



The Northumberland Church of England Academy

Examinations Policy

1.0 Policy Purpose

The purpose of this exam policy is:

- to ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of candidates
- to ensure the operation of an efficient exam 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.

It is the responsibility of the Exam Officer to ensure that this policy is kept up to date.

2.0 Exam responsibilities

Principal Director Secondary

Overall responsibility for the school/college as an exam centre:

- advises on appeals and re-marks
- the Principal Director Secondary is responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice. Refer to the JCQ document *Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments*.

Director of Data

- is responsible for analysis of exam results.
- prepares and presents reports to the SLT showing results achieved in relation to expected grades and comparable data for previous years, indicating where future procedural improvements might be made

Exam Officer

Manages the administration of public and internal exams and analysis of exam results:

- advises the senior leadership team, subject and class tutors and other relevant support staff on annual exam timetables and application procedures as set by the various exam boards
- oversees the production and distribution to staff, governors 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 exam timetable that will affect them
- consults with teaching staff to ensure that necessary coursework is completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines
- provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries
- receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts

- administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration using the JCQ *Access arrangements and special considerations regulations* and *Guidance relating to candidates who are eligible for adjustments in examinations*
- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes
- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges
- recruits trains and line manages the invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams
- submits candidates' coursework marks, tracks despatch and stores returned coursework and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule
- arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the SLT, any appeals/re-mark requests
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.

Heads of Faculty

- Preparation of students for exam content and procedures.
- Guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exam entries or amendments to entries.
- Notification to exam officer and SENCO of any access arrangements required
- Involvement in post-results procedures.
- Accurate completion of coursework mark sheets and declaration sheets.
- Accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the Exam Officer.
- Authorisation of late entries through consultation with Exam Officer and Principal Director Secondary

SENCO

- Administration of access arrangements.
- Identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements.
- Provision of additional support — with spelling, reading, mathematics, dyslexia or essential skills, hearing impairment, English for speakers of other languages, IT equipment — to help candidates achieve their course aims.

Invigilators

- Collection of exam papers and other material from the exams office before the start of the exam.
- Correct distribution of papers during the exam
- Upholding of exam protocol in all exams.
- Ensuring the safe and orderly entrance and exit to and from exams.
- Immediate notification to Exam Officer of any incidents of malpractice.
- Collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and their return to the exams office.

Candidates

- Confirmation and signing of entries.

3.0 The statutory tests and qualifications offered

The academy aims to provide all learners with the opportunity to enter and be successful in the public examinations for which they are being prepared. The statutory tests and qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the heads of subject and the senior leadership team.

The statutory tests and qualifications offered are GCSE, A and AS levels, BTEC, NQF and OCR Nationals.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus for that year.

At Key Stage 3

All candidates will follow a broad curriculum including English, mathematics, science and ICT. Performance in all curriculum subjects will be judged through internal assessments at this key stage.

At Key Stage 4

All candidates will be entitled, and enabled, to achieve a broad range of entry for qualifications from external awarding bodies.

At post-16

It is expected that candidates choose between AS modules, BTEC and OCR National qualifications to study during year 12 and year 13.

4.0 Exam seasons and timetables

4.1 Exam seasons

External exams are scheduled in November, January, March and June.

Controlled assessments may also be sat at other times during the year. Information on these can be found in the controlled assessment policy.

Internal assessments may be arranged by individual departments throughout the year. These will be arranged by departments after consultation with the Director of Quality and Standards.

Which exam series are used in the centre is decided by the heads of faculty after consultation with Director of Quality and Standards.

4.2 Timetables

The exams officer will circulate the exam timetables once these are confirmed.

5.0 Entries, entry details, late entries and retakes

5.1 Entries

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by heads of faculty and subject teachers after

consultation with Director of Quality and Standards. However, no learner can be entered for an exam against the parents wishes.

The academy is under no obligation to enter learners for public examinations if there are educational reasons for not doing so. The academy may change the tier of the exam for which the learner has been entered if they are working below the level required. A decision such as this will be taken after consultation between faculty head and Director of Quality and Standards.

