Southend adult community college

Exams policy

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The policy is next due for review on August 2015.

Aim

The purpose of this exams policy is:

- to ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interests of candidates.
- to ensure the operation of an efficient exams 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 exams policy will be reviewed every year.

The exams policy will be reviewed by the Senior Exams Officer and Senior Management Team.

Where references are made to JCQ regulations/guidelines, further details can be found at www.jcq.org.uk.

Exam responsibilities

The head of centre:

- has overall responsibility for the college as an exams centre and advises on appeals and re-marks.
- is responsible for reporting all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice - refer to the JCQ document *Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments*.

Senior exams officer[1]:

- manages the administration of internal and external exams and assessments.
- advises the senior management team, heads of learning and class tutors, and other relevant support staff on annual exams timetables and procedures as set by the various awarding bodies.
- oversees the production and distribution to all centre staff and candidates, of annual calendars for all exams in which candidates will be involved and communicates regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events.
- ensures that candidates are informed of and understand those aspects of the exams timetable that will affect them.
- checks with teaching staff that the necessary coursework and/or controlled assessments are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
- requests and confirms detailed data on estimated entries.
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.
- receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts and ensures that scripts are dispatched as per the guidelines.
- administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration following the regulations in the JCQ publications for Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration.

[1] This is the individual to whom the Head of Centre has delegated responsibility for the administration of exams in their centre.

- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes.
- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges.
- line manages the examinations and exams invigilation team
- organises the recruitment, training, and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams.
- ensures candidates' coursework / controlled assessment marks are submitted, and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule.
- tracks, dispatches, and stores returned coursework / controlled assessments.
- arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the SLT, any post results service requests.
- makes decisions on post-results procedures.

Heads of Learning are responsible for:

- communicating to senior exams officer decisions on curriculum plan in relation to awarding bodies, qualification, specification and units to be studied / examined
- guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exams entries or amendments to entries.

Tutors are responsible for:

- supplying information on entries, coursework and controlled assessments as required by the head of learning and/or exams officer.
- accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the exams officer.
- accurate completion of coursework / controlled assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets.

The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) is responsible for:

- identification and co-ordinating testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements and notifying the senior exams officer in good time so that they are able to process any necessary applications in order to gain approval (if required).
- working with the senior exams officer to provide the access arrangements required by candidates in exams rooms.

Invigilators are responsible for:

- assisting the senior exams officer in the efficient running of exams according to JCQ regulations.
- 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 ensuring their return to the exams office.

Candidates are responsible for:

- confirmation and signing of entries.
- understanding coursework / controlled assessment regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.
- ensuring they conduct themselves in all exams according to the JCQ regulations.

Qualifications offered

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the heads of learning.

The types of qualifications offered are GCSE, VRQ, Progression Awards, Diploma's, Awards, Certificates, Apprenticeships, Functional Skills, Progression, and Employability.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus or similar documents for that year. If there is to be a change of specification for the next year, the exams office must be informed by *21st May.*

Informing the exams office of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the heads of learning.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by tutor in consultation with the heads of learning and senior exams officer.

Exam series

Internal exams (mock or trial exams) and assessments are scheduled in November, January and March series, and on-demand throughout the academic year.

External exams and assessments are scheduled in the exam June series or as on-demand dependant on exam board and qualification type.

Internal exams are held under external exam conditions according to awarding body regulations.

The senior leadership team (SLT), heads of learning and senior exams officer *decide* which exam series are used in the centre.

The centre does offer some assessments on an on-demand basis. If offered, on-demand assessments can be scheduled only in windows agreed between the senior exam officer and the heads of learning.

Exam timetables

Once confirmed, the senior exams officer will circulate the exam timetables for internal and external exams at a specified date before each series begins.

Entries, entry details and late entries

Candidates can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal subject to approval by the heads of learning.

The centre does not accept entries from private candidates except in exceptional circumstances.

The centre does not act as an exams centre for other organisations.

Entry deadlines are circulated to curriculum teams via email, briefing meetings, internal post/pigeonhole.

Heads of learning/tutors will provide estimated entry information to the exams officer to meet JCQ and awarding body deadlines.

Entries and amendments made after an awarding organisation's deadline (i.e. late) require the authorisation, in writing, of heads of learning and SLT

GCSE re-sits/retakes are not allowed except in exceptional circumstances

VRQ re-sits/retakes are not allowed except in exceptional circumstances.

Functional skills re-sits/retakes are allowed.

Progression Award re-sits/retakes are allowed.

Re-sit decisions will be made by heads of learning in consultation with tutors and senior exams officer

Exam 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.

The senior exams officer will publish the deadline for action well in advance for each exams series.

GCSE entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

VRQ entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

Functional skills entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

Progression Award entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the curriculum area.

Fee reimbursements are sought from candidates:

- If they fail to sit an exam.
- If they do not meet the necessary coursework requirements without medical evidence or evidence.

