



EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS POLICY (including non-exam assessments)

Belfast High School

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CONTENTS

Summary and Purpose	3
Roles and Responsibilities	4
Qualifications Offered	7
Examination Seasons, Venues and Timetables	8
Late Arrivals	9
Child Protection	10
GDPR	11
Entries and Resits	12
Special Educational Needs & Disability (NI) Order 2005, SENDO	13
Estimated Grades	14
Managing Invigilators and Examination Days	15
Examination Papers	16
Results, Enquiries About Results (EARs) and Access to Scripts	17
Certificates	18
Appeals	19
Candidates, Candidates with Examination Clashes and Special Consideration	20
Coursework, Controlled Assessments and Appeals Against Internal Assessments	21
Appeals Against Internal Assessments	22
Assessment Requirements for University	23
Linked Documents/Policies	24

Summary

This policy provides an overview of arrangements pertaining to external examinations.

Purpose

- To ensure the planning and management of examinations is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of all candidates.
- To ensure the operation of an efficient examination system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the centre's Examination Processes to read, understand and implement this policy. This Examination Policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Centre, Vice Principals and the Examinations Team.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal

- Overall responsibility for Belfast High School as an Examination Centre;
- Advises on appeals;
- 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 Assessment';
- Is responsible for the School having an exams contingency plan (see separate document);
- Oversight of the operation of examinations and the work of the Examinations Officer (EO) and the Examinations Team;
- Ensure Access NI checks for all invigilators are in place.

Examinations Officer

- To manage the administration of public examinations;
- To advise the Senior Leadership Team, subject and class teachers and other relevant support staff on annual examination timetables and application procedures as set by the various examination boards;
- To oversee the production and distribution to staff and candidates of an annual calendar for all examinations in which candidates will be involved and to communicate regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events;
- To ensure that candidates and their parents/carers are informed and understand those aspects of the examination timetable that will affect them;
- To consult with teaching staff to ensure that necessary coursework is completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines;
- To provide and confirm detailed data on estimated entries;
- To receive, check and store securely all exam papers and completed scripts;
- To administer Access Arrangements and make applications for Special Consideration using the JCQ Access Arrangements and Special Consideration regulations and guidance relating to candidates who are eligible for adjustments in examinations in conjunction with the Learning Support Co-ordinator;
- Ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are informed annually of the JCQ regulations regarding malpractice in written exams and non-exam assessments;
- Collate information on staff and invigilator potential conflict of interest annually, reporting any conflicts to the exam boards in line with JCQ guidelines;
- Is responsible for the implementation and review of the School's examination contingency plan (see separate document);
- To identify and manage exam timetable clashes;
- To account for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges;
- To manage the Chief Invigilator and organise the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of Exams Invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams. A meeting with the Invigilation Team will take place at the start of each Examination Series to outline current protocols;
- To oversee the submission of candidates' coursework marks, track despatch and store returned coursework and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule;
- To advise on re-marks in conjunction with relevant middle leaders;
- To apply for any appeals/re-mark requests;
- To maintain systems and process the timely entry of candidates for their examinations;
- To assist with the identification of candidates on examination days;
- To confirm the identity of external candidates (photographic identification) on examination days.

Examinations Team

To assist with all of the above.

Head of Key Stage

To confirm with the Examinations Officer all relevant entry information on candidates in their Key Stage.

Learning Support Co-ordinator

The School has appointed suitably qualified members of staff who have attended training and have undertaken to avail of further training opportunities to ensure that they are in a position to carry out appropriate assessments and to advise the Examinations Team including:

- Identify examination access requirements for candidates as soon as possible at the beginning of each Key Stage in line with JCQ guidance;
- Notification of Access Arrangements (as soon as possible after the start of the course and no later than 2 weeks before each examination season);
- Complete all administration relating to Access Arrangements;
- Identification and testing of candidates for Access Arrangements;
- Provision of additional support for candidates with identified additional needs including, English for speakers of other languages, IT equipment and tablets to help candidates achieve their course aims;
- All Access Arrangements should be recorded electronically and available to all relevant staff.

Assistant Learning Support Co-ordinators and Assessor

To assist with all of the above.

Head of Department

- Guidance and advice to candidates on exam entries;
- Submission of forecast grades, if requested by the Exam Board;
- Involvement in post-results procedures;
- Accurate completion and checking of coursework mark sheets and declaration sheets for the department;
- Accurate checking of entries and adherence to deadlines as set by the Examinations Officer;
- Disseminate information from all Examination Officer emails;
- Complete internal standardisation for coursework/NEA/Controlled Assessment;
- Collect examination papers 24 hours after published finish time of examination for review and report any issues to the Examinations Officer;
- Store all completed coursework/NEA/controlled assessment securely and in line with JCQ guidance;
- Ensure compliance with Internal Appeals procedure deadlines;
- To assist with the identification of candidates on examination days;
- Identify resilience evidence to be gathered in line with exam board guidance;
- Securely store resilience evidence in accordance with exam board guidance.

