



St. Mary's Grammar School, Belfast

EXAMINATION

POLICY

April 2017



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St. Mary's CBGS Examination Policy

The purpose of this examination policy is:

- to ensure the planning and management of examinations is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of 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 exam processes to read, understand and implement this policy.

- The examination policy will be reviewed annually.

- The examination policy will be reviewed by the Head of Centre, Senior Leadership Team and Examinations Officer

Examination responsibilities

The Head of Centre:

- has overall responsibility for the school as an examination centre advises on appeals and remarks
- the Head of Centre is the school Principal. He/she also delegates a responsibility to two Senior Teachers as Head of Centre for Post-16 and Key Stage 4 examinations
- is responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice – refer to the JCQ document *Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments*.

The Examinations Officer (under direction of the Heads of Centre):

- manages the administration of public and internal examinations
- advises the senior leadership team, subject and class tutors and other relevant support staff on annual examination timetables and application procedures as set by the various awarding bodies
- oversees the production and distribution to staff, governors and candidates of an annual calendar for all examinations in which candidates will be involved and communicates regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events
- ensures that candidates and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the examination timetable that will affect them
- 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 examination papers and completed scripts
- administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration using the JCQ publications Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration 08/09
- identifies and manages examination timetable clashes
- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all examination costs/charges
- line manages the senior examination invigilator in organising the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of examinations invigilators responsible for the conduct of examinations
- submits candidates' coursework marks, tracks despatch and stores returned coursework and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule
- arranges for dissemination of examination results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the SLT, any appeals/re-mark requests
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their examinations.

Heads of Department

- guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about examination entries or amendments to entries
- 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 examinations officer.

Teachers are responsible for:

- notification of access arrangements requirements (as soon as possible after the start of the course)
- submission of candidates' names to Heads of Department.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) is responsible for:

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

Lead invigilator/invigilators are responsible for:

- collection of examination papers and other material from the examinations office before the start of the examination
- collection of all examination papers in the correct order at the end of the examination and their return to the examinations office.

Candidates are responsible for:

- confirmation and signing of entries
- understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own
- ensuring prompt arrival for all examinations. Candidates must be at the examination centre for 9am and 1pm each day
- reminding oneself of the examination centre venue in advance. This information will be relayed to students via the TV monitor information system located in the main foyer, the ER foyer and in the canteen. If there is any doubt about locations the candidate should be referred to the Examinations Officer or Year Head
- ensuring that they are fully equipped to complete the examination (pens/pencils/calculators etc)
- attending examinations and assessments in full school uniform at all times
- following all school and examination body rules for behaviour and conduct.

Qualifications offered

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Head of Centre and Senior Leadership Team in consultation with the Heads of Department.

The qualifications offered are GCE, OCR, Diploma and GCSE.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus and the Options Booklets for that year. This information is also available on the school website. If there has been a change of specification from the previous year, the Examinations Officer and Senior Leadership Team must be informed at the beginning of the new school year.

Informing the Senior Leadership Team and 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 candidates, parents/carers, SENCO, subject teachers, Head of Department, School Careers Officer and the Senior Leadership Team.

Examination series

Internal examinations and controlled assessments are scheduled throughout the academic year.

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

The Head of Centre and Senior Leadership Team decide which examination series are used in the centre.

On-demand assessments can be scheduled only in times agreed by the Senior Leadership Team.

Timetable

Once confirmed, the Examinations Officer will circulate the examination timetable for internal examinations and external examinations.

Entries, entry details and late entries

All entry decisions are to be approved by the Senior Leadership Team.

Candidates are selected for their examination entries by subject teachers.

Candidates for AS Level January examinations are entered on the recommendation of the Head of Department using verification of chance graphs, homework records, attendance etc.

Candidates or parents/guardians can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal.

The centre will accept entries from external candidates only with approval from the Principal.

The centre may act as an examination centre for other organisations.

Entry deadlines are circulated to Heads of Department via email

Late entries are authorised by Head of Centre and Heads of Department.

GCSE re-sits will meet the GCSE terminal rule and re-sit requirements.

Re-sit decisions will be made in consultation with candidates, subject teachers, and Heads of Department.

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

Examination fees are paid by the centre.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the departments, centre and candidates dependent upon the circumstance.

Candidates who fail to register for resit examinations by the agreed deadline are responsible for the payment of any late fees.

