



St Columba's College

Examinations Policy

This policy applies to the Senior School. It should be read in conjunction with the SEND Policy.

St. Columba's College is conducted in the educational tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. As such it nurtures a holistic environment which includes a commitment to academic excellence, religious values, friendly discipline, and personal attention.

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Section 1 Introduction

St Columba's College is committed to ensuring that exams are managed and administered effectively and efficiently. This examination policy ensures that:

- all aspects of the centre examination process is documented and other relevant examinations-related policies, procedures and plans are signposted, thus "...minimising risk to examination administration and any adverse impact on students, should the Examinations Officer be absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle." As detailed by JCQ
- staff are well informed and supported
- all centre staff involved in the examinations process clearly understand their roles and responsibilities
- all examinations and assessments are conducted in accordance with JCQ and awarding body regulations, guidance and instructions, thus ensuring that "... the integrity and security of the examination/assessment system is maintained at all times and is not brought into disrepute"
- candidates sitting examinations understand the examinations process and what is expected of them.

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure ways of working in the centre are accurately reflected and that examinations and assessments are conducted to current JCQ (and awarding body) regulations, instructions and guidance.

Assistant Head – Director of Studies is responsible for the annual review and any required update of this policy. The Head Master is responsible for the approval and sign-off of this policy. This policy is communicated to all relevant centre staff.

Section 2 Roles & responsibilities overview

Head of centre

"The Head of Centre is responsible to the awarding bodies for making sure all examinations/assessments are conducted according to the instructions, and the qualification specifications issued by the awarding bodies. The Head of Centre may not appoint themselves as the Examinations Officer."

The Head of Centre will be familiar with the contents, refer to and direct relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations> (GR)

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice--instructions-for-conducting-examinations> (ICE)

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration>

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice>

The Head of Centre will ensure:

- the National Centre Number Register (NCNR) annual update (administered on behalf of the JCQ member awarding bodies by OCR) is responded to
- the Examinations Officer attends appropriate training events offered by awarding bodies, MIS providers and other external providers to enable the examination process to be effectively managed and administered
- centre staff are supported and appropriately trained to undertake key tasks within the examinations process
- centre staff undertake key tasks within the examinations process and meet internal deadlines set by the Examinations Officer
- “that a teacher who teaches the subject being examined, or a senior member of teaching staff who has had overall responsibility for the candidates’ preparation for the examination, is not an invigilator during the examination or on-screen test;”
- security within the examination process is managed as per JCQ and awarding body regulations, guidance and instructions
- risks to the examination process are assessed and appropriate risk management processes/contingency plans are in place
- required internal appeals procedures are in place
- a disability policy showing the centre’s compliance with relevant legislation is in place (see SEND Policy).

Examinations Officer

“The Examinations Officer is the person appointed by a Head of centre to act on behalf of the centre in matters relating to the administration of awarding body examinations and assessments.”

The Examinations Officer will:

- be familiar with the contents of annually updated JCQ publications including:
 - <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>
 - <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice—instructions-for-conducting-examinations>
 - <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice>
 - <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/post-results-services>
- be familiar with the contents of annually updated information from awarding bodies on administrative procedures, key tasks, key dates and deadlines
- ensure key tasks are undertaken and key dates and deadlines met
- recruit, train and deploy a team of internal/external invigilators; appoint lead invigilators, as required.

Senior leadership team (SLT)

SLT will be familiar with the contents, refer to and direct relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including:

- <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>
- <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration>

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice>

Head of Academic Support (Head of Academic Support (SENCo))

- will be familiar with the contents, refer to and direct relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including:
<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration>
- will lead on the access arrangements and reasonable adjustments process (referred to in this policy as ‘access arrangements’)
- if not the qualified specialist assessor, will work with the person appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process
- will present when requested by a JCQ inspector, evidence of the specialist assessor’s qualification. “Evidence of the specialist assessor’s qualification(s) must be held on file for inspection purposes. The documentation must be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the Head of Academic Support (SENCo).”

Subject Leaders

- will ensure teaching staff undertake key tasks, as detailed in this policy, within the examinations process (examination cycle) and meet internal deadlines set by the Examinations officer and Head of Academic Support (SENCo)
- will ensure teaching staff keep themselves updated with awarding body teaching-specific information to confirm effective delivery of qualifications
- will ensure teaching staff attend relevant awarding body training and update events.

Teaching staff

- will undertake key tasks, as detailed in this policy, within the examinations process and meet internal deadlines set by the Examinations Officer and Head of Academic Support (SENCo)
- will keep themselves updated with awarding body teaching-specific information to confirm effective delivery of qualifications
- will attend relevant awarding body training and update events.