A candidate or parent/carer can in some cases request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal. In all cases this should be arranged through discussion with the relevant head of faculty. If the centre does not uphold the request then the cost of this action may be borne by the candidate. In this case parents / carers can appeal against the decision by writing to the Principal Director Secondary.

In some circumstances the centre will accept external entries for examinations.

5.2 Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of faculty via post by the individual examination boards. These must be adhered to in all but exceptional cases.

Late entry procedures, deadlines and costs are published in individual examination board publications. In all cases subject teachers should be aware of these procedures.

Late entries are authorised by heads of faculty and exams officer after consultation with Director of Quality and Standards.

5.3 Retakes

Retake decisions will be made in consultation with the candidates, faculty and the Director of Quality and Standards

(See also section 6: Exam fees)

6.0 Exam fees

GCSE initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

AS initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

A2 initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the relevant faculty or, if the entry is due to a candidate request, by the candidate themselves.

Candidates or faculties 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.

Reimbursement will be sought from candidates who fail to sit an exam or meet the necessary coursework requirements.

This fees reimbursement policy will be communicated in writing to candidates and parents/carers at the start of GCSE and post-16 courses.

(See also section 5.3: Retakes)

Candidates must pay the fee for an enquiry about a result, should the centre not uphold the enquiry and the candidate insist on pursuing the enquiry. Any fees incurred will be communicate to the candidate and parents in writing. A candidate can appeal against any fee by writing to the Principal Director Secondary in the first instance.

(See also section 12.2: Enquiries about results [EARs])

If a candidate fails to achieve their MEG, the centre will pay for a retake if it is requested by the candidate.

If a candidate achieves their MEG, but wishes to retake to further improve their grade then they will be liable for the entry fee.

7.0 The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), special needs and access arrangements

7.1 DDA

The Disability Discrimination Act extends the application of the DDA to general qualifications. All exam centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law.

7.2 Special needs

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by statement requirements, medical requirements, liaison with departments and SENCO over individual student need.

The SENCO will inform subject teachers and faculties of candidates with special educational needs at the start of the academic year and will update as necessary thereafter. Faculties will inform the SENCO of any special arrangements that individual candidates may require during the course and in the exam within the given deadlines of the JCQ policy.

7.3 Access arrangements

Making special arrangements for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of the SENCO with the Exam Officer.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the SENCO with the Exam Officer.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the SENCO with the Exam Officer.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the SENCO with the Exam Officer.

8.0 Estimated grades

It is the responsibility of the head of faculty to submit estimated grades to the Exam Officer when requested. Forms and deadline dates will be passed to departments by the Exam Officer. Departments should, in all cases, adhere to the specific deadlines set out by the individual exam board criteria for each exam series.

9.0 Managing invigilators and exam days

9.1 Managing invigilators

External invigilators will be used for all exam supervision. The recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Director of Operations and Exam Office.

Securing the necessary Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the centre administration. CRB fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre.

Invigilators are line managed, timetabled and briefed by the exams office. Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the centre through the Human Resources Manager

9.2 Exam days

The Exam Officer will ensure that all candidates are properly briefed on examination rules and regulations prior to all exams.

The Exam 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 is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms. The Exam Officer will ensure that all rooms used for exams are set out to the correct specification.

Senior staff or the lead invigilator will start 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 must not advise on which questions are to be attempted. In practical exams subject teachers may be on hand in case of any technical difficulties.

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/faculty at the end of the exam session.

The Exam Officer will ensure that all invigilators are informed of the procedures in case of the need to do an emergency evacuation of the building during an examination. The procedure is given in Appendix A.

9.3 Internal examination invigilation

When internal exams take place, teachers who would normally be teaching a class which has an exam will invigilate that exam.

10.0 Candidates, clash candidates and special consideration

10.1 Candidates

The centre's published rules on acceptable dress, behaviour and candidates' use of mobile phones and all electronic devices apply at all times.

Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Candidates may leave the exam room for a genuine purpose requiring an immediate return to the exam room, in which case a member of staff must accompany them.

The Exam Officer will pass on attendance information to the Attendance Officer at the start of each exam. The Attendance Officer will attempt to contact any candidate who is not present at the start of an exam. The Exam Officer will ensure that all late candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

10.2 Clash candidates

The Exam Officer will be responsible as necessary for identifying escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight stays.