Fee reimbursements are sought from candidates who fail without good reason to complete the requirements of a public examination.

Re-sit fees are paid by the candidate.

Disability Discrimination Act

All examination centre staff must ensure that they meet the disability provisions under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), extended in 2005, and the Disability Equality Duty (DED), introduced in 2006.

The DDA introduced measures aimed at eliminating the discrimination often faced by disabled people. The main provisions of the Act give protection to disabled people in the areas of employment and education.

A person has a disability for the purposes of the DDA if he has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The centre will meet the requirements of the DDA by ensuring that the examinations centre is accessible and improving candidate experience. This is the responsibility of the Head of Centre.

Access arrangements

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

A candidate's access arrangements requirement is determined by the SENCO, doctor, pastoral teacher and/or educational psychologist/specialist teacher.

Making access arrangements for candidates to take examinations/controlled assessments is the responsibility of both the SENCO and examinations officer.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the examinations officer.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the SENCO with the examinations officer.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the SENCO with the examinations officer.

Contingency planning

Contingency planning for examinations administration is the responsibility of the Head of Centre.

Estimated grades

Heads of Department are responsible for submitting estimated grades to the examinations office when requested by the examinations officer.

Managing invigilators

Support staff, external staff and agency employees are used to invigilate examinations.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer.

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the Examinations Officer.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the Director of Corporate Services.

Malpractice

The Head of Centre is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice.

Examination days

The examinations officer will book all examination rooms after liaison with other users and make the question papers, other examination stationery and materials available for the invigilator.

The Director of Corporate Services is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms.
The lead invigilator will start all examinations in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
Subject teachers may be required at the start of the examination to assist with identification of candidates but must not advise on which questions or sections are to be attempted.
Subject teachers are not permitted into the examination centre during an examination.
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. Papers will be made available to Heads of Department at the end of the examination session.

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

Candidates

The centre'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 centre 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 on examination day.

For clash candidates, the supervision of escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight supervision is the responsibility of the examinations officer.

Should a candidate be ill before an examination, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be taken ill during the examination itself or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an examination, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre, the Examinations Officer, or the examination 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 or Head of Centre will then forward a completed special consideration form to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the examination.

Controlled Assessment

Controlled Assessment replaces the largely discontinued term coursework.

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

Marks and appeals

Marks for all controlled assessed work and estimated grades are provided to the Examinations Officer by the subject teachers and Heads of Department.

Appeals against controlled assessments must be made by the specified date.

Appeals against internal assessments

Advice for managing appeals against controlled assessments is available from the Examinations Officer.

Results, enquiries about results (EARs) and access to scripts (ATS)

Candidates will receive individual result slips on results days in person at the centre.

Arrangements for the centre 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 Senior Leadership Team.

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 consent is required before any EAR is requested.

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

ATS

After the release of results, candidates may ask the Head of Department to request the return of papers within three days' scrutiny of the results.

The Head of Department 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.

Certificates

Certificates are presented in person or collected from the school office.

Certificates cannot be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, unless they have been authorised to do so.

The centre retains certificates for three years.

Policy review

The policy is next due for review in 2018.



Pre-release materials: Revised procedures

- All pre-release examination materials will be signed into the strong room on the day of delivery
- The pre-release date, the relevant department and the Head of Department will be recorded on the chart
- The resources will be signed out of the strong room by a Senior Teacher on the designated release date and time
- The sealed packages will be delivered to the department by the Senior Teacher
- The package will be opened by the Head of Department in the presence a Senior Teacher or an Assistant Head of Department where applicable
- The Senior Teacher and Head of Department will verify receipt of the materials and a copy will be retained in the strong room

Staff training

- Internal training sessions will be organised for the Examination Officer and the relevant Heads of Department to ensure they exercise due diligence in fulfilling their duties
- The Examinations Officer will be trained to ensure that the revised procedures are fully implemented and that the examination materials are securely stored in the strong room
- As appropriate, the Heads of Department will be trained to follow the revised procedures to ensure the security of the examination materials
- Staff will be trained to bring immediately to the attention of a member of the School Leadership Team any concerns they may have about the breach of any of these procedures

Examination Policy Review

- The examination policy will be reviewed in 2018

Departments

Department	Current HOD
Science	Miss AM Doherty
Media Studies	Miss K Warren
French	Miss C McAtamney
Music	Mrs C Morris-Spillane
Irish	Mr C Flynn
Art	Miss L McGonagle

