



LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

EXAM POLICY

2024/25

Review Date: September 2025

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This policy which is applicable to all students, staff and parents / carers is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

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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.

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

Process to check the qualifications of the Centre's Assessor

The specialist centre assessor is appointed at the start of each academic year by the Head of School with the assistance of the Exams Officer.

The specialist assessor must either be:

- A qualified Psychologist registered with the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC).
- A specialist assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, awarded by BDA.
- A specialist assessor with a post-graduate qualification in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7.

The original certificate of the specialist assessor has been seen by the Head of School (Quality of Education), and a copy is held on file with the exams officer.

The Head of School (Quality of Education) will check the centre's specialist assessor's qualifications meet the required JCQ levels and will monitor that the assessment process is correctly carried out.

The centre reserves the right to liaise with an external assessor if the specialist assessor is unavailable. The external assessor must hold the necessary qualifications, which are checked by the Head of School (Quality of Education) prior to completing any assessment with the candidate. The Head of School (Quality of Education) will have communicated in writing 'evidence of need' of the candidate to the external assessor.

Responsibilities

The head of School:

- 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.
- has overall responsibility for the school 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/or 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 school staff 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 / carers 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 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 LT, any post results service requests.

Subject Teachers in conjunction with the Exams Officer 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.
- supplying information on entries, coursework and controlled assessments as required by the exams officer Head of School.

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 officer 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 exams officer.

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 Head of School (Quality of Education) and Exams Officer.

The types of qualifications offered are *GCSE, Entry Level Certificate, Functional Skills*

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found on the school website www.learningopps.org for that year. If there is to be a change of specification for the next year, the exams officer must be informed by 1/07/25

Informing the exams officer of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the Head of School (Quality of Education).

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by Head of School in consultation with the Subject Teacher and Exams Officer.

Exam series

Internal exams (mock or trial exams) and assessments are scheduled in December or January prior to the March and June Exam Series

External exams and assessments are scheduled in March and June Series

Internal exams are held under external exam conditions.

The Head of School (Quality of Education) decides which exam series are used in the centre.

The school does offer some assessments on an on-demand basis. If offered, on-demand assessments can be scheduled only in windows agreed between the Head of School and the Exams Officer.

Exam timetables

Once confirmed, the exams officer will circulate the exam timetables for internal and/or external exams at a specified date before each series begins.

Entries, entry details and late entries

Candidates or parents/carers cannot request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal.

The school does not accept entries from private candidates.

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

Entry deadlines are circulated to Teachers via email, briefing meetings, the school intranet.

Updated January 2025

Teachers 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 Head of School and Exams Officer.

GCSE re-sits/retakes are allowed.

Functional skills re-sits/retakes are allowed.

Re-sit decisions will be made by Head of School in consultation with Exams Officer and Subject Teachers.

Exam fees

Candidates 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 exam series.

GCSE entry exam fees are paid by the school.

Functional skills entry exam fees are paid by the school.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the school.

Fee reimbursements are not 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 school.

Equality Legislation

All exam staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of any equality legislation.

The school 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 Head of School.

Access arrangements

The Head of School (Quality of Education) 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 Head of School (Quality of Education) / Exams Officer.

Updated January 2025

Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement is the responsibility of Head of School (Quality of Education) / 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 Head of School (Quality of Education).

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the Exams Officer

Contingency planning

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the Head of School (Quality of Education) / Exams Officer.

Contingency plans are available via email, briefing meetings, the school intranet and are in line with the guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and awarding organisations.

Estimated grades

Subject teachers are responsible for submitting estimated grades to the exams officer when requested by the exams officer.

Managing invigilators

External staff will not be used to invigilate examinations.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Head of School (Quality of Education)

Securing the necessary Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the Proprietor.

DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the school.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the Proprietor

Invigilators are recruited, timetabled, trained, and briefed by the Exams Officer

Malpractice

The Head of School (Quality of Education) in consultation with Exams Officer 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.

The Leadership Team are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms, and will be advised of requirements four weeks in advance.

The Exams Officer 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. 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 Head of School (Quality of Education) in accordance with JCQ's recommendations and no later than two hours after 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 Parcelforce Worldwide/Education.

Candidates

The exams officer will provide written information to candidates in advance of each exam series. A formal briefing session for candidates may be given by the Exams Officer.

The school's published rules on acceptable dress and behaviour apply at all times. Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the school 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 Invigilator/Exams Officer

Note: candidates who leave an exam room must be accompanied by an appropriate member of staff at all times.

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

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 Head of School (Quality of Education) / Exams Office to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within seven days of the exam.

The exams officer will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body within fourteen days of the exam.

Internal assessment

It is the duty of subject teachers 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 officer. 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 school's Internal Appeals Procedure (IAP) document.

Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days

- By email - where appropriate the candidates parents / carers will also be informed of results.

The results slip will be in the form of a school produced document.

Arrangements for the school to be open on results days are made by the Head of School.

The provision of the necessary staff on results days is the responsibility of the Head of School.

Enquiries about Results (EAR)

EARs may be requested by school 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 school.

All decisions on whether to make an application for an EAR will be made by Head of School (Quality of Education)

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 ten days of the receipt of results.

School 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 school.

Processing of requests for ATS will be the responsibility of Exams Officer.

Certificates

Candidates will receive their certificates

- in person at the school or
- 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 school 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.