Subject Teacher

- Prepare candidates for external examinations;
- Share examination dates with candidates;
- Follow JCQ coursework / NEA /Controlled Assessment guidelines;
- Mark controlled assessment/NEA and coursework accurately following departmental policy and JCQ guidelines;
- Staff must inform the Examinations officer of any potential conflict of interest;
- Return all coursework/NEA/Controlled Assessment to Head of Department for secure storage;
- Share marks for controlled assessment/NEA/coursework with candidates in line with Internal Appeals procedure deadlines;
- To assist with the identification of candidates on examination days;

- Ensure pupils are aware of which assessments will constitute resilience evidence;
- Return all resilience evidence to the Head of Department for secure storage.

Form Tutor

Distribute statements of entry and examination timetables and collect candidate signatures as verification.

Careers Team

Provide guidance and careers information to candidates.

Chief Invigilator/Invigilators

- Receipt of examination papers and other material from the Examinations Officer before the start of the examination;
- Collection of all examination papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and their return to the Examinations Officer or member of Examinations Team;
- Attend relevant training courses as required by the Examinations Officer;
- Invigilate examinations in line with JCQ regulations.

Bursar/Assistant Bursar

Add payment requests to ParentPay for re-sit examinations as advised by the exams officer.

Candidates

- Confirm and sign entries;
- Understand coursework/NEA/controlled assessment regulations and sign a declaration that authenticates this work as their own;
- Inform Examinations Officer if additional qualifications are being undertaken in a different centre;
- Arrive on time and equipped for timetabled examinations;
- Complete examinations and remain for the duration of the exam;
- Candidates must complete all aspects of the qualification.

IT Support

- Provide and prepare suitable IT equipment as needed in consultation with the Examinations Officer.
- Configure software as per JCQ guidelines under the direction of the Examinations Officer.

General Office Staff

Provide lanyards and signing in/out book for invigilators.

Qualifications Offered

- All qualifications offered at this centre are authorised by the Head of Centre, following consultation with SLT and middle leaders;
- All subjects offered in any academic year may be found in the prospectus or curriculum policy for that year.

If there has been a change of syllabus from the previous year, the Examinations Officer must be informed by the 30 September of the current Exam Series by the Heads of Department. If a new qualification is being offered it has to be approved by the Examinations Officer and Head of Centre by the deadline set by the Department of Education for inclusion on the NIEFQAN file.

At Key Stage 3

A small minority of candidates will sit a GCSE in a native language providing the Principal has granted permission following a written request from a parent/carer and all aspects of the qualification can be accommodated.

At Key Stage 4

All candidates will be entered for GCSE or other approved Level 2 qualifications.

At Post-16

All candidates will be entered for Level 3 qualifications with AS modules completed at the end of Year 13 and A2 modules or linear qualifications at the end of Year 14.

Examination Seasons, Venues and Timetables

Examination Seasons

Internal exams are scheduled in December and May/June and these may form the basis of some of the resilience evidence. External examinations are taken in the November series (Year 12 English and Maths resits), and the Summer series (Years 11 – 14). Entry for each examination series is approved by the Head of Centre.

Venues

- The majority of external examinations will take place in the Assembly Hall;
- Additional rooms will be utilised based on numbers/requirements;
- Rooms will be set up in line with JCQ regulations.

Examination Timetables

- The Examinations Officer will circulate the examination timetables for external examinations once these are confirmed;
- Candidates must check their individual timetable and ensure all of their scheduled examinations are correct - any issues should be highlighted to the Examinations Officer as soon as possible.

Late Arrivals

- Candidates are responsible for their prompt arrival to each examination;
- Candidates are only permitted late entry at the Chief Invigilator's discretion, in line with JCQ guidelines.

Child Protection

Invigilators

- Invigilators will have completed Access NI checks;
- Invigilators will sign in on each visit;
- Invigilators will familiarise themselves with our School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy prior to their first period of cover.

External Candidates

- Only past pupils may request access to our centre as an external candidate;
- Only qualifications which are 'examination only' will be permitted for external candidates;
- Photographic identification must be provided to prove identity on examination days.

GDPR

All staff and candidates must follow the School's GDPR Policy, candidates will be directed to the dedicated External Examinations Google Classroom.

