



EXAMINATIONS POLICY

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EXAMINATIONS POLICY

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1. Exam responsibilities

Head of Centre

Overall responsibility for the school as an exam centre:

- advises on appeals and re-marks
- the head of centre is responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incident of malpractice. Refer to the JCQ document suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments.

Exams Office Manager / Exams Officer / Data Manager

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 exam 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.

Vice Principal

- Organisation of teaching and learning.
- External validation of courses followed at key stage 4 / post-16.

Heads of department / school/ curriculum

- 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.

Head of careers

- Guidance and careers information.

Teachers

- Notification of access arrangements (as soon as possible after the start of the course).
- Submission of candidates' names to heads of department/school/curriculum.

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.

2. The statutory tests and qualifications offered

The statutory tests and qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Vice Principal and the Heads of Curriculum.

The statutory tests and qualifications offered are GCSE and BTEC Diploma.

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 by 1/11/2010.

Decisions on whether a candidate should not take an individual subject or all NCTs will be taken in consultation with the candidates, parents/carers, SENCO, heads of subject and the Vice Principal.

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

3.1 Exam seasons:

Internal exams are agreed in the Management Calendar.

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 Vice Principal and the Heads of Curriculum.

3.2 Timetables

Once confirmed, the exams officer will circulate the exam timetables for internal exams and external exams.

4. Entries, entry details and late entries

4.1 Entries

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

Candidates, or parents/carers, can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal.

The centre does not accept entries from external candidates.

4.2 Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department via email.

Late entries are authorised by the Vice Principal.

5. Exam fees

The centre will pay all normal exam fees on behalf of candidates.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by departments/parents.

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. Changes outside these times will be charged to the Department.

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.

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 can 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 SENCO.

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

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

7. Estimated grades

The heads of faculty, heads of curriculum 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 external exams.

The recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the exams 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 timetabled and briefed by the exams office.

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 designated person 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. Spare papers will be distributed to heads of department at the end of the exam session.

A relevant subject teacher may be available to read out any subject-specific instructions and start the exam, if required.

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 for the Attendance Manager 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 supervising escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight stays.

9.3 Special consideration

Should a candidate be ill before an exam, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be taken ill during the exam itself or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre, the exams officer, or the exam invigilator, to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within three 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.

10. Coursework and appeals against internal assessments

10.1 Coursework

Candidates who have to prepare coursework should do so by the end of the course.

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

Marks for all internally assessed work and estimated grades are provided to the exams office by the heads of subject, heads of department, heads of faculty and the heads of curriculum.

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 either in person at the centre or by post to their home addresses (candidates to provide sae).

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

The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the senior leader.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

(See also section 5: Exam fees)

12. Certificates

Certificates are presented in person.

Certificates may not be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party.

Replacement certificates are only issued if a candidate agrees to pay the costs incurred.

The centre retains certificates for one year.

Appeals against Internal Assessment of Work for External Qualifications

The Gateway Academy is committed to ensuring that whenever staff assesses students' work for external qualification; this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the specification, for the qualification concerned. The framework for this will be in accordance with the Code of Practice for the conduct of external qualifications produced by Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA):

- Internal assessments are conducted by staff who have the appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills;
- Assessment evidence provided by candidates has been produced and authenticated according to the requirements of the specification;
- The consistency of the internal assessment is secured through internal standardisation as necessary;
- Staff responsible for internal standardisation attend compulsory training sessions;

If a student feels that this may not have happened in relation to her / his work, s/he may make use of this appeals procedure. Note that appeals may only be made against the process that led to the assessment and not against the mark or grade submitted by the college for moderation by the awarding body.

This procedure is available from the Examination Office or the Examination Officer (Mr D Cummings).

