



POLTAIR POLICY DOCUMENT for *EXAMINATIONS*

Policy last updated: September 2018
Date of Next Review: September 2019
Staff responsible for review: Exams Officer and Senior Leadership Team

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The Exam Policy

The policy 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 every three years.

The exam policy will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and Exams Officer.

Exam responsibilities

The Exams Officer manages the administration of public and internal exams and

- 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 awarding bodies;
- 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;

- consults with teaching staff to ensure that necessary non-examination assessment (NEA) or coursework and/or controlled assessment (Legacy specifications only) is completed on time and in accordance with JCQ and/or other awarding body guidelines;
- provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries;
- receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts;
- administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration online using the JCQ publication Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration and/or other awarding body procedures if different.
- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes;
- helps Senior Team to account for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges;
- organises the recruitment, training of a team of exams Invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams;
- submits, or liaises with teaching staff to submit, candidates' NEA/coursework/controlled assessment marks, tracks despatch and stores returned NEA/coursework/controlled 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.

Curriculum Team Leaders/Teachers are responsible for:

- Identification of students requiring possible Access Arrangement requirements to the SENDCo as soon as possible after the start of the course;
- Submission of named exam entries to Exams Officer within deadlines requested;
- Preparing students for the correct syllabus whilst maintaining current regulations regarding NEA/coursework/controlled assessment;
- Submission of NEA/coursework/controlled assessment marks where necessary.

The SEND Coordinator SENDCo is responsible for:

- Identification and arranging for the 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;

Lead invigilator/Invigilators are responsible for:

- Collection of exam papers and other material from the exam secure storage cupboard before the start of the exam;
- Supervision of students and maintaining rules and regulations during examinations;
- Collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and their return to the exam secure storage cupboard.

Candidates are responsible for:

- Confirmation of entries;
- Understanding NEA/coursework/controlled assessment regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework/controlled assessment as their own;
- Arriving punctually and with the correct equipment to exams as per individual exam timetables.

Qualifications

Qualifications offered

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Curriculum Team Leaders and Senior Leadership Team.

The qualifications offered include GCSE, Entry level, BTEC, NCFE, Functional skills. Informing the exams office of changes to a syllabus is the responsibility of the Curriculum Team Leaders.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject exam will be taken in consultation with the Candidates, Parents/Carers, Subject teachers, Curriculum Team Leader and Deputy Head responsible for Curriculum.

Exam series and timetables

Exam seasons

Internal exams and assessments are scheduled in November/December, February/March and June/July and will be held under external exam conditions.

External exams and assessments may be scheduled in November, January, March, May and June, or for online on-demand BTEC PE exams, when the students are ready to take the exams.

Timetable

Once confirmed, the Exams Officer will circulate the exam timetable for Internal exams and External exams via the exams section at the bottom of the daily bulletin and will put a copy on the school website.

Entries, registrations, entry details and late entries

Entries, registrations, entry details and late entries

Candidates are selected for their exam entries/registrations by the Curriculum Team Leaders and Subject teachers.

Candidates or parents/carers can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal, but all requests will be referred to Curriculum Team Leaders and Subject Teachers before agreement.

Although the centre does not advertise the acceptance of Private Candidate entries, it may accept entries from former candidates or known persons associated with the centre.

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

Entry/registration deadlines are circulated to Curriculum Team Leaders via Email and Internal Post/Pigeon hole.

Late entries are authorised by Curriculum Team Leaders and Assistant Head in charge of Assessment.

At the discretion of Curriculum Team Leaders and Assistant Head in charge of Assessment, GCSE retakes are allowed. Retake decisions will be made in consultation with Candidates, Subject teachers, Exams Officer, Curriculum Team Leaders and Assistant Head in charge of Assessment.

Exam fees

Exam fees

Candidates or departments will not be charged for entries, changes of tier or withdrawals made by the proper procedures or alterations arising from administrative processes provided these are made within the time allowed by the awarding bodies.

Exam fees are paid by the Centre except for re-sits requested by ex-students / private candidates (unless authorised by Assistant Head in charge of Assessment).

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by Subject Departments unless Assistant Head in charge of Assessment authorises otherwise.

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

Current student re-sit fees are paid by the Centre where request is sanctioned by Curriculum Team Leaders, if re-sit is not advised, fees will be paid by candidate.

Equality Act 2010 / Reasonable Adjustments (Access Arrangements) and Special Considerations

Equality Act 2010

All exam centre staff must ensure that they meet and comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 when allowing reasonable adjustments (Access Arrangements) and special considerations during or following examinations and NEA/coursework/controlled assessment.

Under the Equality Act 2010 a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantially adverse and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The centre will meet the requirements by ensuring that the exams centre is accessible to all and by improving the candidates' experience wherever possible. This is the responsibility of the Head of Centre, Senior Leadership Team, Exams Officer and Curriculum Team Leaders.