Entries and Resits

Entries

- Candidates are identified for their examination entries by the Heads of Department and teachers;
- All candidates within School remain as internal candidates for entry purposes;
- A candidate or parent/carer can request an additional subject entry;
- Parental/carer consent will be required before any change of tier is approved.

Resits

- Candidates may resit a GCSE module once and pay the entry fee;
- Candidates may resit an AS or A Level module once and pay the entry fee;
- Resit decisions will be made in consultation with the candidates, Subject Teachers, Examinations Officer, Heads of Department and parents/carers.

Examination Fees

- GCSE, AS and A2 initial registration and entry examination fees are paid by the Centre;
- Failure to attend any externally timetabled examination, without a valid reason, may result in candidates being billed for the full cost of the entry.

Withdrawals

For a withdrawal to take place:

- Parents/Carers will be fully informed of the individual situation in relation to the candidate;
- Withdrawal from a subject requires approval from the Head of Department, SLT, the Principal and the parents/carers.

Special Educational Needs & Disability (NI) Order 2005, SENDO

All Examination Centre Staff must ensure that the Access Arrangements regulations and guidance are consistent with the law.

Special Needs

- The Learning Support Co-ordinator (LSC) will oversee the candidates' special needs requirements, retain appropriate evidence, and ensure candidates and their parents/carers are informed of the Access Arrangements;
- The evidence file must contain each signed data protection notice;
- The LSC will ensure staff are informed of any special arrangements that individual candidates may be granted during the course of the exam.

Access Arrangements

- The LSC will ensure that Access Arrangements applications are completed within the exam board deadlines working in conjunction with the Examinations Team;
- The Examinations Team will ensure that appropriate Access Arrangements are in place on the day of the examination;
- Invigilation and support for Access Arrangement candidates will be organised by the LSC in conjunction with the Exams Officer;
- All invigilators and those facilitating an access arrangement will be made aware of the Access Arrangements in place for candidates and their role in the invigilation process as outlined in JCQ documentation.

It is JCQ's advice that access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the examination course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working throughout KS3. However, in the event of a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start of the course, access arrangements / reasonable adjustments should be applied for as soon as is practicable. Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment. The School's access arrangements will be scrutinised by JCQ in mid-March and parents / carers should be aware that applications after this date (with the exception of those relating to the circumstances highlighted above) cannot be considered.

Forecast Grades

Heads of Department will submit estimated grades, when requested by the Examinations Officer.

Managing Invigilators and Examination Days

Managing Invigilators

- The recruitment and management of all external examination invigilators is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer;
- Invigilators are timetabled by CCEA and any changes to the schedule must be agreed with the Examinations Officer;
- Invigilators must inform the School of any potential conflict of interest and should not be the sole invigilator for an examination where there is a potential conflict of interest.

Examination Days

- The Examinations Officer will book all exam rooms, including isolation rooms, (following consultation with other users), make the question papers, other examination stationery and materials available for the invigilator;
- The Examinations Team is responsible for the set-up of examination rooms, working with the assistance of the Facilities Team;
- All examinations will be conducted in line with JCQ regulations;
- A copy of the Emergency Evacuation Procedure document must be at hand in each examination room.

Examination Papers

- Examination papers will be handled in line with JCQ regulations;
- Papers will be available to Heads of Department within 24 hours of an examination's published finishing time.

Results, Enquiries About Results (EARs) and Access to Scripts

Results

- Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days in person at the Centre. Year 14 candidates will be given a pin code to access their CCEA results online;
- 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 Head of Centre;
- Arrangements for results to be issued to a nominated person must be requested by the candidate, in writing in advance of results day;
- Results will be made available on the date and at the time specified by JCQ.

Enquiries About Results

- EARs may be requested by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking;
- Candidates must be made aware that with EARs there is the possibility that their marks may be lowered, unchanged or increased;
- The fee for any enquiry about results will be paid by the candidate;
- This fee will be reimbursed if the appeal is upheld.

Access to Scripts

- After the release of results, candidates may ask the Examinations Officer to request a photocopy or original copy of their script;
- Candidates must be made aware that any requested scripts undergo a clerical check which could result in their marks being lowered, unchanged or increased;
- The fee will be paid by the candidate;
- Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes after receiving the candidate's consent. The fee for this service will be paid by the relevant Department;
- Remarks cannot be applied for once the original script has been returned.

Certificates

- Certificates are collected in person;
- Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party from the School Office, provided they have been authorised to do so;
- If not collected within one year, the Centre retains certificates in the candidate's file in line with GDPR.

Appeals

Any requests for appeal by a candidate, or parent/carer of a candidate, should be made in consultation with the Head of Department who will advise if the basis of the appeal is suitable for investigation. The Head of Department will then contact the Examinations Officer to investigate further and prepare the necessary paperwork. This will be signed off by the Head of Centre and forwarded to the relevant examination board.

