

St Bede's Senior School External Examinations Policy

The policy purpose

The purpose of this exam policy is:

- To ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of our 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 St Bede's School external examination processes to read, understand and implement this policy.

The examinations policy will be reviewed each November by the Academic Deputy Head, John Tuson, and the Examinations Officer, Sally Lawson-Cruttenden.

External Examinations - Responsibilities

Sally Lawson-Cruttenden, Examinations Officer, manages the administration of public exams and:

- Advises the Senior Management Team, subject and class teachers and other relevant academic and support staff on annual exam timetables and application procedures as set by the various awarding bodies.
- Oversees the timely production of a calendar for the external examinations in which candidates will be involved, and communicates regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events.
- Ensures that candidates and their parents or carers are informed of and understand those aspects of the external examinations timetable that will affect them.
- Consults with academic staff to ensure that the necessary administrative tasks concerning coursework/controlled assessments are completed on time and in accordance with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidelines.
- Submits detailed data on estimated external examination entries to the relevant awarding bodies.
- Receives, checks and stores securely all examination papers and completed scripts.
- Administers certain access arrangements, working with the Director of Digital Resources to supply IT equipment and support as appropriate.
- Makes applications for Special Consideration in accordance with the current JCQ regulations.
- Identifies and manages examination timetable 'clashes'.
- Accounts to the Finance Office for income and expenditures relating to examination fees and costs.
- Line manages the Senior Examination Invigilator in organising the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of examinations invigilators who are responsible for the conduct of examinations.
- Submits candidates' coursework marks; tracks coursework despatch, and stores returned coursework and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule.
- Arranges for the dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in accordance with academic advice and consultation with the SMT, any post-result appeals/re-mark requests to the awarding bodies.

- Maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their external examinations.

Deputy Head (Academic)

- Organises teaching and learning.
- Manages the external validation of the courses followed at the School at key stage 4 and post-16.

Subject Teachers are responsible for:

- The notification of access arrangement requirements (as soon as possible after the start of the course) to the Learning Support department.
- Submission of external examination candidates' entry details to Heads of department for approval and communication to the Examinations Officer.

The Director of Learning Support is responsible for:

- The identification and testing of candidates
- Arranging for requirements for access arrangements to be fulfilled.
- The provision of additional support to include help with spelling, reading, mathematics, dyslexia or essential skills, hearing impairment, English for speakers of other languages, and/or IT equipment - to help candidates achieve their course aims.

The Senior Invigilator, Lead invigilators and invigilation team members are responsible for:

- Ensuring that candidates are supervised whilst waiting to enter exam rooms with the help of a member of the Senior Management Team at busy times.
- Setting up exam rooms to JCQ standards
- Ensuring that candidates enter exam rooms and are seated in an orderly manner
- Monitoring and supporting the use of word processors or other equipment in exams
- Conducting external examinations according to JCQ regulations
- Collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and their return to the exams office.

Candidates are responsible for:

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

Qualifications offered

The qualifications offered at St Bede's Senior School are selected by the Headmaster, the Deputy Head (Academic) and the Senior Management team.

The qualifications offered are GCE and GCSE; IGCSE; Pre-U and BTEC; Oxbridge Entrance Tests.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the School's published prospectus for that year. If there has been a change of specification from the previous year, the Examinations Officer must be informed by 15th September.

Informing the Examinations Officer of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the Heads of Department.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken in consultation with the Subject teacher; Head of Department and the Deputy Head (Academic).

Examination seasons

External examinations and assessments are scheduled in November, January, March, May and June.

The Headmaster, as Head of Centre, Deputy Head (Academic) and Heads of Department decide which exam series are used in the School.

Assessments are not offered on an on-demand basis.

Timetable

Once confirmed, the exams officer will circulate the timetable for external examinations.

Entries, entry details and late entries

Candidates are selected for entry to an external examination by the Heads of Department and their subject teachers.

Candidates or their parents/carers may request a subject entry, change of level of entry, or withdrawal from an external examination via the relevant Head of Department. The decision about these requests will rest with the appropriate academic staff.

The School accepts entries for external examinations from former pupils only on a case by case basis.

The School does not act as an examination centre for other organisations; or for private individuals.

Examination entry information and deadlines are circulated to Heads of Department via e-mail and the School's internal post system.

Late entries are authorised by Heads of Department.

Re-sit decisions will be made by the Deputy Head (Academic) in consultation with other SMT members; Heads of Department, subject teachers and candidates as appropriate.

Examination 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 that these are made within the time allowed by the awarding bodies.

GCE, GCSE, IGCSE, Pre-U and BTEC examination entry and re-sit fees are charged back to the candidate's parents/carers. Late entry fees are paid either by the academic department or the candidate, subject to the circumstances.

Fee reimbursements are not sought from awarding bodies for candidates who decide to sit an examination after the late entry/withdrawal deadline; fail to sit an examination; or do not meet the necessary coursework requirements without medical evidence or evidence of other mitigating circumstances.

Disability Discrimination Act

All staff involved with the external examinations at the School must ensure that they meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), extended in 2005, and the Disability Equality Duty (DED), introduced in 2006.

