

## Examination Entry Policy Statement



### Rationale:

Entry for external examinations represents a culmination of studies for most students. It is important that our criteria for entering students are fair, clear, and applied consistently across the school.

### Objectives:

1. To provide as efficient a service as possible in terms of contact with Examination Boards, examination entries, the dissemination of information to designated persons and the expenditure of Examination fees.
2. To disseminate exam results and to provide support for both staff and students with post examination enquiries.
3. To ensure a consistent approach is maintained across all curriculum and support areas in the School.
4. To ensure that students and parents are made aware of School expectations with regard to entry for external examinations.
5. To reduce instances of non-attendance for external examinations.

### Guidelines:

#### 1. General Criteria for Entry

1. If a student has followed a course of study leading to an examination, the examination entry will normally follow. However, entry should not be seen as a right for all students, regardless of how they have applied themselves towards their course of study.
2. If in the professional judgement of the teacher, the student is capable of achieving a basic 'pass' in the examination (e.g. a grade G at GCSE or a grade E at A/AS level or 1-9), then the student should be entered. If this is not the case then, following discussion with the Lead Learner, Head of Year, SLT Link for Exams and in some cases the school SENCO, the student should either be entered for entry level instead of GCSE (where the issue is one of student ability) or Functional Skills, or not entered for the exam (where the issues relate to poor attendance). If this is the case the Lead Learner should inform the student and parents. The student will of course still be expected to attend the normal lessons for that subject and is the responsibility of the class teacher, unless alternative arrangements are made.
3. If students have followed the course, then it is expected that they will be entered initially for the examination. Where concerns exist, they should be discussed with the student, and the student told that entry might be withdrawn.

4. Where attendance for the course is less than 90%, then the student will not normally be entered, unless there are special circumstances, of which the Head of Year will be aware. Lead Learners /Subject teachers can request individual attendance information from SIMS if necessary. In this instance the subject teacher should make a decision on entry after consultation with the Head of Year /Director of Learning. If a decision not to enter is made the Lead Learner should inform the parent.

### **Entry procedure**

**Exams entered:** GCE, BTEC's L1/2 & 3, GCSE, Cambridge Nationals and Functional Skills

**Exam boards used:** AQA, WJEC, OCR Pearson/Edexcel.

During the second half of the summer term, departments will be asked to complete an internal Estimated Exam Entries Form indicating the MAXIMUM numbers of students to take each exam in the following twelve months. Syllabus and module/component numbers and QAN codes are also required and these must be accurate as they are used to complete examination board estimated entry forms as well as staff examination entry sheets. **Any change of syllabus should be** approved by the appropriate examination board first and should be **clearly indicated on the form.**

Completed entry Mark sheets based on November Trials will be distributed at the end of the autumn term/ start of spring term for GCSE and GCE level. Faculties should check that the mark sheets issued by the Exams Office are correct in terms of students listed and amend, if necessary, and sign before returning them promptly to the Exams Office. The deadline for return will be clearly stated.

(The school will set entry deadlines for each examination series, which must be adhered to by all departments. These will be well before the Examination Board deadlines, for administration, amendment and checking purposes. Entry deadlines will be issued at the start of each academic year but as a rough guide. **BTEC registration entries** for all levels must be received in early October as the Pearson deadline is late October. **GCSE and GCE entries** for the summer series are made by end of January.)

The Lead Learner and subject teachers should keep their own records of examination entries made.

Students will be issued an internal Statement of Entry detailing all the examinations we expect that student to take. Students will need to check this sheet carefully and inform the examinations office immediately of any inaccuracies. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that their entry is correct.

The internal checking of personal details and exam details above is very important. If a student requests an amendment once his/her certificate has been issued then the student will have to meet the Exam Boards replacement certificate costs plus our administration charge.

**Amendments to Entries**

Withdrawals and amendments including change of tier can be made at any time before the final school amendment / withdrawal deadline, usually late March, the exact date each year will be noted in the exams calendar sent out each year in September.

Any withdrawals from a subject must arrive in writing from the Lead Learner or Head of Year and will not be accepted directly from teachers. Any withdrawals must be reviewed by the SLT link for exams. If the amendment or withdrawal misses the board deadline (always after the school deadline) the cost incurred will be passed back to the subject

Non-completion of coursework by students should not automatically preclude entry for the examination; instead it should be considered in the light of the general criteria for entry. The Head of Year should be consulted or SLT Lead for Exams

In exceptional circumstances, parents may be asked to pay a deposit, which may be refunded if the student attends the exam and achieves at least a basic pass.