Invigilators

- will attend training, updates, briefing and review sessions as required
- will provide information as requested on their availability to invigilate
- will sign a confidentiality and security agreement.

Reception staff

Will support the Examinations Officer in dealing with examination-related deliveries and dispatches with due regard to security at all times.

Site staff

Will support the Examinations Officer in relevant matters relating to examination rooms and resources.

Candidates

Where applicable in this policy, the term 'Candidates' refers to candidates and/or their parents/carers.

Section 3 The Examination Cycle

The examinations management and administration process that needs to be undertaken for each examination series is often referred to as the examination cycle. Relevant tasks required within this are grouped into the following stages:

- Planning
- Entries
- Pre-examinations
- Examination time
- Results and post-results

This examination policy identifies the roles and responsibilities of centre staff within this cycle.

Planning

Information sharing

The Head of Centre will:

direct relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice--instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration>

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice>

The Examinations Officer will:

- inform relevant centre staff of JCQ and awarding body documentation relating to the examination process that has been updated
- signpost relevant centre staff to information that should be provided to candidates
- as the centre administrator, approve relevant access rights for centre staff using awarding body secure extranet sites.

Information gathering

The Examinations Officer will:

- annually gather information in preparation for each new academic year to ensure data about all qualifications being delivered is up to date and correct
- collate all data into one central point of reference
- research awarding body guidance to identify administrative processes, key tasks, key dates and deadlines for all qualifications

- produce an annual examinations plan of key tasks and key dates to ensure all external deadlines can be effectively met, and inform key centre staff of internal deadlines

Subject Leaders will:

- respond to requests from the Examinations Officer on information gathering
- meet the internal deadline for the return of information
- inform the Examinations Officer of any changes to information in a timely manner minimising the risk of late or other penalty fees being incurred by an awarding body
- familiarise themselves and their staff with the annual examinations plan of internal deadlines.

Access arrangements

The Head of Academic Support (SENCo) will:

- assess affected candidates (or work with the appointed specialist assessor) to identify access arrangements requirements thereby ensuring that “where a candidate with a learning difficulty requires an assessment of his/her needs, he/she is assessed by an appropriately qualified specialist assessor as appointed by The Head of Centre;”
- gather evidence of need to support access arrangements
- liaise with teaching staff to gather evidence of the normal way of working
- gather signed data protection notices from candidates where required
- apply for approval through Access arrangements online (AAO), where required or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO
- keep relevant evidence on file for JCQ inspection purposes
- liaise with the Examinations Officer regarding examination time arrangements for access arrangement candidates
- ensure staff appointed to facilitate any access arrangements for candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- provide and annually review a centre policy on the use of word processors in examinations and assessments
- ensure criteria for candidates allowed separate invigilation within the centre is clear, meets the requirements of JCQ access arrangements and best meets the needs of individual candidates and remaining candidates in main examination rooms and that candidates use their examination account and adhere to examination seating plan.

SLT, Subject Leaders & Teaching staff will support the Head of Academic Support (SENCo) in determining and implementing appropriate access arrangements.

Internal assessment

The Head of Centre will ensure:

- an internal appeals procedure is in place for a candidate (or parent/carer) to appeal against an internal assessment decision
- a policy for the management of controlled assessment is in place, identifying staff responsibilities and examining potential risks
- irregularities are investigated and any cases of suspected malpractice reported to the awarding body, as required.

SLT will ensure:

- teaching staff have the necessary and appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills, and training to set, conduct, mark and authenticate candidates' work
- a process of internal moderation and standardisation is in place.

Subject Leaders will ensure:

- teaching staff delivering GCSE qualifications follow instructions for conducting controlled assessments (<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/controlled-assessments/>) and subject-specific information where provided by the awarding body
- teaching staff delivering GCE, Entry Level or Project qualifications follow instructions for conducting coursework (<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/coursework>) and subject-specific information where provided by the awarding body
- for other qualifications, teaching staff follow appropriate instructions issued by the awarding body.

Teaching staff will ensure:

- appropriate instructions for conducting internal assessment are followed
- candidates are aware of JCQ or awarding body information for candidates on producing work that is internally assessed.

Invigilation

The Examinations Officer will:

- provide an annual training event for new invigilators and an update event for invigilators in the conduct of examinations
- ensure invigilators supervising access arrangement candidates understand their role (and the role of a facilitator who may be supporting a candidate) and the rules and regulations of the access arrangement(s)
- collect evaluation of training to inform future events.

