

Examinations Policy

November 2021

Version Control				
Version	Status	Date	Contributor(s)	Change
v0.1	Initial draft	June 2015	Conor Renihan	Policy initiated June 2015 following the JCQ Quality Assurance visit
v0.2	Update	June 2016	Conor Renihan	Review and date change
v0.3	Update	Feb 2018	Conor Renihan	Review and date change
v0.4	Update	Jan 2020	Conor Renihan	Review and date change
v0.5	Update	March 2021	Damien Mills	Review and date change. Amend sections 1,2,3,4,4.1,7.2,7.1.7,8,9.2,10.2,12.1 to reflect subject changes and updated policy wording. Add final section in response to 2021 National Covid-19 amendments
v0.6	Update	Nov 2021	Damien Mills	Review and remove 2021 covid exam response. Add updates from Ofqual September/November 2021 guidance.

Signed

Chairman of Governors

November 2021

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Contents

1. Introduction and aims
2. Exam responsibilities
3. The tests and qualifications offered
4. Exam seasons and timetables
5. Entries, entry details and late entries
6. Exam fees
7. The Equality Act 2010, special needs and access arrangements
8. Estimated grades
9. Managing invigilators and exam days
10. Candidates, clash candidates and special consideration
11. Coursework and appeals against internal assessments
12. Results, enquiries about results (EARs) and access to scripts (ATS)
13. Certificates
14. 2022 Proposed changes to the GCSE assessment

1. Introduction and aims:

- The Gateway school is committed to ensuring that exams are managed and administered effectively while being considerate of our cohort's SEMH needs.
- 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 every two years.

This exam policy will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the exams officer.

2. Exam Responsibilities

Head Teacher:

Overall responsibility for the School as an exam centre:

- Advises on appeals and re-marks.
- The Head Teacher is responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice. Refer to the 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 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Teachers:

- Notification of access arrangements (as soon as possible after the start of the course.
- Submission of candidates' names to Subject Heads.

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 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.

3. The tests and qualifications offered

The tests and qualifications offered at this centre are chosen and reviewed by the Head of Centre and the individual Subject Heads.

Decisions on which qualifications a candidate should take will be taken in consultation with the SENCO and the Subject Heads and will be based on a learner's individual needs.

At Key Stage 4: All candidates will be entitled and enabled to achieve an entry for qualifications from an external awarding body.

SUBJECT	EXAMINATION OFFERED			
Mathematics	GCSE	Functional Skills level 1&2	Entry Level Functional skills 1,2,3.	Entry Level Mathematics
English	GCSE	Functional Skills level 1&2		
Science	GCSE			Entry Level Science
ICT		Functional Skills level 1&2		
Construction	BTEC			
Art & Design	BTEC			
Motor Vehicle	IMIAL Level 1&2			
Sports Leader	SLQ level 1 & 2			
Sports	BTEC			
Hair & Beauty	BTEC			
Home Cooking Skills	BTEC			

4. Exam seasons and timetables

GCSE's will run according to Government guideline dates each academic year. Functional Skills examinations offer either set examination windows per term or are on demand depending on the subject.

Which exam series are used in the centre is decided by the Subject Heads.

4.1 Timetables:

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

5. Entries, entry details and late entries

5.1 Entries:

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the Subject Head.

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

The centre does accept entries from external candidates in exceptional circumstances.

5.2 Late entries

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

6. Exam fees

The centre will pay all normal exam fees on behalf of candidates. Late entry or amendment fees are paid by 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.

Fees for remarking will be met on recommendation of the HOD. In exceptional circumstances parents will meet this cost.

7. The Equality Act 2010, special needs and access arrangements

7.1 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.

7.2 Special Needs:

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by their statement/EHC Plan and will be further detailed by the SENCO and educational psychologist / specialist teacher.

The SENCO will liaise with subject heads to discuss candidates' special educational needs and regular way of learning.

The SENCO can then inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates can be granted during the course and in the exam.

7.3 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.