If any individual teacher has an issue with any examination arrangements or any queries brought to them by candidates in their teaching groups or form class, they will inform the Head of Department.

The Examinations Officer and Head of Centre are responsible for administering any appeal to the awarding bodies.

Candidates, Candidates with Examination Clashes and Special Consideration

Candidates

- Normal school uniform rules apply when taking examinations;
- Candidates must not take a mobile phone, electronic device, smart watch, wrist watch or other unauthorised material into an exam room as per JCQ guidance;
- Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the Centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage (this includes mobile phones and other electronic devices);
- Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines;
- Candidates may only leave the examination room for a genuine purpose requiring an immediate return to the examination room, in which case a member of staff must accompany them;
- A member of the Examinations Team or member of SLT will attempt to contact any candidate who is not present at the start of an examination. Candidates are only permitted late entry at the Chief Invigilator's discretion, in line with JCQ guidelines.

Examination Clashes

The Examinations Officer will be responsible as necessary for identifying escorts, identifying a secure venue and making arrangements for overnight supervision.

Special Consideration

- Should a candidate be too ill to sit an examination, suffer bereavement or other trauma or be unwell during the examination itself, it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the Centre, or the Invigilator, to that effect;
- Any Special Consideration claim must be supported by appropriate evidence in line with Special Consideration guidelines from JCQ within 5 working days of the date of the examination;
- The Examinations Officer will make a Special Consideration application to the relevant awarding body.

Coursework, Controlled Assessments and Appeals Against Internal Assessments

Coursework

- Candidates who have to prepare portfolios should do so by the end of the course or centre-defined date;
- Heads of Department will ensure all coursework is ready for despatch at the correct time.

Controlled Assessment

- It is the responsibility of each Head of Department to obtain the controlled assessment task details from the examination boards;
- The Head of Department should choose the most appropriate time for the controlled assessment to take place;
- Departments must plan when and how the assessment will take place, taking into account the accommodation and resources required. All staff should be notified when high level controlled assessment is taking place;
- All staff must be aware of the relevant level of control permitted (high, medium or low) as this will determine the level of permitted supervision eg high control means that candidates are under examination conditions;
- Separate user accounts for examination use must be used for high control level work. The procedures set out by the Examination Board must be followed – these may stipulate that candidates should have no access to internet or e-mail. Candidates must only be able to access work during the controlled sessions. If work is saved on memory sticks these must be collected in after each session and stored securely;
- All assessment materials must be stored securely at the end of each session. The final assessment work should be kept in Departments until requested by the Examining Body;
- If a candidate is perceived to have taken the controlled assessment under adverse circumstances, Heads of Department are asked to refer the matter to the Examinations Officer, who will apply for Special Consideration at the appropriate time;
- If a candidate is absent, the teacher must allow that candidate the opportunity to make up the time if necessary. This may be organised centrally by Departments and may take place outside normal timetabled class time eg lunchtime or after school. It may be necessary for Heads of Year/ Department to contact parents/carers to confirm the expected date of the candidate's return to school so that appropriate assessment arrangements can be put in place;
- If a candidate has prolonged absence, due to an unforeseen illness or other serious misfortune during the period when controlled assessment work was produced, Heads of Department are asked to refer the matter to the Examinations Officer who will apply for Special Consideration if required.. Candidates should, nonetheless, be expected to complete the assessment at a later date if possible;
- Work should be submitted in the format appropriate to the controlled assessment, as prescribed by the exam board;
- Where the specification permits candidates to work with others, eg during collection of data, any descriptions of the joint work must be in each candidate's own words;
- Where work is assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the Examination Board, standardisation of marking must take place in the School if more than one teacher is involved in the assessment process;
- If suspected malpractice occurs, the Examination Officer must be informed;
- If a candidate's work is mislaid within the School, the procedures set out by the Examination Board should be followed;
- Authentication forms must be signed by the teachers and candidates;
- Access arrangements do apply to controlled assessment;
- The assessment marks and identified samples of work must be submitted to the examination board by the appropriate date;
- Candidates' work must be securely stored until all results have been verified.

Appeals Against Internal Assessments

The Centre has an internal appeals process which is outlined in a separate procedure document.

Assessment Requirements for University

Entries for tests such as UCAT/BMAT/LNAT/HPAT are the responsibility of the pupil applying. Pupils are required to register for these tests independently and it is their responsibility to make all the necessary arrangements pertaining to such assessments.

Linked Policies/Documents

- External Qualifications – Internal Appeals Procedure
- Word Processing Policy for Examinations
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Managing Malpractice Policy
- Examinations Contingency Plan
- OCN NI Qualifications Policies