If a candidate wishes to withdraw voluntarily from a GCSE examination, the parental letter with this request should go to the Lead Learner first. The Lead Learner should then liaise with the subject staff, Head of Year and SENCO before a decision is made to withdraw. Once a decision to withdraw has been made the Examination Office should be informed by using the appropriate form.

If a candidate wishes to withdraw from an A Level/BTEC examinations discussion should first have taken place with the subject teacher and the Head of Year and a curriculum change sheet should be completed.

There will be no further tier changes made after late March unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed by the SLT Link for Exams. Any fees incurred for late changes will be charged to the department involved.

**Coursework/ Controlled Assessment**

It is the responsibility of each department to ensure all coursework/controlled assessment is despatched at the correct time. Certificate of posting should always be completed and retained by the Lead Learner in case of loss.

**Certification**

Certification is the process by which a candidate completes a course of study and obtains a final overall terminal grade and therefore an examination certificate. Without certification the board will not issue a terminal grade. The certification process is in addition to the modular entry process.

For GCSE, BTEC and A2 entries the responsibility for certification lies with the Faculty/Department concerned and the appropriate certification code should be entered on the entry mark sheet as well as any other entries that are required.

For AS the responsibility for certification lies with the Faculty/Department concerned and the appropriate certification code should be entered on the entry mark sheet as well as any other entries that are required.

For GCSE the appropriate certification code should be entered on the entry mark sheet as well as any other entries that are required.

### **Criteria Applying to Specific Entries**

In the case of AS level examinations:

If the student has not achieved a pass at AS level, then the subject teacher and Lead Learner should review their continuation in the course to A2 level in consultation with Head of Year.

Where the examination consists of different modules, then the School will only pay for one entry for each module for the duration of the course – any retakes should be paid for by the student unless a new course has been followed.

In the case of GCSE resits in November following the June sitting, students are expected to pay for their entry to the examination. Students should collect entry forms from the Exams Office, which must be returned by the student, with payment, to the Examinations Office. Failure to hand in the form and the entry fee by the date stipulated will result in no entry being made.

In the case of Vocational and BTEC exams the normal entry criteria described above should apply. Year 10/11 students have two attempts which the College pay for. However, since students are initially registered in October/November, then any withdrawals or alterations can only be made before their first exam in January. Where cause for concern exists (e.g. poor attendance or lack of coursework), students may be asked to pay a deposit, which could be refunded if the student completes the course to a satisfactory standard. If a student chooses to leave before the course has been completed they will be liable for the cost incurred.

Functional Skills are entered when students have reached the criteria. Exam boards have entry windows.

### **Fees structure**

Any actions, which cause extra expenditure, such as late withdrawals and late entries, should be minimised. Actions requiring expenditure over and above that which we would expect to spend are as follows:

#### **1. Retakes**

It has been past and present practice for a student to pay for any retakes that they may wish to entered for. There is a standard internal application form, for GCE, BTEC and GCSE.

The form for GCE requires the signature of the Subject Teacher, the student and the parent/guardian. The Subject Teacher's signature is required so that we are assured that they know of the retake and have had the opportunity to recommend to the student whether it is worth their while pursuing the retake. The Subject Teacher should not see this as an opportunity to refuse to allow the student the chance to retake. It is the policy of this centre to allow our students to enter for any retake that they are paying the fee for, as long as there is parental/guardian approval. To apply to retake, the student must collect the form Examinations Office and take the completed form with payment to the examinations office. Failure to hand in the form and the entry fee on time will result in no entry being made.

The form for GCSE requires the signature of the subject teacher, the student and the parent/guardian. To apply to retake, the student must collect the form from the Examination Office and take the completed form with payment to the examinations office by the date stipulated. Failure to hand in the form and the entry fee on time will result in no entry being made.

## **2. Late Withdrawals**

Withdrawals will only incur expenditure when they are made after the Examination Boards withdrawal deadline dates for a particular examination series.

- If the late withdrawal is an oversight by the Lead Learner which will be clear from the internal final entry checklist, then that department budget will be charged through capitation.
- If the late withdrawal is required by parental request then the parent/ student will be charged the entry fee.
- If the late withdrawal is required due to a student defaulting on coursework, then the parent/student will be charged the entry fee.
- If the late withdrawal is required due to an Exams Dept oversight then the fee will be paid from the exams 'budget'.
- If the late withdrawal is required for medical/genuine problems for the student then the fee will be paid from the exams 'budget'.