7.4 Ensuring the exam centre is accessible:

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

The building

- 7.4.1 Ensure that the entrances to the centre and corridors approaching the exam rooms are well lit.
- 7.4.2 Lighting should be checked for suitability both during the day and in the evenings.
- 7.4.3 Ensure that there is no lighting which may trigger seizures for those students with epilepsy.
- 7.4.4 Use tactile surfaces to highlight any steps, stairways or changes in levels.
- 7.4.5 Make sure that any obstacles are removed from corridors and that there is safe access and exit routes through corridors in order to meet the health and safety duty to staff and students, and in particular people with mobility impairments, including wheelchair users.
- 7.4.6 If at all 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.
- 7.4.7 Where a private room has been arranged for an exam, check that the environment is suitable for the student.
- 7.4.8 Ensure that those who need to take medication during the course of the exam can do so in privacy and as speedily as possible.
- 7.4.9 Try to arrange exam rooms which are close to an accessible toilet.
- 7.4.10 Check that there is also a facility to open the door in an accessible toilet from the outside in an emergency.
- 7.4.11 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.

Signage

- 7.4.12 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.
- 7.4.13 Sign content should be simple, short and easily understood.
- 7.4.14 Text and lettering should be in a clear, uncomplicated and reasonably sized (12pt). Sans

serif fonts such as Arial are recommended.

- 7.4.15 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.
- 7.4.16 Signage should be placed at consistent heights.
- 7.4.17 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.

7.5 Emergency evacuation:

- 7.5.1 Think about evacuation procedures and ensure that all staff, including invigilators, know what procedures are in place for disabled staff or students, in particular for those who may need assistance to leave a building.
- 7.5.2 Procedures should be in place so that staff and invigilators know who is responsible for responding to emergency calls.
- 7.5.3 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.
- 7.5.4 All fire exit signs should indicate which exits are suitable for wheelchair users.
- 7.5.5 Ensure that all ground floor exits are level and are accessible to wheelchair users.

7.6 Resources:

- 7.6.1 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.
- 7.6.2 Ensure that there are backups and alternatives in case support equipment ceases to function.

7.7 Improving the student experience:

In addition to the above practical steps, which ensure that the centre is appropriate for disabled students, there are a whole range of adjustments which can be made to ensure that there is a level playing field for disabled students. Exams office staff will be very 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:

- 7.7.1 Modified test papers (off white or coloured paper, enlarged).
- 7.7.2 Up to 25 per cent extra time (or considerably more depending on the nature of a student's disability).
- 7.7.3 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.
- 7.7.4 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.
- 7.7.5 Use of a computer or other technology.
- 7.7.6 Use of an individual room.

After the exam has been completed and in particular at the point of publishing and communicating results, exams office staff need to make arrangements 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.

8. Predicted grades

Predicted grades:

The Heads of Department will submit predicted grades to the exams officer when requested.

9. Managing invigilators and exam days

9.1 Managing invigilators:

The selection and use of invigilators is the responsibility of the exams officer.

Securing the necessary DBS clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the centre administration.

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

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

9.2 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 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 the Head Teacher 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.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Exams Officer

- Note the time that the fire alarm went off and how long the examination has been going on.
- Registers and Exam Checklist should be taken out to the Fire Assembly Point at the rear of the academy and office staff should be informed of who was present in the examination room/s, i.e. students and invigilators.

Lead Invigilator/Invigilator

- Note the time that the fire alarm went off and how long the examination has been going on.
- All examination question and answer papers and materials should be left on the candidates' exam desk and NOT taken out with them. No bags or personal belongings should be taken out of the hall with the candidates.
- Tell the students to remain calm and ask them to leave their belongings and papers on their desk and leave by the nearest fire exit via the academy main entrance.
- **IMPORTANT – BEFORE** the students exit the examination room, remind them that they are still under examination board conditions and under **NO CIRCUMSTANCES** should talk to one another or use a mobile phone. Remind them that a breach of regulations could mean disqualification from their examination. They should be at least one metre away from the students in front and behind.
- **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES** are students to take their mobile phones or other electronic devices outside with them. This will be a breach of examination board regulations and they will risk disqualified from their examination.
- The invigilators should leave with the group through the nearest fire exit via the academy main entrance. The registers (photocopied and original) should be taken out with the invigilators, together with a pen. Invigilators should take a roll-call, to ensure that all students are present and accounted for.
- **IMPORTANT** - the students should assemble outside the front of the academy (unless the area is deemed unsafe). This will ensure that they are isolated from the other classes and students. Please line up the students according to tutor groups.
- Keep radio contact with the caretakers and ask them if you have the all clear for re-entering the examination room
- Note the time of re-starting the examination and change the finish time. Inform the Exams Officer of the incident, so that a Special Consideration Form can be produced.

