



Exams Policy

2023/24

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Exams Policy - Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- To ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently, in line with regulatory guidelines and in the best interests of the candidates
- To ensure the operation of an efficient exams system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff

The exams policy will be reviewed at least yearly by the Exams Officer

Exam Responsibilities – Exam Officer

Purpose of the role

- To be responsible for managing the effective and efficient administration of external examinations in accordance with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations (on behalf of the JCQ member awarding bodies)
- Managing exam administration in a consistent and secure fashion, ensuring the integrity of the assessment process
- To act on behalf of, and be the main point of contact for, the centre in matters relating to the general administration of awarding body examinations and assessments
- To closely liaise with key stakeholders (external and internal) to ensure exams administration processes are strictly followed and key deadlines met
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice/maladministration before, during the course of and after examinations have taken place

Main duties and responsibilities

Before examinations

Planning

- Implement and maintain systems to manage and coordinate all aspects of the exams administration process
- Identify and access relevant support available from external stakeholders (awarding bodies/JCQ/Network group/The Exams Office etc.)
- Comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations, guidance and instructions
- Communicate clear internal deadlines and processes for gathering/sharing exam related information from/with relevant internal stakeholders
- Brief candidates/staff/parents/carers on examination regulations and requirements
- Actively support the head of centre in co-operating with the JCQ Centre Inspection Service, an awarding body or a regulatory authority when subject to an inspection, an investigation or an unannounced visit
- Annually confirm the information required by the National Centre Number Register (as administered by OCR on behalf of the JCQ) and inform them of any changes to centre status

- Manage arrangements to receive, check and store confidential question papers and examination material safely and securely at all times and for as long as required in accordance with the regulations
- Manage any potential conflicts of interest by informing the awarding bodies to timescale for each examination series and recording the measures taken to mitigate any potential risk to the integrity of the qualifications affected
- Contribute to the creation/review/update of exam-related policies/procedures as required by the regulations and ensure these accurately reflect working practices in the centre
- Support the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCo) (or equivalent role) in identifying examination access arrangements and reasonable adjustments for eligible candidates

Entries

- Register or enter candidates for an examination or assessment in accordance with the awarding bodies' published procedures and published deadline for that qualification
- Implement processes and liaise with relevant internal stakeholders to gather correct exam entry information
- Implement strategies to avoid late (or other penalty) fees
- Verify the identity of all students that are entered for examinations/assessments
- Effectively use internal and external IT systems to submit and manage awarding body registration and entry data
- Liaise with Finance to ensure fees are paid as instructed and at the time specified by the awarding bodies
- Submit any applications for transferred candidate arrangements in accordance with the awarding body requirements Pre-exams
- Recruit, train, update and manage a team of invigilators
- Manage the arrangements for the timetabling, rooming, seating, resourcing and invigilation of examinations in accordance with JCQ or exam body regulations
- Effectively resolve exam timetable clashes and manage overnight supervision arrangements (where arrangements may be required after all other options have been explored) in accordance with the regulations
- Ensure all candidates are notified of their examination entries and the dates and times of their examinations/assessments in accordance with the regulations
- Ensure all candidates are aware of the JCQ and awarding body information and regulations regarding the conduct of their examinations/assessments in advance of these taking place
- Confirm relevant internal stakeholders complete administrative tasks associated with centre assessed work in an accurate and timely manner in accordance with the requirements of awarding bodies and moderators
- Support the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCo) (or equivalent role) in implementing examination access arrangements or reasonable adjustments for eligible candidates (appropriate arrangements for rooming, resourcing, facilitation, invigilation etc.)
- Effectively manage arrangements for the secure storage and dispatch of examination scripts for marking