## **3. Late entry**

A late entry for a candidate is one which is made after the Examination Boards entry deadline for an examination series, and could be triple the cost of a correct entry.

- If the late entry is an oversight by the Director of Learning, which will be clear from the internal final entry checklist, then that department will be charged through capitation.
- If the late entry is required by parental/student request then the parent/student will be charged the late entry fee.

- If the late entry is required due to an Exams Dept oversight then the fee will be paid from the exams 'budget'.
- If the late entry is required for a new student to the school then the fee will be paid from the exams 'budget'.

#### 4. External / Private candidates

If a candidate is not currently on roll they are classed as an external candidate. Anyone wishing to become an private candidate should check with the exams office to see if External exams are running that academic year. Charges will be made for external candidates as appropriate plus fee for each paper sat, to cover Invigilation and Administration costs. External candidates are:

- Students who are no longer on roll but previously attended the school, costs for any examinations entered will apply, including exam entry fee and invigilation/administration fees (£40 per exam under 2 hours and £50 per exam over 2 hours). Refunds will be issued if exams are cancelled before the Exam Board entry deadline.
- Candidates who have not previously attended this school but who want to use it as an examination centre, costs for any examinations entered will apply, including exam entry fee and invigilation fees (£25 per exam under 2 hours and £35 per exam over 2 hours). Refunds will be issued to external candidates if exams are cancelled before the Exam Board entry deadline.

#### 5. Post result examination services / Remarks

- There are a number of different services available. Candidates must provide their informed consent for Enquiry about Result services 1 and 2 and also for use of examination scripts.
- Enquiries about Results are extremely expensive therefore the Lead Learner should be quite sure that a mistake in the marking has occurred for a Review of Marking to be requested. There is no allowance in the exams budget for review of marking so Lead Learners must bear the cost of any reviews if they are not successful. If marks do go up as a result of a rereview, there will be no fee.
- If a student/parent requests a review then they will be responsible for any expense incurred. Please refer to the College policy re Enquires about Results and Post Results.
- Pearson now offer a script viewer service. **A student's consent form must be completed** before accessing this free service. It is only available for a specific period of time after results are released.

#### Special Arrangements/Special Considerations

Access Arrangements and Special Considerations are two separate factors.

**Access Arrangements** are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres, others require prior JCQ awarding body approval.

Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

#### *Reasonable Adjustments for Access Arrangements*

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment. A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements. How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment. There is no duty on the Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.

For Access Arrangements, there is a deadline for applications to the Board. The Examinations Boards often rely on our professionalism in terms of applying only in cases of genuine need and ensuring no favouritism or unfair advantage is offered to any of our candidates. Ideally these candidates would be identified before the start of the course. A Form 8 will need to be filled in the by the SENCO so that an online application can be made.

The SENCO will liaise with the Examinations Dept to apply to the Examination Boards for Access Arrangements, on behalf of the Examinations Dept, providing the necessary documentation required. On reply from the examination board the SENCO will be informed and the SENCO will inform the candidate.

The Exams Lead will ensure that the permitted Access Arrangement is in place or is allowed on the day of the examination(s) in question.

**Special Consideration** is a post-examination adjustment that compensates candidates who were suffering from a temporary illness or condition or who were otherwise disadvantaged at the time of the examination. The Exams officer may apply for special consideration on a candidate's behalf. Special consideration can go some way to assist a candidate affected by a potentially wide range of difficulties, emotional or physical, which may influence performance in their examinations. It cannot remove the difficulty faced by the candidate. This means that there will be some situations where candidates should not be entered for an examination. This is because only minor adjustments can be made to the mark awarded. To make larger adjustments would jeopardize the standard of the

examination. There are minimum requirements for enhanced grading in cases of acceptable absence.

In terms of Special Consideration, any member of staff, whether tutor, invigilator etc, may and should inform the Examinations Lead if they feel a student's performance in an examination has been hindered for any reason. It will be the responsibility of the Examinations Officer/Lead to decide whether to proceed with a Special Consideration application. If a student or parent is requesting Special Consideration then evidence to support the application (e.g. a doctor's note), indicating the exam in question, must be handed to the Examination Officer within 3 days of the examination. Once again it will be the responsibility of the Examination Officer/Lead to decide whether to proceed with the application. However, application for Special Consideration should not be seen as a right in this instance and each application will be judged on its own merit.

Policy developed by: John Milner

Reviewed by: Linda Bennett Examinations Lead

Date adopted: September 2006

Reviewed: October 2023

Supporting Documents: JCQ Regulations Document