

ST CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL



EXAMS POLICY

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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.

This exam policy will be reviewed annually.

This exam policy will be reviewed by the Exams Officer.

1. Exam responsibilities

Head of centre / principal

Has overall responsibility for the school/college as an exam centre.

Exams Officer

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

- advises the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), 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/carers 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 Joint Council of Qualifications (JCQ) guidelines
- provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries to Awarding Bodies
- 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
- the (head of centre) exams officer is responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice. Refer to the JCQ document *Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments*.
- line manages the senior exams invigilator and invigilators
- organises 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 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.
- Administration of access arrangements.
- Posting of exam papers.

Deputy Head

- Organisation of teaching and learning.
- Line Manages Exams Officer

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
- advise on appeals and re-marks
- store returned coursework

Careers Service

- Guidance and careers information.

Teachers

- Notification of access arrangements (as soon as possible after the start of the course) to the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)
- Submission of candidate names to heads of department / faculty.

SENCO

- 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.

- Set out the exam room(s) as directed by the exams officer
- Attend relevant training provided by exams officer
- Attend pre and post exam meetings/briefings
- Collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and their return to the exams office.
- Brief candidates on the procedures and expectations of the exam.
- Maintain the rules throughout, reporting and dealing with any malpractice or other incidents.

Candidates

- Understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.
- Abiding by the exam regulations for every exam.
- Conduct themselves in such a way that allows the exam to run as best it can and for their fellow candidates.

2. The qualifications offered

The (statutory tests and) qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the head of centre, heads of curriculum, heads of department and the senior leadership team.

The (statutory tests and) qualifications offered are Foundation Certificate of Secondary Education (FCSE), General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), Business & Technician Education Council (BTEC), Adult Literacy and Numeracy Level 2 (ALAN) and Oxford, Cambridge & RSA Examinations (OCR) Nationals.

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 3

KS3 marks are submitted as Teacher Assessments at the end of every school year. They are reported to the Department for Education (DfE).

3. Exam seasons and timetables

3.1 Exam seasons

Internal exams and on screen tests are scheduled throughout the school year.

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

All internal exams are held under external exam conditions.

Which exam series are used in the centre is decided by the head of centre, heads of department and the senior leadership team.

3.2 Timetables

The Exams Officer will circulate the exam timetables for both external and internal exams once these are confirmed to all staff, students and external candidates.

4. Entries, entry details, late entries and retakes

4.1 Entries

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

Candidates, or parents/carers, cannot request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal.

The centre does accept entries from external candidates.

4.2 Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department via email, notice board and briefings.

Late entries are authorised by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). An Exam Entry Withdrawal Form must be completed by the Head of Department and submitted to SLT for a decision. Only SLT approved withdrawals will be carried out and submitted.

4.3 Retakes

Candidates are allowed 1 retake per subject in GCSE.

Retake decisions will be made in consultation with the candidates, subject teachers, head of centre and the heads of department.

(See also section 5: Exam fees)

5. Exam fees

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

Late entry and 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 will be sought from candidates who fail to sit an exam (unless a medical note/other authorised reason with evidence is provided) or meet the necessary coursework requirements or work required to complete a vocational course.

This fees reimbursement policy will be communicated in writing to candidates and parents/carers at the start of year 10.

Retake fees for first and any subsequent retakes are paid by the centre.

(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 Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (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

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

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

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Progress and Learning Manager (PaLM) with the Exams Officer.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the PaLM with the Exams Officer.

7. Estimated grades

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

8. Managing invigilators and exam days

8.1 Managing invigilators

External invigilators will be used for exam supervision.
They will be used for external and internal exams.

The recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

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 timetabled and briefed by the Exams Officer.

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

8.2 Exam 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 SLT/other teaching 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.

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 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 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 (alternative arrangements, ie where a candidates has 2 parallel exams)

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 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 or complete the application using the awarding body secure internet site 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 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.

10.2 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 30 June 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.

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 centre/by post to their home addresses (candidates to provide stamped addressed envelope).

Arrangements for the school to be open on results days are made by the head of centre.

The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the head of centre.

11.2 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 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 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.

12. Certificates

Certificates are presented in person.

Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, provided they have been authorised to do so. The third party must provide identification and a signed letter confirming that the third party can collect the certificates/results on behalf of the candidate.

Certificates are not withheld from candidates who owe fees.

The centre retains certificates for two years.

Signed:

Mr M Gosling

(Executive Headteacher)

Mr T Miskell

(Chair of Governors)

Date ratified by Governing Body: 19 April 2012

Date to be reviewed: March 2013