During examinations

Exam time

- Effectively manage the conduct of examinations in accordance with JCQ regulations and/or awarding body rules
- Ensure all exam accommodation is prepared in accordance with JCQ requirements
- Inform the JCQ Centre Inspection Service of any alternative site that may be used by the centre to conduct timetabled examinations
- Effectively deploy fully trained invigilators to exam rooms as appropriate
- Manage unexpected issues/irregularities which may affect the conduct of examinations
- Support the head of centre in investigating and reporting cases of suspected or actual malpractice in accordance with JCQ specified guidance
- Manage any additional emergency access arrangements for eligible candidates as required
- Maintain the confidentiality and security of candidates' responses and dispatch scripts according to published guidance and timelines
- Submit (if necessary), relevant follow-up reports to the awarding bodies' in relation to the very late arrival of candidates for examinations and applications for special consideration where candidates meet the published criteria
- Ensure live non-examination assessments, including controlled assessments, coursework and portfolios are kept secure and confidential at all times whilst in the centre's possession
- Ensure when scripts that have been returned under access to scripts arrangements are no longer required, they are disposed of in a confidential manner, but no earlier than the dates specified by the awarding bodies

After examinations

Results and Post-Results

- Ensure candidates and relevant internal stakeholders are aware of processes, key dates and deadlines in relation to results and the arrangements for post-results services
- Plan, prepare for, and manage the restricted release of results and the distribution of provisional statements of results in accordance with JCQ regulations and/or awarding body rules
- Effectively use internal and external IT systems to access and manage awarding body results information
- Manage and administer the receipt, distribution and retention of examination certificates according to the regulations
- Results are kept entirely confidential and restricted to key members of centre/consortium/Academy Trust staff, at the discretion of the head of centre, until the official dates and times of release of results to candidates
- Provisional statements of results will be distributed to all candidates without delay and regardless of any disputes (such as non-payment of fees)

Post-Results Services and Appeals

Ensure that:

- a written procedure is in place for dealing with candidates' requests for access to scripts, clerical re-checks, reviews of marking, reviews of moderation and appeals to the awarding bodies, and that details of these procedures are made widely available and accessible to all candidates
- candidates are aware of the arrangements for post-results services before they sit any examinations and the availability of senior members of centre staff immediately after the publication of results
- candidates have provided their written consent for clerical re-checks, reviews of marking and access to scripts services offered by the awarding bodies after the publication of examination results
- requests for appeals are made in accordance with the JCQ publication *A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes*
- outcomes of clerical re-checks, reviews of marking, reviews of moderation and appeals are made known to candidates
- candidates and their parents/carers are aware of the centre's written internal appeals procedure to manage disputes when a candidate disagrees with a centre decision not to support a clerical re-check, a review of marking, a review of moderation or an appeal
- late subject awards for unitised GCE AS and A-level qualifications are submitted by the published deadline

Certificates

Ensure that:

- certificates are distributed to all candidates without delay and regardless of any disputes (such as non-payment of fees)
- a record is kept of the certificates that are issued
- all unclaimed certificates are retained under secure conditions for a minimum of 12 months from the date of issue
- any unclaimed certificates are destroyed in a confidential manner (or returned to the respective awarding body) after retaining them for a minimum of 12 months
- a record of certificates that have been destroyed is retained for four years from their date of destruction
- candidates are informed that some awarding bodies do not offer a replacement certificate service and may only issue a Certifying Statement of Results
- any certificates requested by the awarding bodies are returned immediately

Other

- Undertake training as required and disseminate relevant information where necessary to internal and external stakeholders.
- Ensure the exam policy is updated when appropriate to reflect changes in published regulations or guidance
- Undertake other duties appropriate to the role as may be required by the head of centre/SLT responsible for examinations

Exam Responsibilities – Head of Centre

Purpose of the role

- To hold to account the Exams Officer for the management and effective delivery of examinations and assessments within the centre
- To hold to account the Exam Officer for compliance with the published Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations and awarding body requirements in order to deliver the qualification(s) and conduct examinations and assessments in accordance with these regulations
- To support the Exam Officer in adopting an ethical approach and work proactively to avoid malpractice among students and staff, taking all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice/maladministration before, during the course of, and after examinations have taken place

