Examinations Policy

May 2018
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The purpose of this exams policy is:

- to ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interests of candidates;
- to ensure the operation of an efficient exams 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 exams policy will be reviewed every year.

The exams policy will be reviewed by the Senior Line Manager of Assessment and the Examinations Officer.

Where references are made to JCQ regulations/guidelines, further details can be found at www.jcq.org.uk.

Exam responsibilities

The Head of Centre:

- has overall responsibility for the school/college as an exams centre and advises on appeals and remarks.
- is responsible for reporting all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice - refer to the JCQ document Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments.

Exams officer:

- manages the administration of internal exams and external exams.
- advises the senior leadership team, subject and class tutors, and other relevant support staff on annual exams timetables and procedures as set by the various awarding bodies.
- oversees the production and distribution, to all centre staff and candidates, of an annual calendar for all exams in which candidates will be involved and communicates regularly with staff concerning imminent
ensures that candidates and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the exams timetable that will affect them.

- checks with teaching staff that the necessary coursework and/or controlled assessments are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
- provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries.
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.
- receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts and ensures that scripts are dispatched as per the guidelines.
- administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration following the regulations in the JCQ publication *A guide to the special consideration process*.
- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes.
- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges.
- line manages the senior exams invigilator and organises the recruitment, training, and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams.
- ensures candidates’ coursework / controlled assessment marks are submitted, and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule.
- tracks, dispatches, and stores returned coursework / controlled assessments.
- arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the SLT, any post results service requests.

**Heads of Faculty** are responsible for:

- guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exams entries or amendments to entries.
- accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the exams officer.
- accurate completion of coursework / controlled assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets.
- decisions on post-results procedures.

**Teachers** are responsible for:

- supplying information on entries, coursework and controlled assessments as required by the head of department and/or exams officer.

The **Special Educational Needs Coordinator** (SENCo) is responsible for:

- identification and testing of candidates’ requirements for access arrangements and notifying the exams officer in good time so that they are able to put in place exam day arrangements
- process any necessary applications in order to gain approval (if required).
- working with the exams officer to provide the access arrangements required by candidates in exams rooms.

**Lead invigilator/invigilators** are responsible for:

- assisting the exams officer in the efficient running of exams according to JCQ regulations.
- 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 ensuring their return to the
Candidates are responsible for:

- confirmation and signing of entries.
- understanding coursework / controlled assessment regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.
- ensuring they conduct themselves in all exams according to the JCQ regulations.

Qualifications offered
The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Executive Headteacher and Head of School. The types of qualifications offered are Level 2 and Level 3 Academic and Vocational courses, largely in the form of GCSEs, A-Levels and BTECs.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus or similar documents for that year. If there is to be a change of specification for the next year, the exams office must be informed by the final day of the previous academic year.

Informing the exams office of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the Senior Line Manager of the Subject in question.

The Assistant Headteacher (responsible for the candidate’s relevant Key Stage) will make decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject, in consultation with the Head of Department (for said subject).

Exam timetables
Once confirmed, the exams officer will circulate the exam timetables for internal and external exams at a specified date before each series begins. The timetables will be circulated to students, staff and parents and will be displayed on the school website.

Entries, entry details and late entries
Candidates or parents/carers can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal and this request will be considered by the Assistant Headteacher responsible for the student’s academic and pastoral progress. The centre does not accept entries from private candidates.

The centre does not act as an exams centre for other organisations.

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department/curriculum via email.

Heads of department/faculty will provide estimated entry information to the exams officer to meet JCQ and awarding body deadlines.

Entries and amendments made after an awarding organisation’s deadline (i.e. late) require the authorisation, in writing, of the senior line manager for examinations.

GCSE, AS, and A-Level retakes are only allowed if approved by the Senior Line Manager for Exams and Assistant Headteacher of the relevant Key Stage.

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.
The exams officer will publish the deadline for actions well in advance for each exams series. *GCSE, AS Level, A Level, and BTEC entry exam fees are paid by the centre.*

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the party accountable for the incurred cost: i.e. Candidate, Department or parent.

Fee reimbursements may be sought from candidates:
- *if they fail to sit an exam*
- *if they do not meet the necessary coursework requirements without medical evidence or evidence of other mitigating circumstances.*

Re-sit fees are paid by the centre.

*Equality Legislation*

All exam centre staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of any equality legislation. The centre will comply with the legislation, including making reasonable adjustments to the service that they provide to candidates in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies, and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the SENCo.

*Access arrangements*
The SEN department and/or SENCo will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs and any special arrangements that individual candidates will need during the course and in any assessments/exams.

A candidate’s access arrangements requirement is determined by the SENCo and/or a qualified professional. Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate’s access arrangement is the responsibility of the SENCo. Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the SENCo.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the SEN department, as directed by the SENCo. Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the SEN department, as directed by the SENCo.

*Use of Word Processors in Examinations*
For the purpose of examinations, the school is allowed to provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility / predictive text disabled (switched off) to a candidate where it is their *normal way of working within the centre*. Candidates who have Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) approval for a scribe may alternatively use a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility enabled.

