



Queen Mary's Grammar School, Walsall

Examinations Policy

Approved by the Pastoral & Curriculum Committee November 2016

1. Aims

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 by the pastoral and curriculum policy of the governing body.

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

2. Exam responsibilities

The head of centre:

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

The examinations 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 deadlines and events.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 department 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 and disabilities coordinator (SENDCO)** 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).
- administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration following the regulations in the JCQ publication *A guide to the special consideration process*.

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 exams office.

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.

3. Qualifications offered

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Heads of Department in consultation with the Headmaster or Deputy Headmaster.

The subjects offered for qualifications in any academic year may be found in the published options booklets on the School's website).

Informing the exams office of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the Head of Department.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by Head of Department in consultation with the SLT.

4. Exam series

Internal exams are held under external exam conditions and are scheduled in:

- November - Year 11 mock exams
- May/June - Year 7-10 end-of-year exams

External exams and assessments are scheduled mainly in the summer exam series (May/June), with some GCSE re-sits in Maths and English in the November series.

5. Exam timetables

Once confirmed, the exams officer will circulate the individual exam timetables for at a specified date before each series begins. These will also be displayed on the exam notice board (in the main quad).

6. Entries, entry details and late entries

There are certain conditions placed upon exam entries:

- Candidates or parents/carers cannot request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal without prior consultation with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- The centre accepts entries from private candidates on a case-by-case basis.
- The centre does not act as an exams centre for other organisations.
- Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department via email and briefing meetings
- Heads of department 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 authorisation of the SLT

7. 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.

Payments

- First GCSE, AS and A2/A level entry exam fees are paid by the centre
- Late entry or amendment fees may be payable by the School or candidate depending on the circumstances

- Re-sit fees are paid by the candidates, through the Parent Pay system

8. 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 JCO. This is the responsibility of the examinations officer and the SLT.

9. Access arrangements

The SENDCO 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.

Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement is the responsibility of SENDCO.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the SENDCO.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the examinations officer, along with invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCO access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the examinations officer.

Full details of the School's support for candidates with SEND requirements can be found in the policy of '*Special Educational Needs, Disabilities (SEND) and Equalities Policy*', approved in November 2016

10. Contingency planning

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the Headmaster and SLT. There may be a number of situations which need to be planned for:

(a) Disruption of teaching time - School closed for an extended period

- If the School is closed, or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning, it is the responsibility of the School to prepare students, as usual, for examinations:
- In the case of modular courses, candidates should sit the examinations in the next available series
- The School should plans to facilitate teaching and learning by an alternative method or alternative location.
- Guidance on emergency planning, with advice on severe weather, is available on the Department for Education website:
<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/emergencyplanning/a0069425/advice-on-severe-weather>

(b) Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

If the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of Examinations is disrupted:

- The awarding organisations to source alternative couriers for delivery of hardcopies.
- The awarding organisations would provide the School with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. Awarding organisations would fax examination papers to centres if electronic transfer is not possible. The examinations officer must ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.

(c) Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis

This contingency applies if the School becomes closed due to extreme issues on the school site e.g. fire, adverse weather.

- The School can liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations. JCQ guidance on alternative site arrangements can be accessed through the JCQ website
- The School can offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series
- The School can apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements. Candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control.
- JCQ guidance on special consideration can be accessed through the JCQ website: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangementsandspecialconsideration/regulations-and-guidance

(d) Centre is unable to open as normal during the examination period

If the School is unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations it must inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is

possible. The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for the School to open lies with the Headmaster.

The Headmaster is responsible for taking advice, or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether they are able to open.

- The School should open for examinations and examination candidates only if possible.
- The School should use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public building, if possible)
- The School may offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series
- The School can apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements

(e) Disruption to the transportation of completed examination Scripts

If there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts:

- The School will seek advice from awarding organisations and normal collection agency regarding collection.
- The School must not to make arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations.
- The School must ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

(f) Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

If due to large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked:

- The awarding organisations should generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations in consultation with the regulators.
- The candidates should retake affected assessment at subsequent assessment window.

