

Examinations Policy

More Than Ed | Independent School

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1. Introduction and Aims

Our school is committed to ensuring that exams are managed and administered effectively. The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- the planning and management of exams is conducted in the best interests of candidates;
- our system of exams administration is efficient and clear, and staff and students understand what is required and expected of them; and
- we comply with the requirements and guidance set out by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and the awarding bodies.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Everyone

Everyone involved in our exam processes, including staff and students, must read, understand and implement this policy.

Head of centre

The head of centre has overall responsibility for the school as an exams centre, and is responsible for ensuring that all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice are reported in line with JCQ guidance. Our head of centre is Karen Holmes.

Exams officer

The exams officer is responsible for the administration of internal and external exams. This includes advising the SLT and staff on timetables and procedures; producing and distributing an annual exams calendar; informing candidates and parents of relevant timetable details; checking that coursework and controlled assessments are completed on time; confirming estimated entries and managing timely entry of candidates; receiving, checking and securely storing exam papers and scripts and dispatching them per the guidelines; administering access arrangements and special consideration applications; managing timetable clashes; accounting for exam income and expenditure; line-managing the senior invigilator and the invigilation team; submitting coursework and controlled-assessment marks; arranging dissemination of results and certificates; and advising on appeals and re-marks. Our exams officer is Tracey Chambers.

Heads of subject

Heads of subject advise the exams officer of any changes to syllabus or assessment details and of entries for their subjects; provide guidance and pastoral care for candidates unsure about entries; accurately complete entry, mark and declaration sheets to deadline; and decide on post-results procedures.

Teachers

Teachers supply information about entries, coursework and controlled assessments as required by the head of subject and/or the exams officer.

Special educational needs co-ordinator (Assistant SENCO)

The SENCO identifies and tests candidates' requirements for access arrangements and notifies the exams officer in good time; processes any necessary applications for approval;

and works with the exams officer to provide the access arrangements required in exam rooms. Our Assistant SENCO is Heidi Lindle.

Lead invigilators

The lead invigilators assist the exams officer to run exams efficiently according to JCQ regulations; collect exam papers and materials before the exam; collect all papers in the correct order at the end and return them to the exams office; and ensure all candidates are aware of how to conduct themselves. Our lead invigilators are Hayley Winstanley and Alex North.

Candidates

Candidates are responsible for confirming and signing entries; understanding coursework and controlled-assessment regulations and signing a declaration confirming the work is their own; and conducting themselves in all exams according to JCQ regulations. Due to the nature of our candidates' needs, this is checked thoroughly by the staff supporting them.

3. Qualifications Offered

The Headteacher decides the qualifications we offer. We offer the following types of qualification:

- Functional Skills (Entry Level and Level 1); and
- AQA Unit Awards.

The subjects offered in any school year may be found in our prospectus. If there is to be a change to a specification for the next year, the exams office must be informed by January; this is the responsibility of heads of subject. Decisions on whether a candidate is entered for a particular subject are taken by the head of subject in consultation with the SENCO.

4. Exam Series and Timetables

Internal exams (mock or trial exams) and external exams and assessments are scheduled in series determined by the Headteacher, who decides which series are used. Internal exams are held under external exam conditions. The centre also offers assessments on an on-demand basis, scheduled in windows agreed between the exams officer and the Headteacher. Once confirmed, the exams officer circulates the internal and external exam timetables at a specified date before each series begins.

5. Entries, Fees and Re-sits

- Candidates and parents/carers cannot request subject entry, a change of level, or withdrawal.
- We do not accept entries from private candidates, and we do not act as an exams centre for other organisations.
- Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of subject via briefing meetings, and heads of subject provide estimated entry information to meet JCQ and awarding-body deadlines.
- Entries and amendments made after an awarding organisation's deadline require written authorisation by the exams officer.

- Re-sits are allowed for Functional Skills, with decisions made by the head of subject in consultation with the exams officer.
- Candidates and departments are not 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.