The School will meet the disability provisions under the DDA (or the Equality Act 2010), by ensuring that the School is accessible and by improving candidate experience. This is the responsibility of the SMT and the Director of Learning Support.

Access arrangements

The Learning Support department will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an external examination, and the date of any examination. It will inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates can be granted both during the course and in an external examination.

A candidate's access arrangements requirement is determined by the Director of Learning Support and Educational psychologists/Specialist teachers as appropriate.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies and making appropriate access arrangements for candidates to take examinations is the responsibility of the Director of Learning Support working with specialist staff and the Director of Digital Resources as appropriate.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Director of Learning Support in liaison with the Examinations Officer.

Invigilation and specialist support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the Director of Learning Support.

Overseas students

Managing external examinations for overseas students is the responsibility of the academic staff together with the Senior Management Team.

Contingency planning

Contingency planning for the administration of external examinations is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer.

External candidates

Managing any 'external' candidates is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer.

Estimated grades

Heads of Department in liaison with Subject teachers are responsible for submitting estimated grades to the PASS system when requested by the Examinations Officer.

Managing invigilators

External staff are generally used to invigilate external examinations.

The recruitment of a bank of invigilators and securing the necessary Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer and the School's HR Department.

Fees for securing such clearance are paid by the School.

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the Senior Invigilator working with the Examinations Officer

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the School's Finance Office.

Malpractice

The Examinations Officer is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice.

Examination days

The Examinations Officer will book all examination rooms following liaison with other School support staff, and make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials available for the Senior Invigilator and Invigilation Team.

The Facilities Manager under instruction from the Examinations Officer is responsible for arranging for the setting up of the allocated examination rooms.

The Senior Invigilator will start and end all examinations in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Heads of Department may be present at the start of an examination to assist with the identification of candidates or to clarify specific points about the examination paper but they must not advise on which questions or sections are to be attempted.

In practical examinations subject teachers may be on hand in case of any technical difficulties.

Examination papers must not be read by subject teachers or removed from the examination room before the end of a session. Examination papers will be distributed to Heads of Department 24 hours or as soon as is practical beyond the published finish time of the examination.

A relevant subject teacher may be available to read out any subject-specific instructions and to start the examination, if required.

Candidates

The JCQ and the School's published rules on acceptable dress, behaviour and candidates' use of mobile phones and other electronic devices apply at all times.

Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the School accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates are expected to stay for the full examination time at the discretion of the Examinations Officer or Senior Invigilator.

Candidates may only leave the examination room for a genuine purpose and are required to return immediately to the examination room. They must be accompanied by a member of staff at all times.

The Examinations Officer is responsible for handling late or absent candidates.

Clash candidates

The Examinations Officer will be responsible for arranging appropriate escorts, secure venues and arranging overnight stays as necessary in accordance with JCQ regulations.

Special consideration

Should a candidate be ill before an external examination, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be taken ill during the examination itself or be otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the School, the Examinations officer, the Senior Invigilator or another invigilator, to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within three days of the examination, for example by providing a letter from the candidate's doctor.

The Examinations Officer will then make an application to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the examination.

Internal assessment

It is the duty of Heads of Department to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for despatch at the correct time. The Examinations Officer will assist by keeping a record of each despatch, including the recipient details and the date and time sent.

It is the responsibility of the Heads of Department to ensure that marks for all internally assessed work and estimated grades are entered into the PASS system according to the internal deadlines set by the Examinations Officer. The Examinations Officer is responsible for ensuring that this information is transmitted to the awarding bodies by EDI.

Appeals against any internal assessments must be made by the 16th April.

Appeals against internal assessments

The process for managing appeals against internal assessments is detailed in a separate appeals policy, available from the Examinations Office.

Results and post-results services: enquiries about results (EARs); and access to scripts (ATS)

Candidates will receive individual result slips on results days, either in person at the School, by email delivered at the appropriate time to an email address specified by the candidate; or by post to their home address.

Arrangements for the School to be open and the provision of relevant staff on August results days are made by the Headmaster.

EARs

EARs may be requested by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking. The candidate's written consent is required, and this must be counter-signed by the appropriate member of academic staff, before any application is made by the Examinations Officer for an enquiry about results.

Under normal circumstances, the cost of an EAR will be borne by the candidate.

If a result is queried, the Examinations Officer, teaching staff and head of centre will investigate the feasibility of asking for a re-mark at the centre's expense.

For an application for an EAR to be made, the centre must be able to support a candidate's or parent's request for an enquiry.

ATS

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the priority return of GCE papers within three days' scrutiny of the results.

School staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes, up to the internally published deadline date. For script return for teaching and learning purposes, the written consent of the candidates involved must be obtained and retained by the subject teacher.

GCSE re-marks cannot be applied for once a script has been returned.

Certificates

Examination certificates are posted out to candidates' home address by Royal Mail recorded delivery twice a year. From the January examination session they are posted out in May; from the summer examination session certificates are posted out in November.

The School retains external examination certificates for one year. If replacement certificates are required, it is the candidate's responsibility to apply for these via the online procedures offered by the relevant awarding body's website, and to pay any fees incurred.

Deputy Head (Academic)

Examinations Officer

.....

.....

Date

.....

This policy is next due for review in November 2012