Re-sit fees are paid by the centre, or the candidate if they fail to attend a scheduled exam/assessment.

Equality Legislation

All exam centre staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of any equality legislation.

The centre will comply with the legislation, including making reasonable adjustments to the service that that they provide candidates in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies, and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the SLT and senior exams officer.

Access arrangements

Tutors, Education and Careers guidance advisors or students inform the SENCo of candidates with special educational needs and any special arrangements that individual candidates will need during their course and in any assessments/exams.

A candidate's access arrangements requirement is determined by the SENCo. Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement is the responsibility of theSENCo.

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

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the senior exams officer.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, or specific exam board's regulations, will be organised by the senior exams officer.

Support staff required (i.e. scribes, readers, practical assistants etc.) for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, or specific exam boards regulations, will be organised by the SENCo.

Contingency planning

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the senior management team (SMT) and senior exams officer.

Estimated grades

Tutors are responsible for submitting estimated grades to the exams officer when requested by the exams officer.

Managing invigilators

External staff will not be used to invigilate examinations.

Invigilators will be used for internal exams and external exams.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the senior exams officer.

Securing the necessary Data Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the SMT.

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

Invigilator's rates of pay are set by the SMT.

Invigilators are recruited, timetabled, trained, and briefed by the senior exams officer.

Malpractice

The head of centre in consultation with the senior exams officer and/or SMT 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 invigilator.

Site management staff are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms, and will be advised of requirements a minimum of 12 weeks in advance.

The exam invigilator will start and finish all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Subject staff may not be present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates. Any staff present must be in accordance with the rules defined by JCQ concerning who is allowed and what they can do.

In practical exams, subject teachers' availability will be in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Exam papers must not be read by subject tutors or removed from the exam room before the end of a session. Papers will be distributed to curriculum teams in accordance with JCQ's recommendations and no later than 48 hours after candidates have completed it.

After an exam, the senior exams officer will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed examination scripts to awarding bodies, working in conjunction with the examinations assistant.

Candidates

The senior exams officer will provide written information to candidates in advance of each exam series. A formal briefing session for candidates may be given by the tutor.

The centre's published rules on acceptable conduct and behaviour apply at all times. Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

In an exam room candidates must not have access to items other than those clearly allowed in the instructions on the question paper, the stationery list, or the specification for that subject. This is particularly true of mobile phones and other electronic communication or storage devices with text or digital facilities. Any precluded items must not be taken into an exam room.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates are expected to stay for the full exam time at the discretion of the senior exams officer.

Note: candidates who leave an exam room must be accompanied by an appropriate member of staff at all times.

The senior exams officer/examinations assistant is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day.

Clash candidates

The senior exams officer will be responsible as necessary for supervising escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight stays.

Special consideration

Should a candidate be unable to attend an exam because of illness, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be ill or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre's senior exams officer to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within 2 days of the exam.

The senior exams officer will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body within 5 days of the exam.

Internal assessment

It is the duty of tutors/heads of learning to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for dispatch at the correct time. The senior exams officer will assist by keeping a record of each dispatch, including the recipient details and the date and time sent.

Marks for all internally assessed work are provided to the exams office by the tutor. The senior exams officer will inform staff of the date when appeals against internal assessments must be made by. Any appeals will be dealt with in accordance with the centre’s Internal Appeals Procedure (IAP) document.

Results

Candidates will receive individual result slips on results days,

- in person at the centre
- posted (first class)
- collected and signed for (subject to letter of authorisation and identification of third party)

The results slip will not be in the form of a centre produced document.

Arrangements for the centre to be open on results days are made by the SMT.

The provision of the necessary staff on results days is the responsibility of the senior exams officer.

Enquiries about Results (EAR)

EARs may be requested by centre staff or the candidate following the release of results. A request for a re-mark or clerical check requires the written consent of the candidate, a request for a re-moderation of internally assessed work may be submitted without the consent of the group of candidates. The cost of EARS will be paid by the candidate.

All decisions on whether to make an application for an EAR will be made by senior exams officer and/or heads of learning.

If a candidate's request for an EAR is not supported, the candidate may appeal and the centre will respond by following the process in its Internal Appeals Procedure (IAP) document.

All processing of EARs will be the responsibility of the senior exams officer, following the JCQ guidance.

Access to Scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask exams office staff to request the return of written exam papers within 5 days of the receipt of results.

Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates must be obtained.

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

The cost of EARs will be paid by the candidate.

Processing of requests for ATS will be the responsibility of the senior exams officer.

Certificates

Candidates will receive their certificates in person at the centre, produce suitable identification and sign to say that the certificate has been collected.

Certificates can be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, provided they have written authority from the candidate to do so, and bring suitable identification with them that confirms who they are.

The centre retains certificates for 1 year.

A new certificate will not be issued by an awarding organisation. A transcript of results may be issued if a candidate agrees to pay the costs incurred.

Head of centre	Exams officer
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Date

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