



Exams Policy

LKN
June 2018

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| Signature of the Chair Of Governors | |
| Name of the Chair of Governors | Mr J Copping |

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The purpose of this exams policy is:

- to ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interests of candidates;
- to ensure the operation of an efficient exams 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.

The exams policy will be reviewed every year.

The exams policy will be reviewed by the Academy Governing Body.

Where references are made to JCQ regulations/guidelines, further details can be found at www.jcq.org.uk.

Exam responsibilities

The Head of Centre:

- has overall responsibility for the Academy as an exams centre and advises on appeals and re-marks.
- is responsible for reporting all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice - refer to the JCQ document *Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments*.

Exams Manager¹:

- manages the administration of internal and external exams.
- advises the senior leadership team, subject and class tutors, and other relevant support staff on annual exams timetables and procedures as set by the various awarding bodies.
- oversees the production and distribution, to all centre staff 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 exams timetable that will affect them.
- liaises with teaching staff to ensure that the necessary coursework and/or controlled assessments are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
- provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries.
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.
- receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts and ensures that scripts are dispatched as per the guidelines.
- process any necessary applications for access arrangements in order to gain approval (if required), administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration following the regulations in the JCQ publication *A guide to the special consideration process*.
- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes.

¹ This is the individual to whom the Head of Centre has delegated responsibility for the administration of exams in their centre.

- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges.
- line manages the invigilation team and organises the recruitment, training, and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams.
- ensures candidates' coursework / controlled assessment marks are submitted, and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule.
- dispatches coursework / controlled assessments.
- arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the ALT, any post results service requests.

Faculty/Subject Leads are responsible for:

- guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exams entries or amendments to entries.
- accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the exams manager.
- accurate completion of coursework / controlled assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets and ensure the sample is ready for dispatch.
- decisions on post-results procedures.

Teachers are responsible for:

- supplying information on entries, coursework and controlled assessments as required by the faculty/subject lead and/or exams manager.

The **Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)** is responsible for:

- identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements and notifying the exams manager in good time so that they are able to put in place exam day arrangements
- working with the exams manager to provide the access arrangements required by candidates in exams rooms.

Invigilators are responsible for:

- assisting the exams manager in the efficient running of exams according to JCQ regulations.
- distributing exam papers and other material to candidates in accordance with the paper/tier detailed on the seating plan.
- collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and ensuring their return to the exams office.

Candidates are responsible for:

- confirmation of entries.
- understanding coursework / controlled assessment regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.
- ensuring they conduct themselves in all exams according to the JCQ regulations.

Qualifications

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Standards).

The types of qualifications offered are GCSEs and equivalent Vocational qualifications.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus or similar documents for that year. If there is to be a change of specification for the next year, the exams office must be informed by the end of January.

Informing the exams office of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the faculty/subject lead.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by faculty/subject leads in consultation with the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Standards).

Exam series

Internal exams (mock or trial exams) are scheduled in November, January and March and are held under external exam conditions.

External exams and assessments are scheduled in May/June.

The centre does offer some exams/assessments on an on-demand basis. If offered, on-demand assessments can be scheduled only in windows agreed between the faculty/subject lead and the exams manager.

Exam timetables

Once confirmed, the exams manager will circulate the exam timetables for internal and external exams at a specified date before each series begins.

Entries, entry details and late entries

Candidates or parents/carers can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal and this will be considered by and a decision made by the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Standards) and the Principal.

The centre accepts entries from private candidates, however restrictions apply.

The centre does not act as an exams centre for other organisations.

Entry deadlines are circulated to faculty/subject leads via email and briefing meetings.

Faculty/subject leads will provide estimated entry information to the exams manager to meet JCQ and awarding body deadlines.

Entries and amendments made after an awarding organisation's deadline (i.e. late) require the authorisation, in writing, of the faculty/subject lead.

GCSE re-sits are allowed, however decisions will be made by Vice Principal (Curriculum and Standards) in consultation with the Principal.

Exam fees

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.

The exams manager will publish the deadline for actions well in advance for each exams series.

Exam entry fees are paid by the centre.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the department.

Fee reimbursements are sought from candidates:

- if they fail to sit an exam, without medical evidence or evidence of other mitigating circumstances.