6. Equalities and Access Arrangements

All staff must meet the requirements of equality legislation. We comply with the legislation, including making reasonable adjustments for candidates in line with the requirements of the awarding bodies and JCQ; this is the responsibility of the SENCO.

The SENCO informs subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs and any special arrangements they need; determines each candidate's access-arrangement requirement and ensures appropriate evidence is in place. Room arrangements, invigilation and support for candidates using access arrangements (as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations) are organised by the exams officer and the lead invigilator.

7. Contingency Planning

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the exams officer. Contingency plans are shared via briefing meetings and are in line with the guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and the awarding organisations, including the national exam-system contingency plan.

8. Estimated Grades and Managing Invigilators

Heads of subject are responsible for submitting estimated grades to the exams officer when requested. External staff are not used to invigilate examinations. All internal verification is completed on every occasion by Alex North and Hayley Winstanley, and is recorded in a different colour.

9. Malpractice

The head of centre, in consultation with the exams officer, is responsible for ensuring that suspected malpractice is thoroughly investigated and reported in line with JCQ guidance.

10. Exam Days

The exams officer books all exam rooms, makes question papers, stationery and materials available for the invigilator, and starts and finishes all exams in accordance with the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE). Site-management staff set up the allocated rooms and are advised of requirements 5 days in advance. Subject staff may be present at the start of an exam to assist with identification of candidates, in accordance with JCQ rules. Exam papers must not be read by subject teachers or removed from the exam room before the end of a session; they are distributed to heads of subject in accordance with JCQ recommendations and no later than 1 hour after candidates have completed them. After an exam, the exams officer arranges the safe dispatch of completed scripts to the awarding bodies, working with the Business Manager.

11. Candidates

- The exams officer provides written information to candidates in advance of each exam series, and a formal briefing may be given by the head of subject.
- Our published rules on acceptable dress and behaviour apply at all times; personal belongings remain the candidate's responsibility.
- 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 – in particular mobile phones and other electronic devices.
- Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines, and candidates who leave an exam room are accompanied by an appropriate member of staff at all times.
- The exams officer is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day.

12. Special Consideration

If a candidate is unable to attend an exam because of illness, bereavement or other trauma, or becomes ill or otherwise disadvantaged during an exam, they (or staff on their behalf) should alert the Headteacher. The candidate must support any special-consideration claim with appropriate evidence within 5 days of the exam, and the exams officer makes a special-consideration application to the relevant awarding body within 7 days of the exam.

13. Internal Assessment

It is the duty of heads of subject to ensure all internal assessment is ready for dispatch at the correct time; the exams officer keeps a record of each dispatch. Marks for internally assessed work are provided to the exams office by heads of subject. The exams officer informs staff of the deadline for appeals against internal assessments, and any appeals are dealt with in accordance with our internal appeals procedure.

14. Results, Certificates and Post-Results Services

Candidates receive certification once their exam has been officially passed. Given the nature of the setting, the exams officer ensures all students receive their certificate once papers have been internally verified and grades logged.

Enquiries about results (EARs)

EARs may be requested by centre staff or the candidate following the release of results. A re-mark or clerical check requires the written consent of the candidate. The cost of EARs is paid by the centre, decisions to apply are made by the head of subject, and all processing is the responsibility of the exams officer following JCQ guidance. If a request is not supported, the candidate may appeal under our internal appeals procedure.

Access to scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of written exam papers within 7 days of receipt of results. Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or, with candidate consent, for teaching purposes. Applications for EARs cannot be submitted once an original script has been returned. The cost of ATS is paid by the centre, and the exams officer is responsible for processing requests.

15. Monitoring and Review

The head of centre is responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed every year, in line with JCQ requirements.

16. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the school's other policies, including:

- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report
- Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy
- Equality Policy and Accessibility Policy
- Complaints Policy and internal appeals procedure
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices

17. Legislation and Guidance

In drawing up this policy, the school has had regard to the following:

- JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, and JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE)
- JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, and the Special Consideration guidance
- JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures
- Ofqual exam-system contingency guidance
- Equality Act 2010