EXAMINATIONS & ASSESSMENT POLICY - RESPONSIBILITIES

Policy Owners:

Group Head of Exams and Assessment/Senior Examinations Officers (CC/MC, KC, STC)/College Principals.

Responsibilities:

1. **Principals**

   - As Heads of Centre, have overall responsibility for the Colleges as approved exams centres and are accountable to the awarding bodies for ensuring the Colleges are compliant with the published JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements to ensure the security and integrity of examinations and assessments

   - As Heads of Centre, confirm on an annual basis through the National Centre Number Register that they are aware of and adhering to current versions of the JCQ regulations, in particular JCQ General Regulations 5.1 - 5.4. even if there are no changes

   - If required, can confirm external governance arrangements to an awarding body so that the awarding body has confidence in the integrity of all Colleges' activities such as the delivery of qualifications and the conducting of examinations and assessments

   - Comply with JCQ's centre inspection requirements by co-operating with inspectors' unannounced visits, allowing exam venues, paperwork and secure storage facilities to be open for inspection. All policies to be reviewed/updated annually by a member of the senior leadership team and communicated to staff as listed in JCQ exams-related documents (5.3.z/page 17 of the General Regulations)

   - Appoint a SENCo or equivalent member of staff who will co-ordinate the access arrangements process within each college and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, candidates for whom English is an additional language, as well as those with a temporary illness or temporary injury

   - Are nominated as a contact for contingencies, including outside term time, which may require providing a personal mobile number and/or email address, so that any urgent matters, which could adversely affect candidates and potentially put qualification awards at risk, receive an immediate and appropriate response, deploying relevant resources to achieve this if necessary. They may also nominate other senior members of staff to act as contacts for the same purpose

   - Together with senior management, identify alternative site(s) where exams could take place should it not be possible to open a college building for scheduled exams and become necessary to

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invoke the contingency plan, informing relevant awarding bodies as soon as possible. The summer 2026 contingency sessions are all day on 24 June

- Ensure (via the IT Director) there are systems in place to maintain the security of user accounts by:

    a) Ensuring that all members of Group staff who access awarding bodies' online systems undertake annual cyber security training. Suitable training resources can be found on the website of the National Cyber Security Centre:

    Cyber security training for school staff - NCSC.GOV.UK

    The training must include:
    • the importance of creating strong, unique passwords for all accounts;
    • keeping all account details strictly confidential;
    • the critical role of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) in protecting against unauthorised access;
    • how to properly set up and use MFA for both centre and awarding bodies' systems;
    • an awareness of all types of social engineering/phishing attempts;
    https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/blog-post/ncsc-cyber-security-training-for-staffnow-available
    • the importance of staff quickly reporting any suspicious activity, events, incidents and encouraging a safe and supportive reporting culture.

    Certificates of completed staff cyber training must be downloaded and held on file for inspection. The NCSC training resource provides a certificate of completion of cyber training.

    b) Developing and maintaining a comprehensive cyber security policy for the centre. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) provides resources to assist centres in creating such policies;

    c) Implementing and enforcing robust security measures, including:

    • mandatory MFA for all accounts and systems containing exam-related information, including those that interface between awarding body and centre systems, to enhance security and protect sensitive data;
    • regularly reviewing and updating security settings to align with current best practices

    d) Updating any passwords that may have been exposed

    e) Setting up secure account recovery options

    f) Reviewing and managing connected applications

    g) Monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required

    h) Ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding bodies' online systems in line with their regulations regarding cyber security and the JCQ document *Guidance for centres on cyber security*

    https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations

Authorised staff have access where necessary to a device which complies with awarding body multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirements

i)Reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body

- Maintain a good working knowledge of the examination system and provide effective line management support and supervision of the Exams teams to ensure the integrity and security of exams and assessments is maintained at all times
- Are familiar with annually updated JCQ regulations, guidance and instructions
- Support and guide Heads of Exams to ensure that systems and processes are adopted and followed, and that appropriate controls are in place which allow accurate data to be submitted to the awarding bodies by the required deadlines, e.g. registrations, entries, achievement claiming etc.
- Ensure the integrity and security of examinations and assessments is maintained throughout each exam series, and have the authority to deploy the necessary resources to achieve this
- Together with wider College management, make sure all reasonable steps are taken to comply with requests for information or documentation made by an awarding body or regulatory authority as soon as is practical and ensure relevant members of staff respond promptly
- Ensure sufficient resources, such as invigilators and other staff (e.g Inclusive Learning, Security), rooms, furniture and PCs, are provided to enable the smooth running of exams
- Ensure that Exams staff have sufficient time to perform their roles and familiarise themselves with relevant JCQ and awarding body documentation
- Represent Exams at a senior and Group level
- Ensure relevant staff respond promptly to actions raised by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service and report any incidents which might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery to the appropriate awarding body
- Have in place a process for gathering evidence of candidate performance for in-scope qualifications in line with published regulators' (Ofqual) guidance, see here, aimed at ensuring resilience in the qualifications system, especially for students for whom progression is important
- After gaining awarding body agreement to the delegation of this task by the Head of Centre, initiate and oversee steps to investigate any incidents of suspected student or staff malpractice to ensure they are appropriately looked into and reported

3. **Group Head of Exams and Assessment/Senior Exams Officers/Exams staff**

- Plan, manage and administer exams, and administer or support colleagues with other assessments when appropriate, maintaining their security and integrity at all times, including compliance with requirements relating to secure materials, electronic or otherwise
- Make arrangements to download, print (in a secure environment) and store electronic examination materials safely and securely at all times in accordance with section 4 of JCQ's current ICE document, particularly in regard to devices complying with awarding bodies' multi-factor authentication requirements and not share such devices
- Manage the recording of results and achievement within deadlines and report immediately to the awarding bodies any potential or actual breach of results
- Advise senior management, teaching and relevant support staff of exam dates and deadlines, regulations and the application of procedures as set out by various awarding bodies as well as internal policies and procedures

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- Interpret and distribute exam information and communicate regularly concerning regulations, deadlines and changes to staff and students (NB: ensure *awarding body* privacy notices are distributed to all candidates, the JCQ document for this purpose has been removed)
- Maintain systems and processes to support timely registration and exam entry of candidates with awarding bodies. Any difficulty with registration must be escalated to the Head of Exams and further to the Head of School for appropriate action, ensuring timely resolution and mitigation of harm
- Collect conflict of interest details from relevant staff and collate and report in line with awarding body regulations
- Process exams-related invoices
- Ensure that students are informed of and understand those aspects of exams timetables that will affect them including access arrangements and timetable clashes
- Consult with teaching staff to ensure that assessments are completed in accordance with awarding body guidelines and within deadlines
- Receive, check and securely store all exam papers, live materials and completed scripts and despatch within timescales. Colleges must ensure that script packages are available at the agreed pick-up point 15 minutes before the beginning of the collection slot
- Apply for approval of and administer access arrangements in line with JCQ "Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments" regulations and other awarding bodies' guidelines as appropriate. Undertake regular CPD such as attending an annual update course
- Make applications for special consideration in line with the JCQ's A guide to the special consideration process, and other awarding bodies' guidelines as appropriate
- Liaise with Inclusive Learning on access arrangement and other exam issues
- Recruit appropriate external invigilators (current students and parents are not considered appropriate); train and manage all internal and external invigilators in the conduct of examinations and assessments; keep a record of training for inspection purposes
- Bring to the attention of relevant senior STCG staff any suspected incidents of malpractice in line with JCQ's "Suspected Malpractice Policy and Procedures", and other awarding bodies' regulations as appropriate
- Advise on post-results services and appeals and submit applications
- Submit/facilitate submission of assessment marks; despatch, track, store and dispose of returned work and any other material required by awarding bodies correctly and on schedule
- Publish results to students and staff; for national exams, ensure results are available to students from 8.00 am on official release dates
- Distribute certificates to students; archive in line with regulations
- Collate and record learner outcomes for internal purposes, in particular the recording of results on EBS within target timescales
- Manage the retention and disposal of documents in line with awarding body requirements
- Exams team members work closely with curriculum staff and escalate to the Head of Exams any issues such as non-compliance with deadlines or the provision of other information e.g. registration or exam entry details, to ensure clarity and accountability in handling such matters preventing delays and ensuring effective resolution. The Head of Exams will liaise to resolve such issues with relevant curriculum staff, escalating to Heads of School when appropriate.
- Take all reasonable steps to maintain the integrity of the examinations/assessments system including:
    - Ensuring the security of all assessment materials
    - Ensuring that assessment materials, including pre-release materials and set assignments, and information about their contents, are only shared with appropriate staff and candidates, and not shared outside the centre