For smaller examination rooms, the same rules apply.

10. Candidates, clash candidates and special consideration

10.1 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.

10.2 Clash candidates:

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

10.3 Special consideration: also see Special Consideration and Reasonable Adjustment Policy.

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.

11. Coursework, controlled assessments and appeals against internal assessments

11.1 Coursework/Controlled assessment:

Candidates who have to prepare coursework/controlled assessments should do so by the end of the specified date.

Heads of Department will ensure all coursework/controlled assessments 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 Department.

11.2 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:

- 11.2.1 Appeals will only be entertained if they apply to the process leading to an assessment. Under normal exam conditions there is no appeal against the mark or grade awarded.
- 11.2.2 Candidates may appeal if they feel their coursework/controlled assessments has been assessed unfairly, inconsistently or not in accordance with the specification for the qualification.
- 11.2.3 Appeals should be made in writing to the Head Teacher (or other nominee) who will decide whether the process used conformed to the necessary requirements.
- 11.2.4 The Head Teacher's findings will be notified in writing, copied to the exams officer and recorded for awarding body inspection.

12. Results, Enquiries About Results (EARs) and Access To Scripts (ATS)

12.1 Results:

Candidates will receive individual feedback on their results on results days in person at the centre (or via telephone if the pupil is unable to access the school).

Arrangements for the School to be open on results days are made by the Head Teacher.

The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the exams officer.

12.2 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.

12.3 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)

13. 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 certificates for three years.

14: 2022 Proposed changes to assessment arising from the September 2021 Ofqual guidance.

In summary, these decisions mean that for summer 2022

1. There will be optional topics and content in GCSE English literature, history, ancient history and geography. Ofqual will require exam boards to change how they assess these subjects to reflect the expected changes to the way the subject content is assessed, as proposed in the consultation.
2. Centres will be allowed to deliver practical work in GCSE biology, chemistry, physics, combined science, geology and astronomy, AS level biology, chemistry, physics and geology, and AS and A level environmental science by demonstration. We would encourage centres to continue to make available hands-on practical activities for their students wherever possible. This does not require changes to the assessment arrangements that the exam boards have in place for each of these specifications.
3. Exam boards will provide advance information about the focus of the content of the exams for all GCSE, AS and A level subjects (except GCSE English literature, history, ancient history and geography) for the summer 2022 exams. The advance information will meet the principles set out in the consultation document.
4. The policy intention of providing advance information is that it will support students' revision. Therefore, the DfE has confirmed that advance information will be provided by 7 February 2022 at the latest. This will enable teachers to plan to adapt their teaching in the second half of the spring term if necessary. DfE has also decided to retain the flexibility for advance information to be deployed at other points ahead of 7 February 2022 if circumstances require. At least a week's notice will be given if it is decided that advance information will be released earlier than 7 February 2022.
5. Students will be given a formulae sheet for GCSE mathematics in summer 2022. Exam boards will provide copies of the formulae sheet for use in teaching and to ensure that students are familiar with it prior to the exams. Clean copies of the formulae sheet will be provided in the exams.
6. Students will be given a revised equation sheet for GCSE physics and combined science in summer 2022, covering all the equations required in the subject content. Exam boards will provide copies of the equation sheet for use in teaching and to ensure that students are familiar with it prior to the exams. Clean copies of the equation sheet will be provided in the exams.

If exams must be cancelled in summer 2022, students' grades would instead be determined by their teachers, using a Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) approach similar to that used in summer 2021. TAGs are based on teachers' assessment of their students' work.

Ofqual September 2021 full guidance can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-changes-to-the-assessment-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2022>

Ofqual November 2021 full guidance can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-contingency-arrangements-for-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-summer-2022/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-other-exam-centres-on-contingency-arrangements-for-students-entering-gcses-as-and-a-levels-the-advanced-extension>