- Ask the home centre special educational needs coordinator/additional learning support for any assistance required for the administration and management of access arrangements.

Exams office staff

(Please note this could refer to the exams office of an individual school or college, or to a centralised exams office that covers all controlled assessment within a consortium depending on local circumstances.)

- Enter learners for all units, whether assessed by controlled assessment internally, or externally assessed, before the awarding body deadline.
- Where confidential materials are directly received by the exams office, to be responsible for receipt, safe storage and safe transmission, whether in CD or hard copy format.
- Download and distribute marksheets for the use of teaching staff, and collect/send them to awarding bodies before deadlines.

Special educational needs coordinator/additional learning support

- Ensure access arrangements have been applied for.
- Work with teaching staff to ensure requirements for support staff are met

14. Controlled Assessment Risk Management Process

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff : Responsible-R Accountable-A Consulted-C Informed-I VP=Vice Principal EO= Exams Officer DM=Data Manager N= Network Manager GM= Guidance Manager CL= Curriculum Lead T=Teachers
	Forward planning	Action	
Timetabling			
Assessment schedule clashes with other activities	Plan/establish priorities well ahead (e.g. start of academic year) for all subjects or lines of learning	Plan dates in consultation with school calendar – negotiate with other parties	VP=A DM=R EO=I
Too many assessments close together across	Plan assessments so they are spaced over the	Space assessments to at least allow candidates	VP=A

subjects or lines of learning	duration of the course	some time between assessments	DM=I EO=R
Accommodation			
Insufficient space in classrooms for candidates	Once group sizes are known at the start of the year, flag instances where regular classroom space may not be suitable to conduct controlled assessment	Use more than one classroom or multiple sittings where necessary	VP=A EO=R
Insufficient facilities for all candidates	Careful planning ahead and booking of rooms / centre facilities		VP=A EO=R
Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	Action	
Downloading awarding body set tasks			
IT system unavailable on day of assessment	Download tasks well ahead of scheduled assessment date in all cases	Book IT equipment well ahead and download tasks before scheduled date of assessment	EO=R NM=C
Teaching staff/assessors unable to access task details	Test secure access rights ahead of schedule every year and every session	Ensure teaching staff/assessors have access rights for correct area of awarding body secure extranet sites ahead of time	EO=R NM=C
Loss of task details in transmission	Download tasks well ahead of scheduled assessment date	Report loss to awarding body for replacement; download again	EO=R NM=C
Absent candidates			
Candidates absent for all or part of assessment (various reasons)	Plan alternative session(s) for candidates		EO=R GM=C
Candidates have a scheduling clash for exams or assessment (possibly offsite on consortium teaching)	Always consider candidate timetables well ahead and decide on priorities in advance to scheduling clashes	Check before booking the date; provide an alternative date, where necessary and consult awarding body procedures for dealing with timetabling clashes N.B. retakes of controlled assessment are limited	EO=R

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff (<i>use 'RACI' to determine who should be listed</i>)
	Forward planning	Action	
Control levels for task taking			
Assessment is undertaken under incorrect level of control (time, resources, supervision and collaboration)	Ensure teaching staff/assessors know what level is applicable and understand what is involved. Provide training if required	Seek guidance from the awarding body	VP= A EO= R
Supervision			
Student study diary/plan not provided or completed*	Ensure teaching staff/assessors are aware of the need for study diary/plans to be completed early in course	Ensure candidates start, continue and complete study diary/plans that are signed after every session	CL= A
Teaching staff/assessors do not understand supervision of controlled assessment is their responsibility	Ensure teaching staff/assessors understand nature of controlled assessments and their role in supervision		CL= A EO= R
Suitable supervisor has not been arranged for an assessment where teaching staff/assessors are not supervising	A suitable supervisor must be arranged for any controlled assessment where a teacher/assessor is not supervising, in line with the awarding body specification.		EO= A

* Not all controlled assessment whether for the Diploma or GCSEs will require the completion of a study diary or study plans

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff (use 'RACI' to determine who should be listed)
	Forward planning	Action	
Task setting			
Teaching staff/assessors fail to correctly set tasks	Ensure teaching staff/assessors understand the task setting arrangements as defined in the awarding body specification**	Seek guidance from the awarding body	CL=A
Assessments have not been moderated as required in the awarding body specification	Check specification and plan required moderation appropriately	Seek guidance from the awarding body	CL= A
Security of materials			
Assessment tasks not kept secure before assessment	Ensure teaching staff understand importance of task security	Request/obtain different assessment tasks	CL= A EO= R
Candidates' work not kept secure during or after assessment	Define appropriate level of security, in line with awarding body requirements, for each department as necessary	Take materials to secure storage	CL= A EO= R
Insufficient or insecure storage space	Look at provision for suitable storage early in the course	Find alternative spaces	CL= A EO= R

** All tasks whether set by the awarding body or the centre/consortium must be developed in line with the requirements of the specification.

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff <i>(use 'RACI' to determine who should be listed)</i>
	Forward planning	Action	
Deadlines			
Deadlines not met by candidates	Ensure all candidates are briefed on deadlines/penalties for not meeting them	Mark what candidates have produced by deadline and seek guidance from awarding body on further action.	CL= A T= R
Deadlines for marking and/or paperwork not met by teaching staff/ assessors	Ensure teaching staff/assessors are given clear deadlines (prior to awarding body ones) to complete marking/paperwork so the exams office can process and send off marks ahead of AB deadlines	Seek guidance from awarding body	CL= A
Authentication			
Candidate fails to sign authentication form	Ensure all candidates have authentication forms to sign and attach to work when it is completed before handing in	Find candidate and ensure form is signed	CL= A T= R
Teaching staff/assessors fail to complete authentication forms or leave before completing authentication	Ensure teaching staff/assessors understand importance of authentication forms and the requirement of a signature	Return form to staff for signature. Ensure forms are signed as work is marked, not at end of season	CL= A

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff (<i>use 'RACI' to determine who should be listed</i>)
	Forward planning	Action	
Marking			
Teaching staff/assessors interpret marking descriptions incorrectly	Ensure appropriate training and practicing of marking. Plan for sampling of marking during the practice phase.	Arrange for remarking. Consult awarding body specification for appropriate procedure	CL= A T= R
Centre does not run standardisation activity as required by the awarding body	Plan against the requirements for standardisation for the awarding body when and how this activity will be conducted.	Check with the awarding body whether a later standardisation event can be arranged.	CL= A T= R

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Head of Centre _____

Examination Officer _____

Date _____

The policy is next due for review on 1st July 2011 and annually thereafter.