

FE Exams Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this exams policy is:

- to ensure the planning and management of exams¹ 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 FE exams policy will be reviewed every two years.

The FE exams policy will be reviewed by the Leadership Team Meeting.

The FE exams policy is linked with the college's Registration and Certification Policy.

Where references are made to JCQ regulations/guidelines, further details can be found at <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

2. Exam responsibilities

2.1 The Head of Centre:

- has overall responsibility for the college 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.

2.2 Exams officer²:

- Manages the administration of internal exams and external exams.
- ensures that all exams invigilation follows JCQ regulations³
- 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 Easton & Otley candidates, via communication with their course tutors, are informed of and understand those aspects of the exams timetable that will affect them.
- ensures that external candidates are informed of and understand those aspects of the exams timetable that will affect them.
- provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries where requested.

¹ In the context of this policy the term exams also encompasses all English and maths functional skills assessments

² This is the individual to whom the Head of Centre has delegated responsibility for the administration of exams in their centre.

³ Note some awarding bodies do not adhere to JCQ regulations and have separate instructions.

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- maintains 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.
- makes applications for special consideration following the regulations in the JCQ publication '*A guide to the special consideration process*'.
- ensures that approved access arrangements are applied.
- manages the exam timetable.
- checks invoices for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges.
- arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the Director of Funding, Reporting Services and IT, any post results service requests.

2.3 Curriculum Quality Managers are responsible for:

- guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exams entries or amendments to entries.
- accurate completion of exam entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the exams officer.
- accurate completion of coursework / controlled assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets.
- checking with teaching staff that the necessary coursework and/or controlled assessments are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

2.4 Programme Managers are responsible for:

- supplying information on entries, coursework and controlled assessments as required by the head of department and/or exams officer.
- tracking, dispatching and storing returned coursework / controlled assessments.

2.5 The FE and HE Specific Learning Difficulties (Exam Access Arrangements Assessor) is responsible for:

- identification and the arrangement of testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements by the Specialist Teacher, in accordance with JCQ regulations.
- Completion of Sections A & B of Form 8 and Form 1.
- Applying to the awarding body on line for the approval of access arrangements
- Recording access arrangements and expiry date on ProSolution.
- Arrange re-testing as necessary.
- processing any necessary applications in order to gain approval (if required).
- working with the exams officer to provide the access arrangements required by candidates in exams rooms.
- Testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements, in accordance with JCQ regulations.
- Completion of Section C of the Form 8.

2.6 Invigilators are responsible for:

- assisting the exams officer in the efficient running of exams according to JCQ regulations.
- 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 ensuring their return to the exams office.
- ensuring all candidates have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities.

- ensuring the security of the examination before, during and after the examination.
- preventing possible candidate malpractice and ensuring that candidates do not receive any inappropriate assistance. .
- preventing possible administrative failures.
- familiarising themselves with JCQ regulations and notices and completing invigilation training.
- giving all their attention to conducting the examination according to JCQ regulations.
- being able to observe each candidate in the examination room at all times.
- informing the Exams Officer of any suspected malpractice.
- checking candidates identity in conjunction with curriculum staff.
- checking and, if necessary, amending seating plans.
- Ensure that all staff adhere to the JCQ guidelines in relation to their specific role whilst providing support to the candidates

2.7 Off Site Exams and Assessments

Whenever possible the college will seek to host exams and assessments on one of our registered sites. However where there is a case for running exams and assessments at a non-registered location such as a work place, conference centre or village hall this will be allowed under the following conditions;

- Sites will be registered by the Centre Exams Officer with the appropriate Awarding Body in compliance with their rules and regulations following a request by curriculum staff to run an offsite exam or assessment.
- The staff member requesting an offsite exam or assessment will ensure the venue is appropriate and meets all the Awarding Body rules and regulations in relation to accommodation of exams and assessments and confirm this to the Centre Exams Officer at the point of their initial request.
- The staff member supervising the hosting and invigilation of the exam or assessment will ensure that all Awarding Body exam and assessment rules and regulations are complied with and will complete the Offsite Exams and Assessments Pro forma Checklist to confirm they have done so. The Checklist will be returned to the Centre Exams Officer along with all other exam and assessment paperwork for processing and filing.
- JCQ rules state that all off site venues must be registered, but only the first time they are used. This applies to ALL offsite exams and assessments and would apply to work based learners being assessed in the work place

2.8 Candidates are responsible for:

- arriving in good time prior to the start of the exam
- confirmation of their identity (by producing their identity badges for internal candidates or supplying identification documents for external candidates) and signing of exam papers where appropriate
- providing the basic necessary stationery and equipment to complete the exam
- 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.

3. Qualifications offered

The qualifications offered at this centre are approved by Directors as part of the curriculum offer.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus or on the college web site for that year. If there is to be a change of specification for the next year, the exams office must be kept informed via access to the course master file for the relevant year.

Informing the exams office of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the Curriculum Quality Managers via updates to the curriculum offer.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by the Programme Managers in consultation with Curriculum Quality Managers.

Internal exams (mock or trial exams) and assessments are scheduled in the college academic calendar on sharepoint.

External exams and assessments are scheduled in the college academic calendar on sharepoint.

Internal exams are held under appropriate exam conditions.

The Curriculum Quality Managers decide which exam series are used in the centre.

