

Bishop Vaughan Catholic School

External Examinations Policy

External Examinations Policy



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.

This exam policy will be reviewed annually.

This exam policy will be reviewed by the Head of Centre, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the Heads of Departments, and the Examinations Officer for the governors' approval.

The centre will comply with the JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres.

1. Exam responsibilities

Head of Centre: Overall responsibility for the school 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. Refer to the JCQ document "Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments."

Examinations Officer: Manages the administration of public examinations.

- advises the SLT, Heads of Departments and other relevant support staff on annual exam timetables and application procedures as set by the various exam boards;
- ensures that candidates and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the exam timetable that will affect them;
- consults with Heads of Departments 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 manages exam timetable clashes;
- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges;
- manages the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of exam invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams;
- submits candidates' NEA marks, tracks despatch, and stores returned NEA 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;

Senior Leadership Team

- Organisation of teaching and learning.
- External validation of courses followed at Key Stage 4 / post-16.

Heads of Department

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

- Notification of Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA) (as soon as possible after the start of the course).
- Submission of candidates' names to Heads of Departments
- All staff must be aware of and comply with the JCQ Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments regulations and report any concerns immediately to the Head of Centre or Examinations Officer.

ALNCo

- Administration of AARA.
- Identification and testing of candidates, requirements for AARA.
- 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.

Invigilators

- 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 check papers against the subject register
- Sign the attendance register in the examination room
- Slot in examination papers for pupils with AARA when examination papers are delivered to the examination room

Candidates

- Contact Tutors and Heads of Departments if unsure of entry information
- Understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.
- Follow instructions during examinations and adhere to the rules and regulations set out in the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE).

The centre will comply with the GDPR and other data protection legislation when handling candidate data related to examinations.

Candidates will be issued a statement of entry and must check and confirm the accuracy of their personal and examination details.

2. The statutory tests and qualifications offered

The statutory tests and qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Heads of Departments and the SLT.

The statutory tests and qualifications offered are GCE, GCSEs, BTEC, and Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales.

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 Examinations Officer must be informed by the end of the summer term each year.

Decisions on whether a candidate should not take an individual subject will be taken in consultation with the candidates, parents/carers, ALNCo, subject teachers, Head of Department, SLT, and Heads of Year.

At Key Stage 4, all candidates will be entitled and enabled to achieve an entry for qualifications from an external awarding body.

At post-16, candidates will qualify for an entry to a qualification from an external awarding body if they:

- Complete 80% attendance
- Have made sufficient effort to merit entry

3. Exam seasons and timetables

3.1 Exam seasons

Internal exams are scheduled throughout the year, depending on the needs of each curriculum area.

External exams are scheduled in November, January, March and May/June.

All internal exams are held under external exam conditions.

Which exam series is used in the centre is decided by the SLT and Heads of Department.

3.2 Timetables

Once confirmed, the Examinations Officer will circulate the exam timetables for external exams to candidates.

4. Entries, entry details and late entries

4.1 Entries

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the Head of Department/Teacher.

4.2 Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to Heads of Departments by the Examinations Officer.

Late entries are authorised by the SLT, Curriculum Leaders and Examinations Officer.

5. Exam fees

5.1 Charges for resits

The centre will pay for the first attempt at an external examination.

- **Payment for a re-sit of examinations will be the responsibility of the student/parent/guardian**
- If the student/parent/guardian is unable to pay for a re-sit due to difficult circumstances or financial problems, contact the school as soon as possible

5.2 Charges for external candidates

External candidates who wish to sit an examination at the centre will be charged a fee of £100 per unit to cover the costs of entry, invigilation, postage and administration.

6. The Equality Act 2010, Special Needs and AARA

6.1 Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on awarding bodies and centres to make reasonable adjustments for candidates with disabilities, as defined by the Act. The school will ensure that all exam centre staff follow the current JCQ AARA guidance, ensuring that candidates are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.

6.2 Special Needs

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the ALNCo, the Educational Psychologist and the Specialist Teacher.

ALNCo 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. ALNCo can then inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates can be granted during the course and in the exam.

6.3 AARA

The Examinations Officer liaising with ALNCo will make special arrangements for candidates to take exams and:

- Submit completed AARA applications to the awarding bodies
- Arrange rooming, invigilation and support for AARA candidates

7. Estimated grades

The Heads of Department/subject teachers will be responsible for submitting estimated grades electronically via mark sheets.

8. Managing invigilators and exam days

8.1 Managing invigilators

External invigilators will be used for all external exams and internal exams where the timetable has been collapsed.

The recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer.

Securing the necessary DBS clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the Business Manager. DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre.

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the Examinations Officer.

Invigilators' pay rates are set by the Head of Centre and the Business Manager.

Invigilators must follow JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations at all times, including maintaining exam security and reporting any irregularities immediately.

8.2 Exam days

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

Caretaking staff are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms.

The Examinations Officer/ invigilator will start all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Subject staff may be present at the start of the exam to assist with the 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 issues.

