



# Highlands School

## Exams Policy

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Governors Committee	C&S



## **Highlands School Exam Policy**

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## 0. Introduction

The purpose of this Exams Policy is:

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

This Exams Policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Centre, Deputy Head and the Exams Officer.

## 1. Exam responsibilities

Head of Centre / Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum)

Overall responsibility for the school/college as an exam centre:

- advises on appeals and re-marks
- the Head of Centre is responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice and will adhere to the guidance in the JCQ document *Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments*.  
(see <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice> )

Exams Officer

Manages the administration of public and internal exams and analysis of exam results:

- advises the Senior Leadership Team, subject and class tutors and other relevant support staff on annual exam timetables and application procedures as set by the various exam boards

- oversees the production and distribution to staff, governors and candidates of an annual calendar for all exams 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 exam timetable that will affect them
- liaises 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 exam papers and completed scripts
- identifies and informs SENCO in advance of the planned daily requirements for access arrangements according to the needs already identified by the SENCO and makes applications for special consideration using the JCQ *Access arrangements and special considerations regulations* and *Guidance relating to candidates who are eligible for adjustments in examinations*
- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes
- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges
- organises the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams
- 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 the dissemination of exam 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 exams.

#### Deputy Head (Curriculum)

- Organisation of teaching and learning
- Ensure courses followed at key stage 4 / post-16 are externally validated
- Be the budget holder for all examinations and invigilation

#### Heads of department/faculty

- Guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exam entries or amendments to entries.
- Involvement in post-results procedures.

- Accurate submission of coursework marks and declarations to exam boards in liaison with the exams officer
- Accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the Exams Officer.

#### Teachers

- Notification to the SENCO of the need for access arrangements for students (as soon as possible after the start of the course).
- Submission of candidate names to heads of department / faculty.

#### SENCO

- Identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements.
- Organisation of human and physical resources for access arrangements eg with spelling, reading, mathematics, dyslexia or essential skills, hearing impairment, visual impairment, English for speakers of other languages, IT equipment .

#### Lead invigilator/invigilators

- Collection of exam papers and other material from the Exams Office before the start of the exam.
- Ensure appropriate exam conditions are maintained throughout examinations in accordance with JCQ rules
- Collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and their return to the Exams Office.

#### Candidates

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

#### Administrative staff

- Support for the input of examination entry data.
- Support the postage of examination scripts via parcel collection services.
- To be trained to act as occasional exam invigilators, if required.

## **2. The qualifications offered**

The statutory tests and qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Head of Centre, Deputy Head and the heads of faculty.

The qualifications offered include GCSE, A level and BTEC.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus for that year. If there has been a change of syllabus from the previous year, the Exams Office must be informed by the end of October of the academic year in question and the Exams Officer will send out a request for information in September to all heads of faculty.

At Key Stage 4 and Post 16

All candidates will be entitled, and enabled, to achieve an entry for qualifications from external awarding bodies. Candidates will only normally be withdrawn from examinations if they are unlikely to achieve a pass grade and this will be subject to the approval of the Headteacher.

### **3. Exam seasons and timetables**

#### 3.1 Exam seasons

Internal exams are scheduled and shown in the school calendar.

External exams are scheduled in November for Year 12 re-sits of English and Maths GCSE and in May/June for the main exam season.

All internal exams are held under external exam conditions.

Which exam series are used in the Centre is decided by the Head of Centre and Deputy Head in consultation with the heads of faculty.

#### 3.2 Timetables

The Exams Officer will circulate the exam timetables for both external and internal exams once these are confirmed.

### **4. Entries, entry details, late entries and retakes**

#### 4.1 Entries

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the subject teachers and the heads of faculty.

A candidate or parent/carer can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal but this will need to be confirmed by the relevant head of faculty, following application to and approval from the Head of Centre.