Section 4 Entries

The term 'entries' is used to describe entry/registration information for internally and externally assessed components, and certification of qualifications against which a result will be reported.

Estimated entries

The Examinations Officer will request estimated or early entry information, where this may be required by awarding bodies, from Subject Leaders in a timely manner to ensure awarding body external deadlines for submission can be met.

Subject Leaders will:

- provide information requested by the Examinations Officer to the internal deadline
- inform the Examinations Officer immediately of any subsequent changes to information.

Final entries

The Examinations Officer will:

- request final entry information from Subject Leaders in a timely manner to ensure awarding body external deadlines for submission can be met
- inform Subject Leaders of subsequent deadlines for making changes to final entry information without charge
- confirm with Subject Leaders final entry information that has been submitted to awarding bodies
- ensure as far as possible that entry processes minimise the risk of entries or registrations being missed and reduce the potential for late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies
- collect and submit final entries and oversee the submissions process.

Subject Leaders will:

- provide information requested by the Examinations Officer to the internal deadline
- inform the Examinations Officer immediately, or at the very least prior to the deadlines, of any subsequent changes to final entry information, which includes:
 - changes to candidate personal details
 - amendments to existing entries
 - withdrawals of existing entries
- check final entry submission information provided by the Examinations Officer and confirm information is correct.

Late entries

The Examinations Officer will:

- have clear entry procedures in place to minimise the risk of late entries
- charge any late or other penalty fees to departmental budgets.

Subject Leaders will minimise the risk of late entries by following procedures and meeting internal deadlines identified by the Examinations Officer for making final entries on time.

Transfer of credit

The Examinations Officer will:

- provide information to relevant centre staff/candidates on transferring credit for GCE AS qualifications
- meet the awarding body deadline for requesting transfer of credit.

“The transfer of credit process will not apply to new linear GCE A-level specifications being introduced for first teaching in England from 1 September 2015 onwards.”

Teaching staff will identify affected candidates to the Examinations Officer.

Candidate statements of entry

The Examinations Officer will provide candidates with statements of entry for checking.

Teaching staff will ensure candidates check statements of entry and return any relevant confirmation required to the Examinations Officer.

Candidates (or parents/carers) will confirm entry information is correct or notify the Examinations Officer of any discrepancies.

Section 5 Pre-Examinations

Access arrangements

The Head of Academic Support (SENCo) will:

- allocate centre staff to facilitate access arrangements for candidates in examinations and assessments
- ensure candidates are informed of the access arrangements that are in place for their examinations and assessments.

Briefing candidates

Before examinations the Examinations Officer will:

- issue individual examination timetable information to candidates
- issue relevant JCQ information for candidates
- where relevant, issue awarding body information to candidates
- issue centre examination information to candidates which will include information on:
 - examination clashes
 - arriving late for an examination
 - absence or illness during examinations
 - what equipment is/is not provided by the centre
 - when results and certificates will be issued
 - the post-results services and how the centre will “... deal with candidates’ access to scripts, enquiries about results and appeals to the awarding bodies...”

Dispatch of examination scripts

The Examinations Officer will identify and confirm arrangements for the dispatch of candidate examination scripts with the DfE 'yellow label service' or the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of the service.

Estimated grades

Subject Leaders will ensure teaching staff provide estimated grade information to the Examinations Officer to the internal deadline (where this still may be required by the awarding body).

The Examinations Officer will:

- submit estimated grade information to awarding bodies to meet the external deadline (where this may still be required by the awarding body)
- keep a record to track what has been sent

Internal assessment

Subject Leaders will ensure that teaching staff:

- provide marks for internally assessed components of qualifications to the Examinations Officer to the internal deadline
- authenticate candidates' work as per awarding body requirements
- provide required samples of work for moderation to the Examinations Officer to the internal deadline

The Examinations Officer will:

- submit marks and samples to awarding bodies/moderators to meet the external deadline
- keep a record to track what has been sent
- log moderated work returned to the centre
- ensure teaching staff are aware of the guidelines for retention and subsequent disposal of candidates' work.

Candidates will authenticate their work as required by the awarding body.

Invigilation

The Examinations Officer will:

- provide an invigilation handbook or brief invigilators accordingly
- deploy invigilators effectively to examination rooms throughout an examination series
- allocate invigilators to examination rooms as per the required ratios
- liaise with the Head of Academic Support (SENCo) regarding the facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates.

The Head of Academic Support (SENCo) will liaise with the Examinations Officer regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates.

Invigilators will provide information as requested on their availability to invigilate throughout an examination series.