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 Curriculum Leaders at the end of the exam session.

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

The Examinations Officer will ensure that seating plans are placed in agreed areas prior to any external exam.

The Examinations Officer will ensure that exam signs are displayed in all exam rooms in accordance with current JCQ instructions.

The Examinations Officer will ensure that the names of candidates are placed on all exam desks prior to any external exam.

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.

Candidates may leave the exam room for a genuine purpose requiring an immediate return to the exam room, in which case the Examinations Officer must be sent for so that the ratio of candidates to invigilators is maintained

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

9.3 Special consideration

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, candidates should inform the centre as soon as possible. Centre staff will also take reasonable steps to identify and support candidates who may be eligible for special consideration.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within three days of the exam, for example, a letter from the candidate's doctor.

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

10. Non-Examined Assessments (NEAs) and appeals against internal assessments

10.1 NEAs

Heads of Departments will ensure that candidates complete all NEAs by the end of the course.

Heads of Departments will ensure all NEAs are ready for despatch at the correct time. The Examinations Officer/Receptionist will keep a record of what has been sent, when, and to whom.

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

10.2 Appeals against internal assessments

The centre's internal appeals procedure for NEA is published and available to candidates via the school website and the Examinations Officer.

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

11.1 Results

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

Arrangements for the school 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 SLT.

11.2 EARs

EARs may be requested by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking.

If a result is queried by centre staff, the candidate's written consent must be obtained; in this instance, the centre will pay any fees.

If a result is queried by the candidate, the candidate's written consent must be obtained; in this instance, the candidate pays any fees.

Parents/candidates should realise that marks and grades can go down, go up, or stay the same.

Candidates will be given information on the costs and procedures involved.

11.3 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, candidates' consent must be obtained.

Candidates should be aware that requesting a copy of a script may affect the deadline for requesting a review of marking. Guidance will be provided to candidates at the time of the results in line with JCQ regulations. (See also section 5: Exam fees)

12. Certificates

Students returning to Year 12 will receive their certificates during a tutorial period.

Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, provided that the third party has been authorised to do so. Candidates need to contact the school prior to the collection of certificates so that the certificates are available to be signed and collected.

Replacement certificates are issued by the Awarding Bodies on payment of a fee.

The centre retains certificates for one year, after which candidates must apply to the appropriate Awarding Body for confirmation of results. A charge will be made by the Awarding Body for providing this information. Awarding bodies do not provide replacement certificates but may issue a certified statement of results.

13. Exam Contingency

The priority when implementing contingencies will be to maintain three principles:

- delivering assessments to published timetables
- delivering results to published timetables
- complying with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards.

The national examination timetable applies to GCSEs, AS levels, and A-levels.

The centre will maintain and implement an emergency evacuation procedure for examinations in line with JCQ guidance

a. Disruption of teaching time – if a centre is closed for an extended period

Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, the centre will, as usual, ensure learners are prepared for examinations.

- In the case of modular courses, the centre may advise learners to sit examinations in the next available series
- The centre will have plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning.

b. Learners unable to take examinations because of a crisis - centres remain open

- In the event of learners being unable to attend the centre to take examinations as normal, the centre will liaise with learners to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations. JCQ guidance on alternative site arrangements is available on the JCQ website.

- The centre will offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.
- The centre will apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates **who have met the minimum requirements**. JCQ guidance on special consideration is available on the JCQ website.

c. The centre is unable to open as normal during the examination period

If the centre is unable to open as normal for examinations, it will inform each awarding body of which examinations are due as soon as possible. As part of general emergency planning, the centre will address the impact on examinations. The Head of Centre will decide whether it is safe for the centre to open. The head will take advice or follow instructions from relevant local or national agencies when deciding whether the centre can open.

- The centre will open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible
- The centre will use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public buildings, if possible)
- The centre will offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series
- The centre will apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements (see item 3, page 6).

d. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

- If there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts, the centre will seek advice from awarding organisations and the collection agency regarding collection. The centre will seek approval from awarding bodies before making its own transportation arrangements.
- The centre will ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

e. If the centre is unable to distribute results as normal

If the centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates or to facilitate post-results services, the centre will contact awarding organisations for **alternative options. i.e:**

- The centre will make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site
- The centre will make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site
- The centre will share facilities with other centres if this is possible.

f. Exams officer absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle

In the event of the examinations officer being absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle, in order to minimise risk to examination administration and avoid any adverse impact on students, the centre will

- Refer to the Exam Entries / Exam Day Contingency Plan (as maintained by the Examinations Officer)
- Consult with examination boards when necessary

E Pole

Head of Centre

J Slater

Examinations Officer

February 2026

Date

Copies of this policy are available on our website, in policy folders on the school network and can be made available on request.

Date: February 2021

Reviewed: February 2023

Reviewed February 2024

Reviewed February 2025

Reviewed February 2026

Policy Next Review Date: February 2027