



Examinations Policy



General

The purpose of this exam policy is:

- To ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of candidate
- 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 Academy's exam processes to read, understand and implement this policy.

This exam policy will be reviewed annually.

1. Exam responsibilities

Principal

As Head of Centre, the Principal has overall responsibility for the Academy as an exam centre and:

- advises on appeals and re-marks
- is responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice. Refer to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments.

Exams officer

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

- advises the Academy 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, Academy Council members 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
- 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
- provides results analysis for Assistant Principal (Assessment)
- prepares and presents reports to the ALT showing results achieved in relation to expected grades and comparable data for previous years, indicating where future procedural improvements might be made
- 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 Principal, any appeals/re-mark requests
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.

Vice Principal (Curriculum) / Assistant Principal (Assessment)

- prepares and presents reports to the ALT showing results achieved in relation to expected grades and comparable data for previous years, indicating where future procedural improvements might be made.
- external validation of courses followed at KS4/Post 16

Subject Co-ordinators

- Guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exam entries or amendments to entries.
- 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 exams officer.

Teaching staff in charge of Information, Advice & Guidance

- Guidance and careers information.

Teaching Staff

- Notification of access arrangements (as soon as possible after the start of the course).
- Submission of candidate names to heads of department / faculty.

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.

Lead invigilator/invigilators

- 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 their return to the exams office.

Candidates

- Confirmation and signing of entries.
- Understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.

Administrative staff

- Support for the input of data.
- Posting of exam papers.

2. The statutory tests and qualifications offered

The statutory tests and qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Principal in consultation with Subject Co-ordinators and Deputy Principal (Curriculum) and the Academy Leadership Team.

The statutory tests and qualifications offered are NCTs, GCSE, A levels and BTEC(First).

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the Academy's published prospectus for that year. If there has been a change of syllabus from the previous year, the exams office must be informed by set date.

At Key Stage 3

All candidates will take English, mathematics and science. The school uses intervention or booster strategies in connection with any candidates who are unlikely to attain the minimum level.

Decisions on whether candidates should not take an individual subject or all NCTs will be taken in consultation with the SENCO, Subject Co-ordinators and Headteacher.

At Key Stage 4

All candidates will be entitled, and enabled, to achieve an entry for qualifications from an external awarding body.

At post-16

It is expected that AS modules will be completed during year 12 and A2 in Year 13. Year 12 students may also take level 2 qualifications such as BTEC (First).

3. Exam seasons and timetables

3.1 Exam seasons ACADEMY TO TAILOR TO THEIR REQUIREMENTS

Internal exams
6th Form Assessment Week 1
6th Form Assessment Week 2
Yr 7 CATs testing -
Yr 11 Trial
6th Form: Assessment Week III
Art GCSE
Yr 10 - All Week
Yrs 7&8 Optional Tests
External Exams
Art GCSE
Yr 9 SATs
Yr 7-9 - All Week
Art A-level
Yr 9 SATs
A-level, GCSE & GCE
Yr 7&8 Optional Tests
A-level, GCSE & GCE
Yr 10 GCSE Science Module Tests

External exams are scheduled in November, January, March and June plus a number of Financial, Literacy and Young Enterprise exams throughout the year.

All internal exams are held under external exam conditions.

Which exam series are used in the Academy is decided by the Principal in consultation with Deputy Principal (Curriculum) and Subject Coordinators.

3.2 Timetables

The exams officer will circulate the exam timetables for both external and internal exams once these are confirmed according to dates published in the school assessment calendar.

4. Entries, entry details, late entries and retakes

4.1 Entries

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the Subject leaders in consultation.

A candidate or parent/carer can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal. The Academy, however, reserves the right to enter students for the exam or tier of entry they consider most suitable for the candidate. If a parent wishes to go against school advice, they may be charged for the entry. This charge would be refunded only if the candidate achieved a C grade or above in the higher tier GCSE or a pass at A level.

The centre does accept entries from external candidates except in exceptional circumstances.

4.2 Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to Subject Co-ordinators via email, post and intranet.

Late entries are authorised by Deputy Principal (Curriculum) and Subject Co-ordinators.

4.3 Retakes

- Candidates are allowed 1 retake unit per subject in GCSE
- Candidates are allowed 1 retake unit per subject in AS
- Candidates are allowed 1 retake unit per subject in A2

Retake decisions will be made in consultation with the candidates, subject teachers. Candidates may pay if they wish to take subsequent retakes.

(See also section 5: Exam fees)

5. Exam fees

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

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

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

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the departments.



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.

Reimbursement may 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.

Retake fees for first retake are paid by the Academy.
(See also section 4.3: 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.
(See also section 11.2: Enquiries about results [EARs])

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

6.1 DDA

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 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.

6.2 Special needs

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the SENCO and the educational psychologist / specialist teacher.

The SENCO will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an exam, and the date of that exam. The SENCO can then inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates may be granted during the course and in the exam.

6.3 Access arrangements

The Learning Support Department oversees the provision of special arrangements for candidates to take exams by submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies.

Staffing and rooming for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the SENCO with the exams officer.

7. Estimated grades

Estimated grades

The Subject Co-ordinators will submit estimated grades to the exams officer when requested.

8. Managing invigilators and exam days

8.1 Managing invigilators

External invigilators will be used for exam supervision of all external examinations.

The recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Principal. The Assistant Principal (Assessment) will advise the Principal when new invigilators need to be recruited.

Securing the necessary Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the Principal.

CRB fees for securing such clearance are paid by the Academy. Assistant Principal (Assessment) is responsible for training invigilators with the support of the Exams Officer and Senior Invigilator.

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the exams office.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the Academy administration.

8.2 Exam days

The exams officer will book all exam rooms after liaison with other users and inform the site team. He/she will make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials available for the invigilator.

Site management is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms.

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 Subject Co-ordinators at the end of the exam session.

9. Candidates, clash candidates and special consideration

9.1 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 Academy accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Candidates will not be allowed to leave the exam room before the end of an examination.

The exams officer will attempt to contact any candidate who is not present at the start of an exam and deal with them in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

9.2 Clash candidates

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

9.3 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 Academy, or the exam invigilator, to that effect. The exams officer will discuss all special consideration with the Assistant Principal (Assessment) on the day of the exam.

Any special consideration claim must be supported by appropriate evidence within five days of the exam, for example a letter from the candidate's doctor. The completed form will be passed to the Principal for signing.

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

10. Coursework and appeals against internal assessments

10.1 Coursework

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

Subject Co-ordinators 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.

10.2 Appeals against internal assessments

The Academy 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 30 June to the Principal (or other nominee) who will decide whether the process used conformed to the necessary requirements
- The Principal's findings will be notified in writing, copied to the exams officer and recorded for awarding body inspection.

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

11.1 Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days in person at the Academy / by post to their home addresses (candidates to provide a SAE).

Arrangements for the school to be open on results days are made by the Assistant Principal (Assessment).

The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the Assistant Principal (Assessment).

11.2 EARs

EARs may be requested by Academy 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 subject staff, they will be charged.
(See section 5: Exam fees)

11.3 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 exams officer, teaching staff and the Principal will investigate the feasibility of asking for a re-mark at the Academy's expense.

Academy staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates and the Principal (if there is a charge) must be obtained.

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

12. Certificates

Candidates will be informed by letter to their last known address that certificates are ready for collection and the length of time they will be held.

Certificates are 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.

Certificates may be withheld from candidates who owe fees.

The Academy retains certificates for two years.