

Exams policy

Retford Oaks Academy

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The purpose of the policy

The Centre is committed to ensuring that the exams management and administration process is run effectively and efficiently. This exam policy will ensure that:

- the workforce is well informed and supported;
- all aspects of the centre's exam process is documented and other relevant exams-related policies, procedures and plans are signposted;
- all centre staff involved in the exams process clearly understand their roles and responsibilities;
- this exam policy will be reviewed annually; and
- all exams and assessments are conducted in accordance with JCQ and awarding body regulations, guidance and instructions.

This exam policy will be reviewed by the heads of department, senior leadership team, exams officer, bursar and the governors.

1 Exam responsibilities

Head of centre/principal

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

- Advises on appeals and re-marks.
- The head of centre is responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice. Refer to the JCQ document Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments.
- Understands the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to annually undated JCQ publications including Access Arrangements and Instructions for conduction non-examination assessments.

Exams 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Deputy head/SLT

- Responsible for the organisation of teaching and learning.
- External validation of courses followed at Key Stage 4 / post-16.
- Are familiar with the contents, refer to and direct relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including Access Arrangements and Suspected Malpractice.

Heads of department

- 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.

- Ensure teaching staff keep themselves updated with awarding body teacher specific information.

Head of careers/CEIAG

- Guidance and careers information.

Teachers

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

SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator)

- 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.
- Is familiar with the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications.
- Presents when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the assessor's.

Lead invigilators/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.
- Attend training, update, briefing and review sessions as required.
- Keep up to date with Safeguarding and other Training.

Candidates

- Checking and confirmation and signing of entries.
- Understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.
- Ensuring their details are correct on their exam timetable i.e. name, date of birth.

Administration

- Support for the input of data.
- Posting of exam papers.
- Support the Exams Officer in dealing with exam related deliveries and dispatches with due regard to security of confidential materials.

2 The statutory tests and qualifications

- The statutory tests and qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the senior leadership team.
- The statutory tests and qualifications offered are GCSE, A levels, CACHE and BTEC.
- The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus for that year. If there has been a change of syllabus from the previous year, the exams office must be informed.

At key stage 4

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

3 Exam seasons and timetables

Exam seasons

Internal exams are scheduled in December, March, May and June.

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

All internal exams are held under external exam conditions.

Timetables

The exams officer will circulate the exam timetables for both external and internal exams once these are confirmed.

4 Entries, entry details and late entries

Entries

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the heads of subject.

A candidate or parent/carer can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal.

The centre accepts external entries from former candidates only.

Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department via email.

Late entries are authorised by heads of subject.

Exam fees

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

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

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the centre.

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 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.

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

5 The equality act, special needs and access arrangements

- Disability is considered a 'protected characteristic' under the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, it is unlawful, in the context of education for an education provider to discriminate directly or indirectly against a pupil on the basis of their disability.
- All exam centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law.
- Special needs. A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the SENCO.

- 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.

Access arrangements

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

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

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the exams officer.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the exams officer.

Estimated grades

The heads of subject will submit estimated grades to the exams officer when requested by the exams officer.

6 Managing invigilators

- External invigilators will be used for exam supervision.
- They will be used for all exams.
- The recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the exams office.
- Securing the necessary Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the centre administration.
- DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre.
- Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the exams office.
- Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the centre administration.

7 Managing exams 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.
- 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 heads of department/faculty at the end of the exam session.

8 Candidates, clash candidates, special considerations and exam absences

The centre's published rules on acceptable dress, behaviour and candidates' use of mobile phones, watches 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.

Centre Administration are responsible for candidates who are late for their exams, or do not turn up at all by contacting home.

Clash candidates

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

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, or the exam invigilator, to that effect.

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

Absence from exams

Invigilator responsible for small rooms is to check before the exam starts and by the very latest within the first 5 minutes of an examination of any missing candidates.

Exams officer to check main examination hall for absences.

Absences to be reported to the receptionist for telephone calls home – **these are to be top priority** – if numbers are significant then the exam should be held for as long as possible but not exceeding 30 minutes. The business administration team are expected to assist with the calls with the receptionist ringing all students not just the students from their year.

Students who cannot get into school should be collected where practicable by the exams officer and/or a member of the SLT team. If a student is unable to attend, then the exams manager will also inform Head of Department and ring the student to explain the importance of exams and the possibility of a U grade.

9 Coursework and appeals against internal assessments

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 heads of subject.

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; and
- appeals should be made in writing by required dates 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.

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

Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days in person at the centre or by post to their home addresses (candidates to provide a stamped addressed envelope ensuring accurate postage is included).

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

The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the exams officer.

Enquiries about results

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 subject staff, they will be charged.

Access to scripts

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 head of centre will investigate the feasibility of asking for a re-mark at the centre's expense.

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

Certificates

Certificates are presented to each student and signed for on collection.

Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, provided they have been authorised to do so.

Certificates are not withheld from candidates who owe fees.

To comply with JCQ policy, the Centre is obliged to retain certificates for 12 months. A record should be kept of those destroyed for four years.