JCQ inspection visit

A member of SLT or the Examinations Officer will be prepared “to accompany the Inspector throughout the course of his or her centre visit, including inspection of the centre’s secure storage facility.”

Seating and identifying candidates in examination rooms

The Examinations Officer will:

- ensure a procedure is in place to verify candidate identity
- ensure that invigilators are aware of the procedure
- provide seating plans for examination rooms as per JCQ and awarding body requirements.

Invigilators will:

- follow the procedure for verifying candidate identity provided by the Examinations Officer
- seat candidates in examination rooms as instructed by the Examinations Officer /in the seating plan.

Security of examination materials

The Examinations Officer will:

- have a process in place to record confidential materials delivered to the centre and issued to authorised staff
- have in place a recording system to track confidential materials taken from or returned to secure storage throughout the time the material is confidential
- receive, check and securely store question papers and other examination materials as per JCQ and awarding body requirements

Reception staff will follow the process to record confidential materials delivered to the centre and issued to authorised staff.

Teaching staff will adhere to the recording system to track confidential materials taken from or returned to secure storage throughout the time the material is confidential.

Timetabling and rooming

The Examinations Officer will:

- produce a master centre examination timetable for each examination series
- identify and resolve candidate examination clashes
- identify examination rooms and specialist equipment requirements
- allocate invigilators to examination rooms as per the required ratios
- liaise with site staff to ensure examination rooms are set up as per JCQ and awarding body requirements

- liaise with the Head of Academic Support (SENCo) regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates.

The Head of Academic Support (SENCo) will liaise with the Examinations Officer regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates.

Site staff will liaise with the Examinations Officer to ensure examination rooms are set up as per JCQ and awarding body requirements.

Transferred candidate arrangements

The Examinations Officer will:

- liaise with the host or entering centre, as required
- process requests to the awarding body deadline
- where relevant (for an internal candidate) inform the candidate of their transferred candidate arrangements.

Internal examinations

The Examinations Officer will:

- prepare for the conduct of internal examinations under external conditions
- provide seating plans for examination rooms
- request internal examination papers from teaching staff
- arrange invigilation.

The Head of Academic Support (SENCo) will liaise with teaching staff to make appropriate arrangements for access arrangement candidates.

Teaching staff will:

- provide examination papers and materials to the Examinations Officer
- support the Head of Academic Support (SENCo) in making appropriate arrangements for access arrangement candidates.

Section 6 Examination Time

Access arrangements

The Examinations Officer will:

- provide cover sheets for access arrangement candidates' scripts where required for particular access arrangements
- have a process in place to deal with emergency access arrangements as they arise at the time of exams
- apply for approval through AAO where required or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO.

Candidate absence

Invigilators will:

- be informed of the policy/process for dealing with absent candidates through training

- ensure that confirmed absent candidates are clearly marked as such on the attendance register and seating plan.

Candidates will be charged relevant entry fees for unauthorised absence from examinations.

Candidate late arrival

The Examinations Officer will:

- ensure that candidates who arrive very late for an examination are reported to the awarding body as soon as practically possible after the examination has taken place
- warn candidates that their work may not be accepted by the awarding body.

Invigilators will:

- be informed of the policy/process for dealing with late/very late arrival candidates through training
- ensure that relevant information is recorded on the examination room incident log.

Conducting examinations

The Head of Centre will ensure that venues used for conducting examinations meet the requirements of JCQ and awarding bodies

The Examinations Officer will ensure that examinations are conducted as per JCQ and awarding body instructions.

Dispatch of examination scripts

The Examinations Officer will:

- dispatch scripts as instructed by JCQ and awarding bodies
- keep appropriate records to track dispatch.

Examination papers and materials -

The Examinations Officer will:

- organise examination question papers and associated confidential resources in date order in secure storage
- attach erratum notices received to relevant examination question paper packets
- collate attendance registers and examiner details in date order
- regularly check mail or inbox for updates from awarding bodies.

Examination rooms

The Head of Centre will:

- ensure only approved centre staff are present in examination rooms
- ensure that information relating to food and drink that may be allowed in examination rooms is clearly communicated to candidates

The Examinations Officer will:

- ensure examination rooms are set up as required in the regulations

- provide invigilators with appropriate resources to effectively conduct examinations
- ensure sole invigilators have an appropriate means of summoning assistance
- ensure invigilators understand how to deal with candidates who may need to leave the examination room temporarily.

SLT will ensure a documented emergency evacuation procedure is in place.