- a) Appeals should be made as early as possible and at least two weeks before the end of the last externally assess paper in the examination series.
- b) Appeals should be made in writing by the candidate's parent / carer to the Examination Officer, who will investigate the appeal with at least two other

members of staff who have not been involved in the internal assessment decision. If the examination officer was directly involved in the assessment in question, the Principal will appoint another member of staff of similar or greater seniority to conduct the investigation. Likewise if the examination officer is not able to conduct the investigation for some other reason.

- c) The purpose of the appeal will be to decide whether process used for the internal assessment conformed to the published requirement of the awarding body and the examination code of practice of the QCA.
- d) The appellant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including any relevant correspondence with the awarding body and any changes made to the procedure relating to internal assessment.
- e) The outcome of the appeal will be made known to the Principal. A written record will be kept and made available to the awarding body upon request. Should the appeal bring any significant irregularity to light, the awarding body will be informed.

After work has been assessed internally, it is moderated by the awarding body to ensure consistency between centres. Such moderation frequently changes the marks awarded for internally assessed work and is outside the control of the Gateway Academy and therefore is not covered by this procedure.

If you have concerns about this then please ask the Examination Officer for a copy of the appeals procedure of the relevant awarding body.

Appeals against External Assessment Marks

Where a student is unhappy with the mark / grade awarded for a particular examination unit (e.g. written exam, coursework, practical assessment, etc) a clerical check or remark may be requested from the awarding body via the Examination Officer. The decision as to whether to support such an enquiry will be made by the Academy on the basis of several factors, including knowledge of the exam system and professional judgement. Where the Academy does not uphold a request for such an enquiry the student may normally pay to have an enquiry carried out. Payment will be returned if an appeal is upheld by the awarding body. The students will be required to acknowledge that her / his grade may be confirmed, raised or lowered.

INTERNAL EXAMINATIONS

13. PROCEDURES

Preparation

Examinations are an integral part of a Faculty's assessment programme. The examination period will give students the opportunity to practise organising an effective revision programme and experience a timetable of continuous testing. This is a learning situation for students and will help them to perform successfully in the end of key stage public examinations.

In order to prepare effectively for these examinations, departments will need to undertake careful planning of their written papers. The following points are offered as guidelines in the preparation of papers :

I. Syllabus

- a The teaching syllabus should be carefully analysed and questions set against the learning objectives prescribed for that period.
- b The examination paper should be seen as complementary to the coursework programme

II. Resources

- a Care should be taken in the preparation of resources. Print size and layout should be carefully considered. Resources that will not duplicate clearly should be avoided.
- b The language level of resources should be checked and materials modified as necessary.
- c Information should be provided in a broad range of forms e.g. written, graphs, photos, tables, diagrams, cartoons etc. to allow depth of investigation and testing.
- d If a large bank of resources is used, it may be appropriate to use a resources booklet which could be re-used in later test situations.
- e The skill level in the interpretation of the resource data should match the level being tested in the questions

III. Questions

- a Departments should consider the structure of the papers. The following points should be checked:-
 - Would common or tiered papers be appropriate?
 - Should there be choice? If so, how much? Clear instructions must be given at the beginning of each paper. The time allocation should also be given.
 - How will progression be achieved? How steep should the incline of difficulty be?
 - How are the individual questions linked to specific levels?
 - Language levels in the questions should be monitored carefully. The use of suitable command words and care with sentence construction could make questions more accessible to a broad range of candidates. Vocabulary should be appropriate and unnecessarily complicated words should be avoided. If in doubt the SEN department should be consulted.
 - Print size should be considered. Small print may disadvantage some candidates – use at least 12 pt. type size. Hand-written instructions or resource materials should not be used.

- Balance, appropriate to the syllabus, should be sought between testing knowledge, understanding and skills.

IV. Marking

- a Clear marking criteria should be identified. A variety of styles may be used from point marking to levels of response for more open-ended questions.
- b It should always be possible to convert raw marks into a National Curriculum level, or GCSE grade.
- c The Heads of Faculty are responsible for ensuring consistency of marking and reporting for their subjects.
- d Report as directed by the Examinations Officer, Assessment Co-ordinator.