- Report **immediately** to awarding bodies any potential or actual breach of examination assessment materials

4. **Heads of School/Deputy Heads of School/Curriculum Managers**

- Support Exams in disseminating information within Schools/Curriculum areas, in particular to be sure that teachers understand the relevant awarding body and JCQ documentation for the qualifications they are delivering to ensure they are delivered in line with the relevant regulations
- Ensure staff keep to exams deadlines and comply with regulations
- Notify Exams of all new qualifications/exams and support requirements in advance of the start of each academic year
- Include awarding body registration and exam fees, and other relevant exam and assessment information within the planning and course approval process
- Approve changes of course/entry/levels as far as they affect registration for qualifications or exam entry
- Approve late registrations and entries before submission to Exams
- Monitor curriculum staff (i) to make sure that achievement is claimed or established in other appropriate ways so that students receive results/certificates in a timely way and Group achievement data is up-to-date and (ii) to ensure compliance with the requirements of relevant specifications including any terminal rules which need to be met at the point of certification
- Ensure teaching staff do not use AI as the sole means of marking students' work

5. **Curriculum Teams**

- Guide and advise learners who are unsure about exam procedures and requirements
- Comply with internal deadlines set by Exams, especially those for registration and exam entry and access arrangement assessment, providing accurate data within timescales
- Complete accurately and <u>within deadlines</u>:
  - estimated entries
  - assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets
  - registration and exam entry sheets, making additions or deletions as necessary
  - achievement and certification claim forms
- Comply with the 5 July deadline every year to ensure student outcomes are established either by a claim to the awarding body concerned or other methods when applicable. It is the responsibility of curriculum teams to ensure students can receive formal confirmation of their achievement
- Notify Inclusive Learning when learners are identified who might have access arrangement needs
- Support Exams in disseminating exams information and regulations, such as JCQ Notices to Candidates, exam dates, results
- Follow appropriate security procedures to ensure confidential information relating to examination and assessment material is not breached, including via social media
- Follow correct procedures for identifying and reporting plagiarism (including AI misuse) when delivering/assessing coursework, internal assessments and/or non-examination assessments
- Ensure that candidates completing coursework or non-examination assessments are aware of the need for the work to be their own and are provided with clear instructions on how to avoid plagiarism (including AI misuse)
- Liaise with Exams on post-results procedures and actions
- Where relevant, ensure candidates' work is backed-up to at least one device, and where possible to a second off-site device, so that candidates' work is protected in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks

6. Inclusive Learning

- Carry out a programme of assessment to identify, test and record learners' requirements for access arrangements
- Comply with internal deadlines set by Exams; following Group policy, new students are informed during enrolment that because of time constraints it cannot be guaranteed that new access arrangements for November GCSE resit exams and January BTEC external assessments will be in place
- Share assessment outcomes with Exams in an acceptable spreadsheet format
- Provide readers/scribes/prompters/practical assistants and other types of exams support as and when required
- Undertake annual training and updates as exams invigilators and for the above support roles
- Deal with JCQ inspections relating to access arrangements
- In 1-2-1 situations where IL staff are the sole invigilator also performing the role of a reader, scribe, prompter or practical assistant a 'roving' invigilator will at regular intervals enter the room to observe the conduct of the exam, ensure all relevant rules are being adhered to and support in maintaining the integrity of the exam