Re-sit fees are paid by the centre.

Equality Legislation

All exam centre staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of any equality legislation.

The centre will comply with the legislation, including making reasonable adjustments to the service that they provide to candidates in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies, and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the Principal.

Access arrangements

The SENCo will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs and any special arrangements that individual candidates will need during the course and in any assessments/exams.

A candidate's access arrangements requirement is determined by the SENCo.

Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement is the responsibility of the SENCo.

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

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

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the SENCo and exams manager.

Contingency planning

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the Academy Leadership Team and are in line with the guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and awarding organisations. See Appendix 1.

Private candidates

Managing private candidates is the responsibility of the exams manager.

Managing invigilators

Internal and External staff will be used to invigilate examinations.

These invigilators will be used for external exams.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the exams manager.

Securing the necessary Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the HR and Finance Manager.

DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the HR and Finance Manager.

Invigilators are recruited, timetabled, trained, and briefed by the exams manager.

Malpractice

The Head of Centre in consultation with Vice Principal (Curriculum and Standards) is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice in accordance with the JCQ guidelines and the Malpractice Policy.

Exam days

The exams manager 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 staff is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms, and will be advised of requirements one month in advance.

A member of the Academy Leadership Team will start all exams (in the main exam room) in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Senior staff may be present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates. Any staff present must be in accordance with the rules defined by JCQ concerning who is allowed in the exam room and what they can do.

In practical exams, subject teachers' availability will be in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Papers will be made available to faculty/subject leads in accordance with JCQ's recommendations and no later than 24 hours after candidates have completed them.

After an exam, the exams manager will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed examination scripts to awarding bodies.

Candidates

The exams manager will provide written information to candidates in advance of each exam series. A formal briefing session for candidates may be given by the Head of Year.

The centre's published rules on acceptable dress and behaviour apply at all times. Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

In an exam room candidates must not have access to items other than those clearly allowed in the instructions on the question paper, the stationery list, or the specification for that subject. This is particularly true of mobile phones, i-watches, MP3/4 players, iPODs and other electronic communication or storage devices with text or digital facilities. Any precluded items must not be taken into an exam room.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates are expected to stay for the full exam time at the discretion of the exams manager.

Note: candidates who leave an exam room must be accompanied by an appropriate member of staff at all times.

The exams manager is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day.

Clash candidates

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

Special consideration

Should a candidate be unable to attend an exam because of illness, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be ill or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre's exams manager to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within 2 days of the exam.

The exams manager will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body within 5 days of the exam season.

Internal assessment

It is the duty of faculty/subject leads to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for dispatch at the correct time. The exams manager will assist by keeping a record of each dispatch, including the recipient details and the date and time sent.

Marks for all internally assessed work are provided to the exams office by the faculty/subject lead.

Any appeals in respect of internal assessment should be conducted in accordance with the Appeals Policy.

Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days,

- in person at the centre
- collected and signed for

The results slip will be in the form of a centre produced document.

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

Enquiries about Results (EAR)

EARs may be requested by centre staff or the candidate following the release of results. A request for a re-mark or clerical check requires the written consent of the candidate, a request for a re-moderation of internally assessed work may be submitted without the consent of the group of candidates.

The cost of EARs will be paid by the centre.

All decisions on whether to make an application for an EAR will be made by Vice Principal (Curriculum and Standards).

If a candidate's request for an EAR is not supported, the candidate may appeal and the centre will respond by following the process in its Internal Appeals Procedure (IAP) document.

All processing of EARs will be the responsibility of the exams manager following the JCQ guidance.

Access to Scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of written exam papers within 14 days of the receipt of results.

Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes, the consent of candidates must be obtained.

An EAR cannot be applied for once an original script has been returned.

The cost of ATS for centre staff purposes will be paid by the centre.

Processing of requests for ATS will be the responsibility of exams manager.

Certificates

Candidates will receive their certificates

- in person at the centre
- collected and signed for

Certificates can be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, provided they have written authority from the candidate to do so, and bring suitable identification with them that confirms who they are.

The centre is required to retain certificates for *12 months*.

A new certificate will not be issued by an awarding organisation. A transcript of results may be issued if a candidate agrees to pay the costs incurred.