The centre does offer some assessments on an on-demand basis. If offered, on-demand assessments can be scheduled only in windows agreed between the Programme Manager and the exams officer.

5. Exam calendar

The exams officer will circulate the exam dates for external exams for publication on the academic calendar.

6. Entries, entry details and late entries

Candidates or parents/carers can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal via curriculum staff, subject to Awarding Body regulations and timeframes.

The centre accepts entries from external candidates but only for qualifications that the college offers.

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

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department/curriculum via email and the college intranet.

Heads of department/curriculum will provide accurate entry information to the exams officer 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 Curriculum Quality Managers.

All exam re-sits/retakes are allowed in line with college assessment policies.

Re-sit decisions will be made by Programme Managers / Curriculum Quality Managers in consultation with the exams officer.

7. 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 officer will publish the deadline for actions well in advance for each exams series. All exam including resits and late entry fees are paid by the curriculum departments. External candidates pay themselves

8. 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 head of centre.

9.1 Access arrangements

The FE and HE Specific Learning Difficulties (Exam Access Arrangements Assessor) 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 FE and HE Specific Learning Difficulties (Exam Access Arrangements Assessor).

Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement is the responsibility of FE and HE Specific Learning Difficulties (Exam Access Arrangements Assessor) Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the FE and HE Specific Learning Difficulties (Exam Access Arrangements Assessor).

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the exams officer in liaison with the ALS Manager and the FE and HE Specific Learning Difficulties (Exam Access Arrangements Assessor).

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the exams officer in liaison with the ALS Manager and the FE and HE Specific Learning Difficulties (Exam Access Arrangements Assessor).

9.2. Supporting Access Arrangements

Support to be provided as per the candidates Form 8/Form 1, in accordance with JCQ regulations.

Unless specified in the Form 8/Form 1 that the candidate needs someone familiar with their normal way of working, staff identified to support access arrangements, should not have provided support to the candidate in class.

10. Contingency planning

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the Head of Centre. Contingency plans are in line with the guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and awarding organisations.

11. External candidates

Managing external candidates is the responsibility of the exams officer.

12. Managing invigilators

A combination of internal and external trained staff will be used to invigilate examinations. These invigilators will be used for internal exams and external exams.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Head of Student Registry. Securing the necessary Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the Human Resources Department.

Invigilators are timetabled, trained, and briefed by the Student Registry Office Supervisor and/or Exams Officer.

For all external tests the recommendation is that the college follows JCQ guidelines for invigilation rather than current CSkills and IMI practice on who can invigilate the test. Current JCQ guidance states:

*'make sure that a teacher who teaches the subject being examined, or a senior member of teaching staff who has had overall responsibility for the candidates preparation for the examination **is not** an invigilator during the timetabled written examination or on-screen test,'*

13. Malpractice

The head of centre in consultation with the Head of Student Registry and the Director of Funding, Reporting Services and IT is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice and communication with the awarding body. An investigating officer will be appointed according to JCQ regulations.

14. 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 staff and IT staff are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms and equipment, and will be advised of requirements usually at least one week in advance. The invigilators will start and finish all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Curriculum staff and college managers 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. Exam papers must not be read by subject teachers or removed from the exam room before the end of a session. Papers may be distributed to heads of department in accordance with JCQ's recommendations.

After an exam, the exams officer will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed examination scripts to awarding bodies, working in conjunction with college central administration staff.

15. Candidates

Programme Managers / Curriculum Quality Managers will provide written information to candidates in advance of each exam series. A formal briefing session for candidates may be given by the programme area leaders/curriculum managers.

The centre's published rules on acceptable dress and behaviour apply at all times. Candidates are required to have their ID badge 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 and other electronic communication or storage devices with text or digital facilities. Any precluded items must be placed out of reach of the candidate before the start of the examination and switched off. Headphones cannot be worn in exams unless for a medical reason.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates are expected to stay for at least the minimum specified time as published by the awarding body at the discretion of the invigilator.

Note: candidates who leave an exam room temporarily must be accompanied by an appropriate member of staff at all times. Candidates who complete an exam early and have left the room must not be permitted to re- enter the exam room.

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

16. Clash candidates

In the case where exams clash at the same time on same day the Head of centre in conjunction with the Exams Officer will be responsible as necessary for supervising escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight stays.

17. Special consideration

Should a candidate be unable to attend an exam because of illness, suffer bereavement or other trauma then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert their course tutor to that effect. If the candidate should become ill or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, the candidate should notify the invigilator, who would then contact the Exams Officer.

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

The exams officer will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body within 7 days of the exam.

18. Internal assessment

It is the duty of Curriculum and Quality Managers to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for dispatch or uploaded at the correct time.

Marks for all internally assessed work are provided to the exams office by the Programme Managers. The exams officer will inform staff of the date when appeals against internal assessments must be made by. Any appeals will be dealt with in accordance with the centre's Internal Appeals Procedure (IAP) document.

19. Results

For GCSE exams, candidates will receive individual results slips on results days,

- in person at the centre
- by post to their home address

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

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

20. 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 candidate.

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

Any appeal against a decision not to support an EAR will be dealt with by a member of Senior Leadership Team or a delegated Director of Curriculum.

21. Access to Scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of written exam papers within 7 days of the receipt of results.

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

An EAR cannot be applied for once an original script has been returned. Processing of requests for ATS will be the responsibility of exams officer.