10.3 Special consideration

Should a candidate be too ill to sit an exam, suffer bereavement or other trauma or be taken ill during the exam itself, it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre, to that effect.

Any special consideration claim should be supported by appropriate evidence within five days of the exam, for example a letter from the candidate's doctor.

The Exam Officer will then forward a completed special consideration form to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the exam.

11.0 Coursework and appeals against internal assessments

11.1 Coursework

Candidates who have to prepare portfolios should do so by the end of the course or centre-defined date.

Heads of department will ensure all coursework is ready for despatch at the correct time and the exams officer will keep a record of what has been sent when and to whom.

Marks for all internally assessed work are provided to the exams office by the subject teachers and the heads of department.

11.2 Appeals against internal assessments

The centre is obliged to publish a separate procedure on this subject, which is available from the exams office.

The main points are:

- appeals will only be entertained if they apply to the process leading to an assessment. There is no appeal against the mark or grade awarded
- candidates may appeal if they feel their coursework has been assessed unfairly, inconsistently or not in accordance with the specification for the qualification
- appeals should be made in writing by the course defined date to the head of centre (or other nominee) who will decide whether the process used conformed to the necessary requirements
- the head of centre's findings will be notified in writing, copied to the exams officer and recorded for awarding body inspection.

12.0 Results, enquiries about results (EARs) and access to scripts (ATS)

12.1 Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days in person at the centre or, if arranged beforehand, by post to their home addresses.

Arrangements for the school to be open on results days are made by the Principal Director Secondary.

The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the Principal Director Secondary.

12.2 EARs

EARs may be requested by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking.

When the centre does not uphold an EAR, a candidate may apply to have an enquiry carried out. If a candidate requires this against the advice of the centre, they will be charged. (See section 6: Exam fees)

12.3 ATS

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of papers within three days' scrutiny of the results.

If a result is queried, the Exam Officer, teaching staff and head of centre will investigate the feasibility of asking for a re-mark at the centre's expense. If the centre does not support the candidates claim then the cost of the re-mark will be met by the candidate.

Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates must be obtained.

GCSE re-marks cannot be applied for once a script has been returned.

13.0 Certificates

Certificates are presented in person and collected and signed for.

Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, provided they have been authorised to do so. In this case the candidate must provide the Exam Officer with a letter of consent prior to the collection of the certificates.

Certificates may be withheld from candidates who owe fees.

The centre retains certificates for six years after which time they may be destroyed.

14.0 Links with other policy areas

This policy relates directly to other key Academy policies, namely:

- Assessment and Marking
- Confidentiality
- Curriculum
- Exam Entries
- Data Protection

Appendix A Emergency evacuation procedure during examinations

An emergency evacuation is indicated by the continuous sounding of a bell. In the event of an emergency, a member of Senior Staff or the Examinations Officer will return to the examinations room as soon as possible and take charge of the proceedings. Until that person arrives, the following action must be taken:

1. Stop the examination and record the time.
2. Switch on the two way radio.
3. Instruct the candidates to remain in their seats in silence, and to arrange their papers neatly and place the stationery pack and equipment on top of their papers.
4. Keep the candidates in their seats (unless of course you can see flames then move to 6.)
5. Await further instructions, which will be issued from a member of Senior Staff or the Examinations Officer.
6. Tell the candidates they **MUST NOT** communicate with anyone when taken outside the exam room.
7. Evacuate the room a row at a time as quickly as possible
8. Escort the candidates to the Fire Assembly Points:
Main Hall – *Quad opposite main reception*
Sports Hall – *Outside main doors*
9. Circulate and be alert for signs of misconduct from the candidates.
10. On returning to the exam room check the register by the seating plan again to ensure that all the candidates have returned to the correct seat.
11. Formally restart the exam and adjust the finishing time

Supervision of Clash Candidates/Special Consideration Candidates

Arrangements will have been made for clash candidates/special consideration candidates to take examinations in rooms other than the main exam rooms. Please follow the above instructions, making sure that candidates do not communicate with anyone and are not left alone at any time.

Academy Support Assistants will be assigned to any candidates needing a wheelchair.