Contingency Plan- Appendix 1

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at North Shore Academy. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by scenarios contained in the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

This plan complies with JCQ general regulations (section 5) in that:

The centre agrees to *"have in place a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to have a robust contingency plan in place, minimising risk to examination administration, should the examinations officer be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle;"*

Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken, for outline of tasks please refer to 'Exams Manager Responsibilities' section of the Examinations Policy.

Centre actions: SLT to nominate a "deputy" to cover a role/task

2. SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the exam cycle not undertaken, for outline of tasks please refer to 'SENCO Responsibilities' section of the Examination Policy.

Centre actions: *SLT to nominate a "deputy" to cover a role/task*

3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- *Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received*
- Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in:
 - *candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late*
 - *late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies*
- *Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines*

Centre actions: SLT to nominate a "deputy" to cover a role/task

4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- *Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams*
- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days
- Invigilator absence on the day of an exam

Centre actions: SLT to nominate a “deputy” to cover a role/task

5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Exams officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning
- *Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days*
- *Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time*

Centre actions: Source alternative venues/facilities

6. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- MIS system failure at final entry deadline
- *MIS system failure during exams preparation*
- *MIS system failure at results release time*

Centre actions: SIMS is backed up daily and records held with ONEITSS. Liaise with the IT Manager and ONEITSS staff to gain access to server records via an alternative external system.

7. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning

Centre actions: Centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the disruption to teaching time and provide appropriate work via the school intranet or source an alternative location.

8. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

Centre actions: Centre will communicate with relevant awarding organisation to make them aware of the issue. Centre will then communicate solutions to parents/carers and candidates

9. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions: Open for examinations and candidates only, if possible. Where possible to provide alternative provision in agreement with awarding organisation. Centre to inform awarding organisation of examinations to be affected

10. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations

Centre actions: Centre to communicate with awarding organisation to arrange alternative delivery.

11. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts.

Centre actions: Centre will communicate with the collection agency and awarding organisation (as appropriate), ensure secure storage and organise alternative arrangements for delivery of scripts, as instructed.

12. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked

Centre actions: Immediate communication to be made with relevant awarding body and completion of relevant paperwork. Students, parents and carers to be informed by letter.

13. Centre unable to distribute results as normal

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services

Centre actions: Centres to contact awarding bodies and discuss alternative means of distribution

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning Ofqual

Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/joint-contingency-plan-in-the-event-of-widespread-disruption-to-the-examination-system-in-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

JCQ

General regulations

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Guidance on *alternative site arrangements*
<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/forms>

Instructions for conducting examinations
<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

A guide to the special consideration process
<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

GOV.UK

Emergencies and severe weather: schools and early years settings
<https://www.gov.uk/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>

Teaching time lost due to severe weather conditions
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions>

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-guide>

Emergency Evacuation- Appendix 2

Issue

Emergency alert where an evacuation of the building is necessary e.g. fire alarm, bomb scare, flooding.

Actions

Remove candidates to defined evacuation area in accordance with Section 18 of the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations regulations.

Criteria

In assessing whether to continue the examination, the following factors need to be taken into consideration:

- the length of time that has passed since the official start time
- whether the minimum time for remaining in the examination has passed to maintain the integrity of the examination
- the amount of time left to complete the examination(s)
- whether there is sufficient time to complete the examinations before another session starts
- whether continuing the examination take candidates over the session limit of 3 hours, taking particular care to consider candidates with access arrangements which include extra time.

The Head of Centre, or their nominated deputy, should decide whether it is appropriate to continue the session using the criteria set out above. In making this decision, the Head of Centre, or their nominated deputy, must be satisfied that communication between candidates has not taken place outside of the examination room. **Only if completely satisfied that no communication whatsoever has taken place must candidates be allowed to continue the examination.**

If the session is to be abandoned, this will be either:

- because of consideration of the criteria above;
- because re-entry to the premises cannot be secured; or
- because the risk of communication between candidates, which would invalidate the examination, cannot be eliminated.

If the examination has to be abandoned:

- The Examinations Officer should take the first opportunity to contact the awarding organisation and then seek to apply for Special Consideration for all the candidates affected.

Partially completed papers should be dispatched to the awarding organisation as usual, unless it is specifically requested that papers should not be submitted.