



Peacehaven Community School

Examinations Policy

Head of Centre	Rachel Henocq
Date	September 2023
Date for Review	September 2024
Responsibility for Review	Head of Centre Examinations Officer

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 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.

The exam policy will be reviewed annually by the Exams Officer and Head of Centre.

Exam responsibilities

Examinations Officer:

- Manages the administration of public and internal exams
- Advises the Senior Leadership Team, teaching staff and other relevant support staff on annual exam timetables and application procedures as set by the various awarding bodies
- Oversees the production and distribution to staff, parents and candidates of seasonal calendars 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
- Consults with teaching staff to ensure that necessary internal assessments are completed on time and in accordance with the relevant awarding body guidelines
- Provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries (where applicable)
- Receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts
- Administers access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and makes applications for special consideration using up-to-date JCQ and NCFE publications and online forms
- Identifies and manages exam timetable clashes
- Recruits, trains and line manages the team of invigilators
- Submits internal assessment marks and grades, tracks despatch and stores returned internal assessments and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule
- Arranges for 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.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Notification of access arrangement requirements (as soon as possible after the start of the course) to the SEND Coordinator (SENDCo).
- Submission of candidates' names, entries, tiers, internal assessment units, amendments and withdrawals promptly to the Exams Officer when requested.
- Complying with board regulations and deadlines for internal assessment completion and despatch.

The SENDCo is responsible for:

- Identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements.
- 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.

Exam Invigilators are responsible for:

- Collection of exam papers and other material from the Exams Office before the start of the exam.
- Collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and their return to the Exams Office.
- Maintaining the integrity of any exam in accordance with the JCQ and NCFE regulations.

Candidates are responsible for:

- Confirmation and signing of entries.
- Understanding controlled/internal assessment regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the work as their own.

Qualifications offered

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Head of Centre, Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Departments.

The qualifications currently offered at PCS are:

- BTEC
- Cambridge Nationals
- Functional Skills
- GCSE
- Technical Awards (including V Cert)

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 1st of July of each year in order to be able to submit intentions to enter to the relevant boards (where applicable).

Informing the Exams Office of changes to a syllabus is the responsibility of the Heads of Departments and Senior Leadership Team.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken in consultation with the candidates, parents/carers, subject teachers and Head of Department.

Exam series and timetables

Internal exams and assessments are scheduled into the calendar at the beginning of each year to avoid overburdening students and to avoid unnecessary clashes.

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

GCSE exams are scheduled in May and June. NCFE external assessment dates/windows are chosen at the start of the course by the Head of Department.

All internal exams are held under external exam conditions.

On-demand tests can be scheduled only in windows agreed with the Exams Officer and the Senior Leadership Team.

Once confirmed, the Exams Officer will circulate the exam timetable for both external and internal exams and post on the school website.

Entries, entry details and late entries

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the subject teachers.

The centre does not, as a rule, accept entries from external (private) candidates, nor does it act as an exam centre for other organisations.

Entry deadlines are circulated to Heads of Departments via email. Late entries are authorised by the Head of Centre and Exams Officer.

Retake decisions will be made in consultation with candidates, Heads of Departments and the Senior Leadership Team.

Withdrawal of student entry

Candidates deciding to withdraw from their programme of study should be supported to explore other options available to them, with withdrawal seen as a last resort.

All candidates considering withdrawal from their programme of study should seek advice and guidance as soon as possible from both their subject teacher and Head of Department.

If following this advice the candidate wishes to proceed with withdrawal, a meeting will be held with the candidate's parents/carers and the senior member of staff in charge of outcomes, where they should confirm their decision with reasons and a formal decision will be made by the senior member of staff.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Credit Accumulation & Transfer (CAT)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and transfer of credit exist to enable learners to avoid duplication of learning and assessment. Learners may claim RPL or transfer of credit against a whole unit or several units.

During the application process for students joining PCS, a thorough check will be made on their prior learning and any qualifications they may have achieved at a Centre.

Students transferring to other Centres will have RPL and CAT evidence provided upon request from the new Centre

Recognition of Prior Learning

During the admissions interview, all relevant information concerning the young person's prior learning will be discussed and requested from the referring Centre.

If relevant, then awarding body procedures will be followed to assess and validate the learning or achievement that has not been certificated or accredited previously towards the qualification being studied.

Credit Transfer

During the admissions interview, the admissions team will check with the referring Centre if the learner has any previously accredited unit achievements which would count towards a qualification being studied at PSC. If this is the case, then the awarding body procedures would be followed to ensure that existing achievements are recognised.