7. Invigilators

- Ensure the integrity and security of examinations and assessments are maintained in every exam in which they are involved
- Arrive punctually to collect exam papers and other exams materials before the start of exams and take responsibility for taking everything necessary to the exam room
- Supervise the exams environment including display of posters, light, temperature, ventilation and noise levels
- Manage exams rooms to uphold the regulations and to maintain candidates' silence
- Make the mandatory announcements to candidates. College must be aware of candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties who may need the invigilator's announcement in an alternative format or may need to hear it more than once
- Establish the identity of all candidates sitting exams in accordance with written procedures
- Make sure candidates are not in possession of unauthorised items – airpods, earphones/earbuds, tablets (e.g. iPads or ipods), mobile phones, MP3/4 or similar devices, watches, smart glasses or any other smart devices – reminding them frequently before the exam begins and giving a final opportunity to hand them in; follow Exams' procedures for reporting incidents when students are found to have these items on them during an exam, including when they are out of the room for reasons such as a toilet or rest break
- Be familiar with and ready to put into practice emergency evacuation and lockdown procedures
- Be aware of procedures for handling suspected malpractice, lateness, illness and other exam room incidents. Use the incident report to log details of candidates who do not maintain silence in the exam room or open papers before permission is given to do so
- Ensure that all exams are regulated in accordance with the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations and other awarding body regulations as appropriate
- Complete exams attendance sheets, incident or late reports and any other necessary paperwork
- Collect and collate exam papers in the correct order and any other exam materials at the end of the exam and return securely and promptly
- Attend annual invigilator training and updates

8. Students

- Confirm and sign for registrations or exam entries where applicable

- Read and comply with documentation regarding college and awarding body examination rules and regulations
- If invited for assessment for access arrangements, respond in a timely fashion and attend assessment sessions so that deadlines can be met, especially the final annual deadline of 31 January; it will be assumed that students who fail to do this after receiving 3 invitations to attend do not wish to be assessed for access arrangements. Exams teams will only accept late assessments in exceptional circumstances and when there are genuine mitigating circumstances. Heads of Exams will make such decisions on a case-by-case basis
- Understand assessment regulations and sign a declaration that authenticates work as their own if required by the awarding body
- Arrive at exam rooms in good time before the start of exams
- Check exam timetables, access arrangement and clash details and raise queries in a timely fashion
- Comply with all regulations and invigilators' instructions in exam rooms and understand that penalties may apply for contravention of the rules

9. IT

- Give priority to, and provide immediate response for, technical support issues during online exams and other exams for which PCs are required
- Provide exam logins and passwords as required
- Ensure software installations are completed and updated by required deadlines
- Provide technical support for out-of-hours online exams, evenings and weekends, as requested through the helpline, minimum notice of 2 weeks to be given by Exams
- Where relevant, support Curriculum in backing-up candidates' work to at least one device, and preferably to a second off-site device, so that the work is protected in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks
- Ensure STCG Exams can fully comply with JCQ and awarding body exam and assessment security requirements

10. Management Information Systems (MIS)

- Deal promptly with Exams' queries, for example regarding course titles, codes, QANs, learner enrolments/withdrawals and so on
- Run weekly ProAchieve updates between R12 and R14 (E&T and Apprenticeships)

11. Information Development

- Manage the ProAchieve ILR import process
- Ensure students will be able to access results on ProPortal as required
- Support Exams to develop new and existing reports, as agreed through the Systems Group
- Provide technical support/troubleshooting with the importing of electronic files to EBS on GCSE, A level and BTEC results' days
- Have a good working knowledge of the EBS Exams Module

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