Access to a word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he / she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he / she uses a laptop at home.

Access to a word processor for examinations requires the prior approval of the school’s Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) and such approval will only be forthcoming if the SENCo is satisfied that there is both evidence of need and evidence that this is the candidate’s normal way of working within the centre. Candidates who may benefit from the use of a word processor may include, for example, a candidate with:
- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly;
- a medical condition;
- a physical disability;
- a sensory impairment;
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand;
- poor handwriting

This list is not exhaustive.

Where a candidate has SENCo approval to use a word processor for examinations, the school will provide a word processor which has been set up for examinations in accordance with current JCQ regulations. Candidates will not be permitted to use their own personal word processors for examinations.

For JCQ regulations on the use of a word processor in written examinations please see section 5.8 of the JCQ publication Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties
https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration

Contingency planning
Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer. Contingency plans are available via email and are in line with the guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and awarding organisations.

Estimated grades
Heads of Department/Faculty are responsible for submitting estimated grades to the exams officer when requested.

Managing invigilators
External staff will be used to invigilate examinations. These invigilators will be used for external exams. Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Senior Line Manager for Examinations and Assessment. Securing the necessary Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the Headteacher’s PA (under their role in HR).
DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre.
The Executive Headteacher (in collaboration with the Head of School) sets the invigilators’ rates of pay.
Invigilators are recruited, timetabled, trained, and briefed by the Senior Line Manager for Assessment and Examinations, and the Exams Officer.

Malpractice
The Head of Centre (in consultation with the Senior Line Manager for Assessment and Examinations) is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice.

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 staff are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms, and will be advised of requirements at least two weeks in advance.
The Exams Officer and lead invigilator will start and finish 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 may not enter the examination room after the exam commences, unless accompanied by the Head of Centre or Head of School. Any staff present must be in accordance with the rules defined by JCQ concerning who is allowed in the exam room and what they can do.
In practical exams, subject teachers’ availability will be in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
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 in accordance with JCQ’s recommendations and no quicker than 24 hours after the final candidates have completed them.
After an exam, the exams officer will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed examination scripts to awarding bodies, working in conjunction with the senior invigilator.

**Candidates**
The exams officer will provide written information to candidates in advance of each exam series. The lead invigilator may give a formal briefing session for candidates. The centre's published rules on acceptable dress and behaviour apply at all times. Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

In an exam room candidates must not have access to items other than those clearly allowed in the instructions on the question paper, the stationery list, or the specification for that subject. This is particularly true of mobile phones and other electronic communication or storage devices with text or digital facilities. Any precluded items must not be taken into an exam room.

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 Senior Line Manager for Assessment & Examinations, Exams office, and invigilators.
Note: candidates who leave an exam room must be accompanied by an appropriate member of staff at all times. The exams officer and attendance officer is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day.

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

**Special consideration**
Should a candidate be unable to attend an exam because of illness, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be ill or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre's exams officer to that effect.
The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within two days of the exam.
The exams officer will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body within five working days of the exam.

**Internal assessment**
It is the duty of Heads of Department/Faculty to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for dispatch at the correct time. The exams officer will assist by keeping a record of each dispatch, including the recipient details and the date and time sent.

Marks for all internally assessed work are provided to the exams office by the Head of Department/Faculty. The exams officer will inform staff of the date when appeals against internal assessments must be made by. Any appeals will be dealt with in accordance with the centre’s Internal Appeals Procedure (IAP) document.

**Results**
Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days in one of the following ways:
- *in person at the centre*
- *by post to their home address - candidates to provide a self-addressed envelope*
- *collected and signed for by an approved and authorised third party such as a family member (only with written permission from the candidate).*
The results slip will be in the form of a centre produced document.
Arrangements for the centre to be open on results days are made by Business Manager and Site Team. The provision of the necessary staff on results days is the responsibility of the exams officer and senior line manager for exams.

**Enquiries about Results (EAR)**

EARs may be requested by centre staff or the candidate following the release of results. A request for a re-mark or clerical check requires the written consent of the candidate, a request for a re-moderation of internally assessed work may be submitted without the consent of the group of candidates. The cost of EARs will be paid by the candidate. All decisions on whether to make an application for an EAR will be made by the Head of Centre. If a candidate’s request for an EAR is not supported, the candidate may appeal and the centre will respond by following the process in its Internal Appeals Procedure (IAP) document. All processing of EARs will be the responsibility of the exams officer, following the JCQ guidance.

**Access to Scripts (ATS)**

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of written exam papers within seven working days of the receipt of results. Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates must be obtained. An EAR cannot be applied for once an original script has been returned. The cost of EARs will be paid by the candidate. Processing of requests for EARs will be the responsibility of the exams officer.

**Certificates**

Candidates will receive their certificates
- by post to their home address

Certificates can be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, provided they have written authority from the candidate to do so, and bring suitable identification with them that confirms who they are.

The centre retains certificates for five years. A new certificate will not be issued by an awarding organisation. A transcript of results may be issued if a candidate agrees to pay the costs incurred.

**To be reviewed:** May 2020
**To be reviewed by:** AHT