Main duties and responsibilities

Before examinations - Planning

JCQ/Awarding body

The head of centre/senior leader/line manager must:

- be aware of the contents, and annual changes, in a range of JCQ publications, including:
 - *General Regulations for Approved Centres*
 - *Instructions for conducting examinations*
 - *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*
 - *Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments*
 - *Suspected Malpractice – Policies and Procedures*
 - *A guide to the special consideration process*
 - *Instructions for conducting coursework*
- co-operate with the JCQ Centre Inspection Service, an awarding body or a regulatory authority when subject to an inspection, an investigation or an unannounced visit, and takes all reasonable steps to comply with all requests for information or documentation made by an awarding body or regulatory authority as soon as is practical
- allow all venues used for examinations and assessments, paperwork and secure storage facilities to be open to inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service
- ensure that the JCQ Inspector is accompanied throughout his/her tour of the premises, including inspection of the centre's secure storage facilities □ ensure that there is a process in place to:
 - submit, in accordance with awarding bodies' instructions, information they may reasonably require in relation to their examinations and assessments, returning all subject-specific forms by the required date
 - ensure that the head of centre (as managed as part of the National Centre Number Register annual update) confirms on an annual basis, that they are both aware of and adhering to the latest version of the JCQ regulations
 - immediately inform the National Centre Number Register Team of any other changes in circumstances that could affect the centre status (for example, contact details, change of address etc.)
- ensure their centre complies with JCQ requirements including:
 - clear signage outside the main building

- its own reception which is permanently staffed between 8.30 am to 3.30 pm during term time
- having designated members of centre staff, Monday to Friday, 8.30 am to 3.30 pm, to receive deliveries of confidential examination/assessment material and/or accompany a JCQ Centre Inspector or awarding body representative
- a secure storage facility in a room solely assigned to examinations as defined in the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting examinations*
- for appropriate accommodation to be available to support the size of the cohorts being taught, including appropriate accommodation for candidates requiring access arrangements

Confidentiality

Ensure that:

- the names and addresses of examiners, moderators, external verifiers and any other awarding body examining/assessment personnel, as well as the e-mail addresses of awarding body/JCQ personnel, are kept confidential
- e-mails and letters from awarding body or JCQ personnel are not forwarded without prior consent to third parties or upload such correspondence onto social media sites and applications (including third party applications)
- the centre's employment of, in any capacity, any current or former JCQ Centre Inspectors, awarding body examiners, moderators, awarders, external verifiers or other examining personnel, is kept confidential and that they are not mentioned in any form of literature issued in connection with the centre's programme of assessment

Training of staff

Ensure that:

- the relevant senior leader(s), exams officer and the SENDCo receive appropriate training and support in order to facilitate the effective delivery of examinations and assessments within the centre and ensure compliance with the published JCQ Regulations

Internal governance arrangements

Confirm that:

- a written escalation process is in place should the head of centre, or a member of the senior leadership team with oversight of examination administration be absent
- a member of the senior leadership team is in place who will provide support and guidance to the examinations officer and ensure that the integrity and security of examinations and assessments is maintained throughout an examination series

Public liability Ensure

that:

- there is compliance with local health and safety rules which are in place and that the centre is adequately covered for public liability claims

Conflicts of interest

Confirm that:

- the conflicts of interest process is managed in line with JCQ regulations
- any conflict of interest is either reported to the relevant awarding body or recorded at centre level
- measures are taken to mitigate any potential risk to the integrity of the qualifications affected

Centre inspections

Ensure that the following is in place:

- allow all venues used for examinations and assessments, paperwork and secure storage facilities to be open to inspection
- ensure that the JCQ Centre Inspector is accompanied throughout his/her tour of the premises, including inspection of the centre's secure storage facility

Exam responsibilities - SENDCo

Main duties

Ensure that:

- determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities is in place
- the centre recognises its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, including a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates
- undertakes the necessary and appropriate steps to gather a picture of need and demonstrate normal way of working for candidates. This includes distance learners and home educated students
- where a candidate with a learning difficulty requires an assessment of his/her needs, he/she is assessed by an appropriately qualified assessor as appointed by the head of centre. Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) must be obtained before he/she assesses candidates
- a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*
- the awarding bodies receive appropriate assistance in the discharge of their duty to make reasonable adjustments by requesting access arrangements, where required, and fully support the SENDCo in effectively implementing those arrangements once approved
- any applications for access arrangements or reasonable adjustments are submitted by the published deadline. The SENDCo must hold on file appropriate documentary evidence to substantiate such an arrangement, which must be open to inspection

- for GCE and GCSE qualifications, a file is presented by the SENDCo which must contain for each application the downloaded approval for the respective arrangement(s), supporting evidence of need (where required) and a signed data protection notice/candidate data personal consent form. This information must be readily available for inspection at the venue where the candidate is taking the examination(s)
- requests for modified papers are submitted by the published deadline
- all arrangements are carried out in accordance with the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*
- Lead CPD for the collation and interpretation of Exam Access Arrangements

Personal data, freedom of information and copyright

Ensure that:

- the JCQ publication *Information for candidates – Privacy notice, general and vocational qualifications* is distributed to all candidates at the start of a course leading to a vocational qualification, or, where candidates are following GCE and GCSE qualifications, when the entries are submitted to awarding bodies for processing
- any person involved in administering, teaching or completing examinations/assessments where malpractice is suspected, or alleged, is advised that personal data about them will be provided to the awarding body (or bodies) whose examinations/assessments are involved
- question papers are only used for the purpose only of preparing future groups of candidates for mock examinations and other internal centre tests
- question papers are not released to centre personnel for use in accordance with the above licence until after the awarding body's published finishing time for the examination or, in the case of a timetable variation, until all candidates within the centre have completed the examination
- each of its candidates has been asked to grant the awarding body a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to use their assessment materials on the terms detailed in *General Regulations for Approved Centres* section 6.15

Other

- Undertake training as required and disseminate relevant information where necessary to internal and external stakeholders.
- Undertake other duties appropriate to the role as may be required by the head of centre/SLT responsible for examinations

Exam Responsibilities – Invigilators

Main duties

1. To conduct examinations in accordance with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), awarding body and [insert centre name] regulations and instructions
2. To have a key role in upholding the integrity and security of the examination/assessment process

Before exams

- Report to and be briefed by the exams officer prior to each exam session
- Keep confidential exam question papers and materials secure before, during and after exams
- Ensure exam rooms are set up according to the requirements
- Admit candidates into exam rooms under formal exam conditions
- Identify candidates and seat candidates according to the required arrangements
- Distribute the correct question papers and exam materials to candidates
- Instruct candidates in the conduct of their exams
- Deal with candidate questions
- Start exams

During exams

- Supervise and observe candidates at all times and be vigilant throughout exams
- Keep disruption in exam rooms to a minimum
- Deal with emergencies or irregularities effectively
- Record/report any incidents, disruption or irregularities
- Complete attendance registers
- Deal with candidate questions according to the regulations

After exams

- Instruct candidates in finishing their exams and collect exam scripts and exam materials
- Dismiss candidates from the exam room
- Check candidates' names on scripts, match the details on the attendance register
- Securely return all exam scripts and exam materials to the exams officer

Other tasks

- Undertake training as directed by either the Exam Officer or SENDCo
- Undertake relevant online invigilator training and assessment for that academic year (prior to invigilating an exam series)
- Undertake, where required and where able, other duties requested by the exams officer, for example:
 - centre supervision of exam timetable clash candidates between exam sessions
 - facilitating access arrangements for candidates, for example as a reader, scribe etc. (full training will be provided)
 - other exams-related administrative tasks including maintaining question paper security by supporting the 'second pair of eyes check'