

TheArtsXchange

Part of the T4 Trust

Examinations Policy

Version	V.2
Developed by	The ArtsXchange CLT
Date	May 2023
Review date	May 2024
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Shared with staff	May 2023

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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.

Exam Responsibilities

Head of Centre:

Overall responsibility for the 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 Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document. 'Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments'.

Exams Officer:

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

- advises the college 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.
- 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 outgoings relating to all exam costs/charges.
- organises the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams submits candidates' coursework marks, tracks, despatches 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 maintain systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exam.
- importing base data and setting up mark sheets for staff.

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.

Connexions:

- Guidance and careers information.
- “Next steps” planning.

Teachers/Tutors:

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

SENCo:

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

Invigilators:

- Collection of exam papers and other material from the exam’s 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 exam’s office.

Candidates:

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

The Tests and Qualifications Offered

The tests and qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the head of centre and the heads of department. The tests and qualifications offered are GCSE, Functional Skills, UAL and RSL. The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in

the centre's published prospectus for that year. Decisions on whether a candidate should not take an individual subject will be taken in consultation with the SENCo and the heads of subject.

At Key Stage 4:

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

Exam Seasons and Timetables

Exam seasons:

External exams are scheduled in November, February and June. Internal exams, i.e., mock exams, PPEs are held under exam conditions. Which exam series are used in the centre is decided by the heads of department.

Timetables:

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

Entries, Entry details and Late entries

Entries:

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the heads of department. Candidates, or parents/carers, cannot request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal. The centre does accept entries from external candidates.

Late entries:

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department via email and notice board. Late entries are authorised by the exams officer.

Exam Fees

The centre will pay all exam fees on behalf of internal candidates. Fees for remarking will be met on recommendation of the HOD. In exceptional circumstances parents will meet this cost.

Private Candidates must reimburse the school for the full entry fee charged to the school by the Examination Board plus an administration fee of £50 per subject per examination series. If fees are not paid any entries will be withdrawn.

The Equality Act 2010, Special Needs and Access Arrangements

Equality Act:

All exam centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law. Additionally, this policy complies fully with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Special Needs:

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the SENCo and 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 can 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 SENCo with the exams officer.

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

Ensuring the exam centre is accessible:

Exam centres are required to be accessible to both internal and external students to comply with the Equality Act.

The building

- Ensure that the entrances to the centre and corridors approaching the exam rooms are well lit.
- Lighting should be checked for suitability both during the day and in the evenings.
- Lighting should be evenly distributed, ensuring that it does not cause glare and shadows. This is particularly important for people with a visual impairment or with perceptual difficulties.
- Ensure that there is no lighting which may trigger seizures for those students with epilepsy.
- Use tactile surfaces to highlight any steps, stairways or changes in levels.
- Make sure that any obstacles are removed from corridors and that there are safe access and exit routes through corridors to meet the health and safety duty.

to staff and students, and in particular people with mobility impairments, including wheelchair users.

- If possible, try to arrange exam rooms on the ground floor of buildings, and at the very least ensure that they are located near emergency exits.
- Where a private room has been arranged for an exam, check that the environment is suitable for the student. For example, is there enough room for a wheelchair and its supports? Is the decoration likely to result in discomfort or hyper nervous stimulation if the student has autism?
- Ensure that those who need to take medication during the exam can do so in privacy and as speedily as possible.
- Try to arrange exam rooms that are close to an accessible toilet. Be aware that many students may need adult changing facilities in the accessible toilet.
- Lighting in toilets should be adjustable as this is essential for students who are deafblind.
- Mirrors should be used sparingly in an accessible toilet as they can add to the confusion of students with perceptual difficulties.
- Check that there is also a facility to open the door in an accessible toilet from the outside in an emergency.
- Centres should ensure that all staff and students, including disabled students and staff, are aware of the emergency evacuation procedures to ensure that disabled students can be safely evacuated from the building whatever their impairment.

Seating

- If you know that a student may become unwell during the exam because of the nature of their disability, try to ensure that you seat them close to the exits to make them feel more comfortable and to limit disruption for others.
- Make sure that there is sufficient space between desks and chairs to enable a student (or invigilator) who uses a wheelchair to enter and leave the area without difficulty.
- Make sure that there are chairs available outside exam rooms to enable those with mobility issues or those who may simply be experiencing stress to sit and rest before they enter the exam.
- Ensure that seating is appropriate and comfortable for those who may have a disability that affects seating and posture.