In both cases – Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer - the Admissions Team and Examinations Officer will work together to obtain all necessary information and evidence of qualifications and units achieved. The Examinations Officer would then contact the relevant awarding body and complete all relevant paperwork to support the applications.

Exam fees

Initial exam fees are paid by the centre. Candidates or faculties 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.

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

Re-sit fees are paid by the centre.

Disability Discrimination Act

All exam centre staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), extended in 2005, and Equality Act 2010 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/6>).

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 she/he has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on her/his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

The centre will meet the requirements of the DDA by ensuring that the exams centre is accessible and improving candidate experience. This is the responsibility of the Head of Centre, Senior Leadership Team and SENDCo.

Access arrangements/Reasonable adjustments

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

A candidate's requirement is determined by the SENDCo, Doctor and /or Educational Psychologist.

Making access arrangements/reasonable adjustments for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of both the SENDCo and Exams Officer.

Submitting completed applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the Exams Officer and SENDCo.

Rooming for access arrangement/reasonable adjustment candidates will be arranged by the Exams Officer.

Invigilation and support for the candidates will be organised by the SENDCo with the Exams Officer.

Contingency planning

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team and the Exams Officer.

Private candidates

Managing private candidates is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

Estimated grades

Heads of Departments and subject teachers are responsible for submitting estimated grades to the Exams Officer when requested.

Managing Invigilators

Internal and external staff are used to invigilate both internal and external examinations.

Recruitment of Invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

Securing the necessary Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the centre's Lead Administration Officer. DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by East Sussex County Council.

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the Exams Officer and their rates of pay are set by the centre administration.

Malpractice

The Exams Office is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice.

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 Invigilators.

Site management is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms.

The Lead Invigilator or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (who has not had overall responsibility for the subject department and/or preparing the candidates for the exam) will start all exams in accordance with JCQ or NCFE regulations.

Nominated subject staff may be present at the start of the exam outside the exam venue to assist with identification of candidates, and to read out any subject-specific instructions.

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. Spare exam papers can be collected by Heads of Departments or subject teachers 24 hours after the exam has taken place.

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 are identified internally by senior members of staff and/or Heads of Departments before they enter the main exam venue. Identification of candidates sitting exams in smaller venues is carried out by the Exams Office staff. 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 and NCFE regulations.

Candidates may only leave the exam room for a genuine purpose and are required to return immediately to the exam room. They must be accompanied by an Invigilator at all times.

All candidates must stay until everyone has finished the exam (unless otherwise instructed).

The Exams Officer is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day or subsequently.

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

Should a candidate be ill before an exam, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be taken ill during the exam itself or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre, the Exams Officer or the Invigilator, to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within three days of the exam, for example by providing a letter from the candidate's doctor. The Exams Officer will then apply online for special consideration to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the exam.

Internal assessments and appeals

[Internal assessment replaces the largely discontinued term coursework]

It is the duty of Heads of Departments to ensure that all internal assessments are ready for despatch at the correct time. The Exams 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 Departments and/or subject teachers to inform the Exams Officer of the internal assessment units and the series candidates are to be entered into when requested.

Internal assessments must be retained in centre until the end of October in case of EARs and exam board requests for evidence.

Marks for internal assessments

Marks for all internally assessed work and estimated grades are provided to the Exams Officer by the subject teachers and Heads of Departments.

Appeals against internal assessments

The process for managing appeals against internal assessments is detailed in a separate appeals policy ('Appeals Against Internally Assessed Marks').

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

Candidates will receive individual result slips on results days, either in person at the centre, by 1st class post to the candidate or via email. Alternatively, the results slip can be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, provided they have written authorisation from the candidate to do so.

Arrangements for the centre to be open on results days are made by the Senior Leadership Team.

The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team.

Enquiries about results (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 submitted to the exam board.

If a result is queried, the Head of Department, teaching staff and the Head of Centre will investigate the feasibility of asking for a re-mark. If they disagree and candidates request this process, all re-mark fees are payable by the candidate. This fee must accompany the consent document and will not be processed until the fee and consent have been received.

If the Head of Department requests the enquiry the fees will come out of the exams budget (if authorised by SLT).

EARs have to be processed within a very tight timescale and it is the Exam Officer's responsibility to meet the exam boards' deadlines for these.

Access to scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of papers ('Access to Scripts' service).

Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. In either case the consent of candidates must be obtained.

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

Certificates

Certificates are presented during the Certificate Evening. If candidates cannot attend this event certificates can be collected from PCS afterwards.

Certificates can be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, provided they have written authorisation from the candidate to do so.

The centre retains certificates for two years, after which they are securely destroyed.

This policy has been reviewed and authorised by:



Rachel Henocq
Headteacher / Head of Centre



Victoria Eames
Examinations Officer