Emergency evacuation procedure

The Examinations Officer will:

- ensure examination rooms are set up as instructed by JCQ and awarding bodies
- provide authorised examination materials which candidates are not expected to provide themselves
- brief invigilators on examinations to be conducted on a session by session basis
- ensure invigilators and candidates are aware of the emergency evacuation procedure

Site staff will:

- ensure examination rooms are available and set up as requested by the Examinations Officer
- ensure grounds or centre maintenance work does not disturb examination candidates in examination rooms
- ensure fire alarm testing does not take place during examination sessions.

Invigilators will conduct examinations in every examination room as instructed in training/update events and briefing sessions.

Candidates will be required to remain in the examination room for the full duration of the examination.

Irregularities

The Head of Centre will ensure any cases of suspected malpractice (by centre staff, candidates, invigilators) are investigated and reported to the awarding body as required.

Managing behaviour

SLT will:

- ensure support is provided for the Examinations Officer and invigilators when dealing with disruptive candidates in examination rooms
- ensure that internal disciplinary procedures relating to candidate behaviour are instigated, when appropriate.

The Examinations Officer will:

- provide an examination room incident log in all examination rooms for recording any incidents or irregularities
- action any required follow-up and reports to awarding bodies as soon as practically possible after the examination has taken place.

Invigilators will record any incidents or irregularities on the examination room incident log (for example, late/very late arrival, candidate or centre staff suspected malpractice, candidate illness, disruption or disturbance in the examination room, emergency evacuation).

Special consideration

The Examinations Officer will:

- process appropriate requests for special consideration to awarding bodies
- gather evidence which may need to be provided by other staff in centre or candidates
- submit to awarding bodies to the external deadline

Candidates will provide appropriate evidence to support special consideration requests, where required.

Unauthorised materials

Arrangements for unauthorised materials taken into the examination room

Invigilators will be informed of the arrangements through training.

Internal examinations

The Examinations Officer will:

- brief invigilators on conducting internal examinations
- return candidate scripts to teaching staff for marking.

Invigilators will conduct internal examinations as briefed by the Examinations Officer.

Results and post-results - Internal assessment

Subject Leaders will ensure:

- teaching staff keep candidates' work, whether part of the moderation sample or not, secure and for the required period stated by JCQ and awarding bodies
- work is returned to candidates or disposed of according to the requirements.

Managing results day(s)

SLT will identify centre staff who will be involved in the main summer results day(s) and their role.

Site staff will ensure the centre is open and accessible to centre staff and candidates, as required.

Accessing results

The Examinations Officer will:

- inform candidates in advance of when and how results will be released to them
- access results from awarding bodies under restricted release of results, where this is provided by the awarding body
- resolve any missing or incomplete results with awarding bodies

- issue statements of results to candidates on publication of results
- provide summaries of results for relevant centre staff on publication of results.

Post-results services

The Examinations Officer will:

- provide information to candidates and staff on the services provided by awarding bodies and the fees charged
- publish internal deadlines for requesting the services to ensure the external deadlines can be effectively met
- provide a process to record requests for services and collect candidate informed consent and fees where relevant
- submit requests to awarding bodies to meet the external deadline
- track requests to conclusion and inform candidates and relevant centre staff of outcomes
- update centre results information, where applicable.

The Head of Centre will ensure an internal appeals procedure is available where candidates disagree with the centre decision:

- not to support an enquiry about results
- not to appeal against the outcome of an enquiry about results.

Teaching staff will:

- meet internal deadlines to request the services and gain relevant candidate informed consent
- identify the budget to which fees should be charged

Candidates will:

- meet internal deadlines to request the services
- provide informed consent and fees, where relevant.

Analysis of results

Following the publication of results, the Assistant Head – Director of Studies will:

- provide analysis of results to appropriate centre staff
- provide results information to external organisations where required
- undertake the Key Stage 4/16-18 Performance Tables checking exercise.

Certificates

Certificates are provided to centres by awarding bodies after results have been confirmed.

Candidates may arrange for certificates to be collected on their behalf by providing the Examinations Officer with written or email permission/authorisation. Authorised persons must provide ID evidence on collection of certificates.

Review

The Examinations Officer will:

- provide SLT with an overview of the examination year, highlighting what went well and what could be developed/improved in terms of examinations management and administrative processes within the stages of the examination cycle
- collect and evaluate feedback from staff, candidates and invigilators to inform review.

SLT will work with the Examinations Officer to produce a plan to action any required improvements identified in the review.

Retention of records

The Examinations Officer will:

- keep records as required by JCQ and awarding bodies for the required period
- keep records as required by the centre's records management policy
- provide an examination archiving policy that identifies information held, retention period and method of disposal.