(g) Disruption to the scanning process - where completed examination scripts are being scanned in preparation for onscreen marking

If the examination boards scanning process is disrupted, resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates:

- The awarding organisations should implement their existing contingency plans for disruption to onscreen marking process
- The awarding organisations should revert to traditional form of marking
- The awarding organisations should recruit, train or re-standardise qualified new markers.

(h) Markers unable to mark examination scripts according to marking schedules

If the examination board markers are unable to mark examination scripts resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates.

- The awarding organisations should re-allocate scripts to available markers
- The awarding organisations to recruit, train or re-standardise qualified new markers and prioritisation of marking to be based on results dates.

(i) Difficulty in meeting planned schedule or unable, to issue results

Inability of awarding organisations (including the case of a single awarding organisation) to either meet planned schedule for issue of results, or to issue results as planned due to a systems failure. If the awarding organisation(s) face delay in meeting the planned schedule for issuing results:

- The awarding body should establish priorities for processing results, implement existing contingency plans for disruption to the schedule for issuing results.
- If awarding organisation(s) face difficulty in issuing results as planned due to a systems failure in consultation with regulators, assess the level of disruption and consider alternative options for issuing results dependent upon the nature of the particular systems failure, the awarding organisations and regulators to liaise with relevant organisations (i.e. UCAS, CAO) regarding process of candidate progression to further and higher education.

(j) Awarding organisations unable to issue accurate results

Due to system error/failure or attack on systems means significant numbers of results cannot be validated as accurate or are issued and found to be inaccurate.

- The candidates, School and stakeholders will be informed of any incorrect results
- The awarding organisations will re-validation results
- The awarding organisations to re-issue results, via alternative format if necessary.

(k) Centres are unable to distribute results as normal

If the School is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post results services.

The School should contact the awarding organisations about alternative options:

- The School will make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site.
- The School will make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site.
- The School will share facilities with other centres where possible.

(l) The examinations officer or key staff in the examinations office are absent or unable to perform roles

In these occasions, the responsibilities for carrying out the roles of the examinations officers will be delegated to the Headmaster and SLT.

11. Estimated grades

Heads of departments are responsible for submitting estimated grades to the exams officer when requested by the exams officer.

12. Managing invigilators

Non-teaching staff will be used to invigilate examinations. These invigilators will be used for internal exams and external exams.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Deputy Headmaster. Securing the necessary Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the SLT. DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre. Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the Headmaster and Finance Director.

Invigilators are recruited, timetabled, trained, and briefed by the examinations officer.

13. Malpractice

The head of centre, in consultation with the examinations officer, is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice.

14. Exam days

The following procedures apply:

- The examinations 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 is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms, and will be advised of requirements in advance.
- The examinations officer will start and finish all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
- 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.
- After an exam, the examinations officer will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed examination scripts to awarding bodies.

15. Candidates

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

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.

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

The examinations officer is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day.

16. Clash candidates

The examinations officer will be responsible as necessary for:

- Informing candidates
- Supervising escorts
- Providing private study arrangements

17. 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 examinations officer to that effect. The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence as soon as possible before an exam.

The examinations officer will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body.

18. Internal assessment

It is the duty of heads of department to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for dispatch at the correct time. The examinations 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/teachers through SIMS.

19. Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days:

- in person at the centre
- by post to their home address - candidates to provide a self-addressed envelope
- collected and signed for

Arrangements for the centre to be open on results days are made by the SLT. The provision of the necessary staff on results days is the responsibility of the SLT

20. 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 processing of EARs will be the responsibility of the examinations office, following the JCQ guidance.

The appeals procedure to manage disputes regarding EARs is set out in the School's Policy on '*Appeals against (internal) coursework grading and Enquiries about (external) results*' (approved November 2015).

21. Access to Scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of written exam papers within the published number of days after the receipt of results.

Centre staff may also request scripts (or photocopies of 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.

Processing of requests for ATS will be the responsibility of the examinations office.

22. Certificates

Candidates will receive their certificates

- in person at the centre
- collected and signed for

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.

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.

23. Secure handling of exam scripts

The School complies with the guidance on the receipt and storage of scripts as set out in the JCQ's 'Instructions for conducting examinations 1 September 2015 to 31 August 2016'

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

The person responsible for this policy is: R.J. Langton (Deputy Headmaster)

The examinations officer is: L. Harding

The Headmaster is: T.J. Swain