Reasonable Adjustments (Access Arrangements)

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. It is made to an assessment for a qualification to enable a disadvantaged learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding of the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of what needs to be assessed, but may involve:

- changing usual assessment arrangements, for example allowing a learner extra time to complete the assessment activity;
- adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in Braille;
- providing assistance during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or a reader;
- re-organising the assessment room, such as removing visual stimuli for an autistic learner;
- changing the assessment method, for example from a written assessment to a spoken assessment;
- using assistive technology, such as screen reading or voice activated software;
- providing the mechanism to have different colour backgrounds to screens for onscreen assessments or asking for permission for copying to different coloured paper for paper-based assessments;
- providing and allowing different coloured transparencies with which to view assessment papers.

Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the learner access to the programme. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a learner's work.

Awarding Bodies and centres are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

Process for deciding which students require Reasonable Adjustments (Access Arrangements)

The SENDCo will arrange for students to be tested, following referrals from Subject Teachers, to identify candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an exam. Following results of these tests, the SENDCo will inform individual staff of any access arrangements that individual candidates can be granted during the course and in the exam. The Exams Officer will also be informed so that a list of all arrangements granted can be kept updated at the bottom of the daily staff bulletin.

- A candidate's access arrangements requirement may also be determined in consultation with a Doctor and/or Educational psychologist/Specialist teacher.
- The organisation of access arrangements for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.
- Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies e.g. AQA, Pearson, OCR, WJEC, NCFE etc. is the responsibility of the SENDCo working alongside an administrator. In most cases this will now be via online forms.
- Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Exams Officer.
- Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the Exams Officer with support from the SENDCo.

Special Considerations

Special consideration can be applied after an assessment if there was a reason the learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment.

For example, special consideration could apply to a learner who has temporarily experienced:

- an illness or injury
- some other event outside of their control

And which has had, or is likely to have had, a material effect on that learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment.

Special consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage, nor should its use cause the user of the certificate to be misled regarding a learner's achievements. The learner's result must reflect his / her achievement in the assessment and not necessarily his / her potential ability.

Special consideration, if successful, may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark of the learner. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances and reflect the difficulty faced by the learner.

Overseas students

Managing overseas students is the responsibility of the Curriculum Team Leaders and Exams Officer. A Bilingual dictionary may be allowed during some external assessments, with the exception of English Language, English Literature, French, Geography, History and RE due to the change in the rules for awarding marks for Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar.

Contingency planning

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the Exams Officer with support from the Senior Leadership Team. A separate policy is available with more details.

Private candidates

Managing private candidates (although not normally accepted) is the responsibility of the Exams Officer, following agreement by the Senior Leadership Team.

Estimated grades

Estimated grades

Curriculum Team Leaders are responsible for submitting estimated grades to the Exams Office when requested by the Exams Officer although most Exam Boards no longer request Estimated Grades.

Managing Invigilators

Managing Invigilators

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

Recruitment and securing the necessary Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new Invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams officer. DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre.

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the Exams officer.

Invigilators rates of pay are set by the Senior Leadership Team following LEA guidelines.

Malpractice

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice. A separate policy is available with more details.

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 following request by Exams Officer.

The Assistant Head for Raising Standards, Exams Officer or 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 or sections 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 Curriculum Team Leaders 24hr after the end of an exam or as soon as possible after exam has ended dependent on specific Exam Board instructions.

A relevant subject teacher may be available to read out any subject-specific instructions/settle students before the start of an exam, but this will take place in a separate room to the actual exam.

Candidates

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' 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. At Poltair School, candidates are expected to stay for the full exam time, even if they finish early.

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 a member of staff at all times.

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 Exam 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 forward a completed special consideration form to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the exam.

Internal Non-Exam Assessment (NEA) and appeals

Non-Exam Assessment (NEA) replaces the largely discontinued terms Internal or Controlled assessment and/or coursework

It is the duty of Curriculum Team Leaders to ensure that all internal assessment is 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.

Marks and appeals

Marks for most internally assessed work and estimated grades are provided to the exam office by the Curriculum Team. This will either be in the form of completed marksheets or online submission.

Appeals against internal assessments for most subjects must be made by the 31st May of the year of submission. Pearson BTEC and BCS subjects have separate policies as applicable.

Appeals against internal assessments

The process for managing appeals against internal assessments is detailed in a separate appeals policy.

Results

Results, Review of Results (ROR) and access to scripts (ATS)

Candidates will receive individual result slips on results days, in person at the centre. If they are not collected they will be sent home by first class post.

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 and the Exams Officer.

ROR

RORs may be requested by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in the process of marking. Candidate consent is required before any ROR is requested.

If a result is queried, the Exams Officer, Teaching staff and Assistant Head Assessment will investigate the feasibility of asking for a re-mark at the centre's expense.

When the centre does not support a candidate's or parent's request for an ROR, a candidate may apply to have an enquiry carried out. If a candidate requires this against the advice of subject staff, they will be charged.

ATS

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of papers within published Exam Board deadlines.

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

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

Certificates

Certificates

Early certificates will be copied so that originals can be kept safe within the Exams Office until the students leave at the end of Year 11. Copies will be given to students so that they can include them within their Record of Achievement folders and show them during college interviews. All certificates will be collected and signed either during a calendared evening, or from reception following the event. Invites will be sent during Autumn Term once all certificates have been received.

Certificates can be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, provided they have been authorised to do so.

The centre retains certificates for as long as possible, but for at least 5 years. After this time, certificates may be securely destroyed, but a written record will be held in case of future enquiries.