Signage

- Make sure that all the signs for the exam and those provided by JCQ are suitably sized and adapted to meet the needs of disabled students.
- Sign content should be simple, short and easily understood.
- Text and lettering should be clear, uncomplicated and reasonably sized (12pt). Sans serif fonts such as Arial are recommended.
- The style, wording and design of signs should be consistent throughout the exam centre. This will help students to easily recognise signs as they move around the building.
- Signage should combine raised text, pictorial symbols, arrows and Braille.
- Braille signs should have a small tactile arrow on the left side.
- The colour of signs should contrast with the colour of the walls.
- Signage should be placed at consistent heights.
- Make sure that signs that identify exam rooms are situated on the wall in case the door is open when a student needs to see the sign.
- Floor plans should be placed at main entrances and at designated areas within buildings, such as outside lifts and close to stairways. These should have easily distinguishable symbols to locate areas and should include instructions for visually.

impaired students to enable them to locate lifts, staircases, accessible toilets and exam rooms.

Emergency evacuation:

- Think about evacuation procedures and ensure that all staff, including invigilators, know what procedures are in place for disabled staff or students, for those who may need assistance to leave a building.
- Procedures should be in place so that staff and invigilators know who is responsible for responding to emergency calls.
- Make sure that when evacuation and emergency procedures are being explained to students, attention is given to appropriate explanation for disabled staff and students whose arrangements may be different.
- Fire alarms that have both aural and visual alerts should be installed. Consider planning for a flashing visual alarm and/or a handheld vibrating alarm. Visit the Deaf Alerter websites at www.deaf-alerter.com.
- Pictorial symbols should be included on all fire evacuation signs. This will help people with learning difficulties and people who have difficulty reading English.
- All fire exit signs should indicate which exits are suitable for wheelchair users.
- Ensure that all ground floor exits are level and are accessible to wheelchair users.
- Make sure that staff are aware of where any 'evacuation' chairs are and that the chairs are located at identifiable points. All staff should be trained in using them.

Resources:

- Where computers are being used for an exam, for example in ICT tests, ensure that hardware and software have been properly adapted and tested for those who may use them, such as people with a visual or aural impairment.
- Ensure that there are backups and alternatives in case support equipment ceases to function.

Improving the student experience:

In addition to the above practical steps, which ensure that the centre is appropriate for disabled students, there are a full range of adjustments that can be made to ensure that there is a level playing field for disabled students. Exams office staff will be remarkably familiar with making adjustments to existing exam arrangements. These are not 'concessions' for the individual students but adjustments designed to reduce/remove unfair disadvantage.

These adjustments include:

- Modified test papers, for example enlarged print or Braille.
- Up to 25 per cent extra time (or more depending on the nature of a student's disability).
- A reader or scribe. Be sensitive to the fact that many people, for example those with autism, will find it hard to relate to someone who is a stranger. Take steps to introduce these support workers to students before the exam.
- Supervised rest breaks. Students with hyperactivity or obsessive-compulsive disorders may need opportunities to take a break and rest during an exam. This may also be the case for students who experience fatigue because of their impairment or long-term, conditions such as cancer. Try to ensure that these rest areas are suitably comfortable while remaining secure for the purposes of the exam process.
- Different coloured scripts.
- Use of a bilingual dictionary.

- A prompter. In some cases where a student may have difficulty with time, for example a student with autism, a prompter will be able to assist the student to move on and not become fixated with a particular question at the expense of the whole paper. It is important that prompters are aware of disability etiquette, particularly if they may need to touch a desk to prompt.
- Use of a computer or other technology.
- Use of an individual room.

After the exam has been completed and at the point of publishing and communicating results, exams office staff need to decide for students to receive their results in an area/room which is accessible. Students should be able to access their results quickly and privately, with appropriate attention given to post-result support.

In cases where there needs to be overnight supervision, be sensitive to issues of support and dietary requirements. Be sensitive when accompanying a disabled student to an accessible toilet and be aware of the possibility that a support staff member may need to assist them.

Estimated Grades

Estimated grades:

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

Managing Invigilators and Exam Days

Managing invigilators:

Internal invigilators will be used for internal exams and external exams.

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the centre administration and exams officer.

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 exams officer and HOD will start all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Subject staff must 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 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.

Departments are responsible for prioritising consumable equipment.

Candidates, Clash Candidates and Special Consideration

Candidates:

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

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.

Clash candidates:

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

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.

Coursework, Controlled Assessments and Appeals against Internal Assessments

Coursework/Controlled assessment:

Candidates who must prepare coursework/controlled assessments should do so by the end of the specified date. Heads of department will ensure all coursework/controlled assessments are 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 exam's office by the heads of department.

Appeals against internal assessments:

The centre is obliged to publish a separate procedure on this subject, which is available from the exam's 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/controlled assessment has been assessed unfairly, inconsistently or not in accordance with the specification for the qualification.
- appeals should be made in writing 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.

Results, Enquiries about Results (EARs) and Access to Scripts (ATS)

Results:

Candidates will receive individual results slips in a personally addressed envelope on results days in person at the centre.

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 exams officer.

EARs:

Centre staff or candidates may request ears 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.

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.

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.

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

The centre retains copies of certificates for three years.