Before the deadline for normal entries for each exam season is reached, the Exams Officer will produce a spreadsheet showing all entries and comparing them with estimated costs. This spreadsheet will be signed by the DH and Head of Centre before entries are submitted to the board.

The centre accepts entries from external candidates but only where this does not increase examination costs for the centre or significantly impact on the smooth running of the examinations for the internal candidates.

#### 4.2 Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department via email.

Late entries are authorised by heads of department, subject teachers and Exams Officer and charged to faculties, unless it is due to the late admission of a candidate into the school or other event outside of faculty control. The Exams Officer will get authorisation for payment of the late entry fee from the Head of Faculty or from the DH before processing the late entry /amendment and will keep a summary record of said changes and charges.

#### 4.3 Retakes

Requests from candidates to re-take an examination will be considered but candidates will normally be expected to pay for them as a private entry. Such requests would normally be granted unless it would cause an unreasonable burden for the School or staff.

Retake decisions will be made in consultation with the candidates, subject teachers, the heads of faculty and, when appropriate, the Head of Post-16.

(See also section 5: Exam fees)

## **5. Exam fees**

GCSE initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the Centre.  
AS initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the Centre.  
A2 initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the Centre.  
Late entry or amendment fees will normally be paid by the Centre.

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.

Reimbursement will be sought from candidates who fail to sit an exam or meet the necessary coursework requirements.

This fee reimbursement policy will be communicated in writing to candidates and parents/carers at the start of GCSE and post-16 courses.

Retake fees are paid by parents other than in exceptional circumstances authorised by the Head of Centre. (See also section 4.3: Retakes)

The Centre will only pay for Enquiries about Results (EARs) in exceptional circumstances.

(See also section 11.2: Enquiries about results [EARs])

## **6. The Equality Act (2010) special needs and access arrangements**

### **6.1 The Equality Act**

The Equality Act extends the application of the equal opportunities for candidates with disabilities to general qualifications. All exam centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law.

### **6.2 Special needs**

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the SENCO and the educational psychologist / specialist teacher.

The SENCO will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an exam,

and the date of that exam. The SENCO will also inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates may be granted during the course and in the exam.

### 6.3 Access arrangements

Awarding special access arrangements for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of the SENCO.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies on-line is the responsibility of the SENCO.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Exams Officer in liaison with the SENCO.

Invigilation access arrangement candidates will be organised by the Exams Officer but support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the SENCO.

The process for applying for special consideration will be publicised to all students in advance of public exams by heads of year.

## **7. Estimated grades**

### Estimated grades

The heads of subject will submit estimated grades to the Exams Officer when requested by the Exams Officer.

## **8. Managing invigilators and exam days**

### 8.1 Managing invigilators

External invigilators will be used for exam supervision. They will be used for all exams apart from internal examinations run in teaching rooms which will be invigilated by the class teacher and for internal exams which release teachers who may then be requested to help invigilate. All external examinations will be invigilated solely by examination invigilators.

The recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams Office.

Securing the necessary Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the centre administration.

DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the Centre.

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the Exams Office.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the centre administration.

## 8.2 Exam days

The Exams Officer will book all exam rooms after liaison with other users and make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials available for the invigilator.

Site management is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms.

The lead invigilator will start all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Subject staff may be present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates but must not advise on which questions are to be attempted.

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

Exam papers must not be read by subject teachers or removed from the exam room before the end of a session. Papers will be distributed to heads of department/faculty at the end of the exam session.

## **9. Candidates, clash candidates and special consideration**

### **9.1 Candidates**

The Centre's published rules on acceptable dress, behaviour and candidates' use of mobile phones and all 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.

For exams longer than one hour, candidates will not be allowed to leave the exam room until at least one hour after the published starting time. They will not be allowed to return.

The Exams Officer will attempt to contact any candidate who is not present at the start of an exam and deal with them in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

## **9.2 Clash candidates**

The Exams Officer will be responsible as necessary for identifying escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight stays.

## **9.3 Late Arrivals**

A candidate who arrives after the start time of the examination will be given the full time if invigilators are available to supervise the exam.

Students must report to the Exams Officer if they arrive later than 1 hour after the published starting time. A full written report on the JCQ form will then be sent to the awarding body. However the student will not be allowed to sit the paper if the paper has already been officially completed.

The candidate must be warned that the awarding body may not accept their work.

## **9.4 Special consideration**

Should a candidate be too ill to sit an exam, suffer bereavement or other trauma or be taken ill during the exam itself, it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre to that effect. If taken ill during an exam, candidates must inform the invigilator who will inform the Exams Officer. If unable to sit an exam, then candidates must inform the Exams Officer.

Any special consideration claim must be supported by appropriate evidence within five days of the exam, for example a letter from the candidate's doctor.

The Exams Officer will then forward a completed special consideration form to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the exam.

## 9.5 Illness during examinations

Should a candidate complain of headache or other malady and would like to have a paracetamol or other analgesic then the invigilator will inform the School Office as soon as reasonably practicable. The Office will facilitate the candidate receiving such medication as soon as possible after checking the child's SIMS record for parental permission in the usual way. This means that examination candidates can receive such medication before, during and after the normal period for the distribution of such medication. If this is earlier than normal then it may be necessary to contact home to make sure that paracetamol has not already been taken in the preceding 4 hours in order to prevent any overdosing.

## 10. Coursework and appeals against internal assessments

### 10.1 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 and the Exams Officer will keep a record of what has been sent, when and to whom.

Marks for all internally assessed work are provided to the Exams Officer by the subject teacher.

### 10.2 Appeal against internal assessments

See appendix A for more information but the main points are:

- candidates may appeal if they feel their coursework has been assessed unfairly, inconsistently or not in accordance with the specification for the qualification.
- appeals should be made in writing **within a week** of receiving your mark to the Head of Centre, head of faculty or examinations officer who will investigate and decide whether the process used conformed to the necessary requirements and make any necessary changes.
- the Head of Centre's finding will be notified in writing, copied to the Exams Officer and recorded for awarding body inspection.

## **11. Results, enquiries about results (EARs) and access to scripts (ATS)**

### 11.1 Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days in person at the centre or may be viewed online via INSIGHT (a web based service offered to parents).

**Results will not normally be sent in any other way.**

Arrangements for the School to be open on results days are made by the senior leader responsible: Deputy Headteacher (Achievement) for GCSE exams, Director of KS5 for A level examinations.

The provision of staff (other than the Exams Officer) on results days is the responsibility of the relevant senior leader.

### 11.2 Enquiries About Results (EARs)

EARs (commonly but incorrectly called re-marks or appeals) may be requested by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been a significant error in marking which might lead to an improvement in the outcome grade for a student. EARs agreed to by the Centre will be paid for by the Centre.

If the Centre (or the candidate) makes an enquiry about a result (review of the original marking) there are three possible outcomes:

- The original mark is lowered, so the final grade may be lower than the original grade received.
- The original mark is confirmed as correct, so there is no change to the grade.
- The original mark is raised, so the final grade may be higher than the original grade you received.

When the Centre does not agree to the request for an EAR, a candidate may still apply to have an enquiry carried out but will be required to bear

any costs incurred. In any case, the written consent of candidates must be obtained in advance and kept by the Exams Officer, according to JCQ regulations. (Email requests from parents or candidates together with payment or payment for a private review via the School's exam shop online will be taken as written consent).

(See section 5: Exam fees)

### 11.3 Access to Scripts (ATS)

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

Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates must be obtained and kept by the Exams Officer, according to JCQ regulations.

Note: EARs cannot be applied for once a script has been returned.

## 12. Certificates

Certificates are usually presented in person to the candidate.

Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, if they provide sufficient evidence to show they have been authorised to do so. The examination officer will maintain a record of candidates' signatures when they collect their certificates.

Certificates are **not** withheld from candidates who owe fees.

The Centre retains certificates for five years, according to examination board regulations.

**Head of Centre**  
Vin McInerney

**Exams Officer**  
Corinne Bell

**Deputy HT (curriculum)**  
David Feldman

## Appendix A

### Appeals against internally assessed marks

#### **(e.g. BTEC & GCSE controlled assessments and GCE coursework)**

**Highlands School** is committed to ensuring that whenever its staff mark candidates' controlled assessment/coursework this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the awarding body's specification and subject-specific associated documents.

Candidates' work will be marked by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skill, and who have been trained in this activity. **Highlands School** is committed to ensuring that work produced by candidates is assessed in line with the requirements of the awarding body. Where a number of subject teachers are involved in marking candidates' work, internal moderation and standardisation will ensure the required consistency of marking.

If a candidate believes that this may not have happened in relation to his/her work, he/she may make use of this appeals procedure.

1. Appeals should be made as early as possible to enable the centre to meet examination board deadlines and so should be made within a week of the final marks being shared with candidates.
2. Appeals must be made in writing by the candidate's parent/carer to the head of faculty, examinations officer or head of centre.
3. The head of centre will appoint a senior member of staff, i.e. an Assistant Headteacher or a Deputy Headteacher, to conduct the investigation. The senior member of staff will not have had any involvement in the internal assessment process for that subject.
4. The purpose of the appeal will be to decide whether the process used for internal assessment conformed to the awarding body's specification and subject-specific associated documents.
5. The appellant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including any relevant correspondence with the awarding body, and any changes made to internal assessment procedures.
6. The outcome of the appeal will be made known to the Headteacher and will be logged as a complaint. A written record will be kept and made available to the awarding body upon request. Should the appeal bring any irregularity in procedures to light, the awarding body will be informed.

After candidates' work has been internally assessed, it is moderated by the awarding body to ensure consistency in marking between centres. The moderation process may lead to mark changes. This process is outside the control of **Highlands School** and is not covered by this procedure.

## APPENDIX 6 – LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE (copied from the school’s Emergency Plan)

*This will be applied to examination rooms as appropriate*

Signals	
Signal for lockdown	Tannoy announcement by SLT to all school
Signal for all-clear	Tannoy announcement by SLT to all school

Lockdown	
Rooms most suitable for lockdown	N/A
Entrance points (e.g. doors, windows) which should be secured	Reception / PE doors / Main hall doors / Canteen doors / All fire exits
Communication arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Two-way radios</li> <li>▪ Classroom telephones</li> <li>▪ Mobile phones</li> <li>▪ Instant messaging / email</li> <li>▪ Other.</li> </ul>
Notes	

Upon hearing the lockdown signal, take the action below. If someone is **taken hostage on the premises**, the school should seek to evacuate the rest of the site.

Ref'	Initial response - lockdown	Tick / sign / time
L1	Ensure all pupils are inside the school building. Alternatively, ask pupils to hide or disperse if this will improve their safety.	
L2	Lock / secure entrance points (e.g. doors, windows) to prevent the intruder entering the building.	
L3	Dial 999. Dial once for each emergency service that you require.	

L4	<p>Ensure people take action to increase protection from attack:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Block access points (e.g. move furniture to obstruct doorways)</li> <li>▪ Sit on the floor, under tables or against a wall</li> <li>▪ Keep out of sight</li> <li>▪ Draw curtains / blinds</li> <li>▪ Turn off lights</li> <li>▪ Stay away from windows and doors.</li> </ul>	
L5	<p>Ensure that pupils, staff and visitors are aware of an exit point in case the intruder does manage to gain access.</p>	
L6	<p>If possible, check for missing / injured pupils, staff and visitors.</p>	
L7	<p>Remain inside until an all-clear has been given, or unless told to evacuate by the emergency services.</p>	