

PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS - Reviewed September 2023

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 exams officer.

Exam Responsibilities

SLT

Overall responsibility for the school as an exam centre:

- advises on appeals and re-marks
- 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 and internal exams and analysis of exam results:

- advises the SLT, subject and class tutors and other relevant support staff on annual exam timetables and application procedures as set by the various exam boards
- oversees the production and distribution to staff 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 assessments are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines
- collects 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 using the JCQ Access arrangements and special considerations regulations and Guidance relating to candidates who are eligible for adjustments in examinations
- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes
- in cooperation with the bursar accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges
- line manages exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams in line with JCQ requirements
- prepares and presents reports to the SLT showing results achieved in relation to expected grades and comparable data for previous years, indicating where future procedural improvements might be made
- ensures that subject teachers submit candidates' controlled assessment marks, stores copies of controlled assessment mark forms, tracks dispatch and stores returned controlled assessment and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule.

Train invigilators and access arrangement staff to abide by JCQ regulations when conducting exams or providing access arrangement services

- arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the SLT and subject teachers, any appeals/re-mark requests
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams based on entry information provided by subject teachers.

Heads of Department

- guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exam entries or amendments to entries. This includes discussion about levels of entry with pupils – possibly parents too
- involvement in post-results procedures
- accurate completion of controlled assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets
- accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the exams officer

Head of Careers

- Guidance and careers information

Teachers

- Submission of candidate names, levels of entry to heads of department



LEAD (SENCO)

- administration of access arrangements - specifically ensuring that there is adequate evidence on file to support application for access arrangements. The EO will actually make application for access arrangements
- 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

Lead Invigilator/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 their return to the exams office

Conduct exams in accordance with JCQ regulations

Candidates

- confirmation and signing of entries
- understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own

Administrative Staff

- support for the input of data
- posting of exam papers – keeping exam labels and appropriate envelopes. Keeping a record of dispatch

The Statutory Tests and Qualifications Offered

The tests and qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the SLT.

The statutory tests and qualifications offered are GCSE and A levels (along with some Free Standing Qualifications).

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published GCSE Options and A Level Options guides for that 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

It is expected that AS modules will be completed during Year 12 year – although retakes of AS modules and new one year AS courses in Year 13 are possible.

Exam Seasons and Timetables

Exam Seasons

Internal exams are scheduled in November/December, May/June and Mock GCSE exams in January for Year 11 pupils.

External exams are scheduled in May and June.

All internal exams are, whenever possible, held under external exam conditions.

Timetables

The exams officer will circulate the exam timetables for both external and internal exams once these are confirmed.

Entries, Entry Details, Late Entries and Retakes

Entries

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the heads of department and the subject teachers.

A candidate or parent/carers can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal.

The centre does accept entries from external candidates.

Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department via notice board and post.

Late entries are authorised by exams officer.

Retakes

Candidates are allowed 2 retakes per subject in GCSE.

Candidates are allowed 3 retakes per subject in AS.

Candidates are not allowed retakes in A2

Retake decisions will be made in consultation with the candidates, subject teachers, exams officer and the heads of department (see also section on Exam fees).

Exam Fees

GCSE initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

AS initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

A2 initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the departments (unless the late entry is due to an error or change made by the EO). In some circumstances the parents of a student will be liable for late entry fees if a change in circumstances should occur that results from decisions/actions made/taken by the parents/family rather than the school

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 school will pay for one retake – if that retake is undertaken on the advice of the school. Any retake requested by a parent or student that is not supported by the school will be charged to that parent.

If further retakes (i.e. a second or third retake) are required they will be charged to the parent (see also section 4.3: Retakes).

If the Centre Supports an Enquiry after Results – e.g. a Remark for a Candidate on the Edge of the C/D divide – the Fee will be Paid by the Centre.

Candidates or parents/guardians must pay the fee for an enquiry about a result.
(See also section 11.2: Enquiries about results [EARs])

Access to scripts – if requested by subject teachers (with candidate's permission) will be charged to the department

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), Special Needs and Access Arrangements

DDA

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 extends the application of the DDA to general qualifications. All exam centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law.

Special Needs

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the SENCO and the educational psychologist / specialist teacher.

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

Access Arrangements

Making special arrangements for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of the SENCO and the exams officer.

LEAD Centre

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

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the SENCO with the exams officer.

Estimated Grades

The heads of department will submit estimated grades to the exams officer when requested by the exams officer.

Managing Invigilators and Exam Days

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the exams office.

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 is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms.

The 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, levels, equipment etc 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 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 heads of department/faculty at the end of the exam session.

Candidates, Clash Candidates and Special Consideration

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.

For exams longer than one hour, candidates will not be allowed to leave the exam room until at least one hour after the published starting time. They will not be allowed to return.

Clash Candidates

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

Special Consideration

Should a candidate be too ill to sit an exam, suffer bereavement or other trauma or be taken ill during the exam itself, it is the responsibility of parents or guardians of the candidate to alert the centre, or the exam invigilator, to that effect.

Any special consideration claim must be supported by appropriate evidence within five days of the exam, for example 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.

Coursework and Appeals Against Internal Assessments

Coursework/Controlled Assessment

Candidates who have to prepare portfolios should do so by the end of the course or centre-defined date.

Heads of department will ensure all coursework is ready for dispatch at the correct time and the exams officer will keep a record of what has been sent when and to whom.

Marks for all internally assessed work are provided to the exams office by the subject teachers and the heads of department.

Appeals Against Internal Assessments

Finborough School is committed to ensuring that whenever staff assesses students' work for external qualification, this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the specification for the qualification concerned. Assessments are conducted by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills, and who have been trained in this activity. The centre is committed to ensuring that assessment evidence provided by candidates is produced and authenticated according to the requirements of the relevant specifications for each subject. Where a set of work is divided between staff, internal moderation and standardisation will ensure consistency.

If a student feels that the process and administration of the assessment in relation to his/her work was flawed, unfair or failed to meet regulatory requirements, then s/he may make use of this appeals procedure.

A student may appeal for a teacher reassessment of the mark or grade provisionally given and therefore each department conducting centre elements for GCSE and GCE must release provisional marks/grades to candidate at least ten working days prior to the submission date in order to allow time for such an appeal and reassessment to take place.



This procedure is available from the exams office.

Appeals should be made as early as possible, and no later than the end of the first week in May in the year of examination.

Appeals should be made in writing by the candidate's parent/carer to the exams officer (EO), who will investigate the appeal with at least two other members of staff who have not been involved in the internal assessment decision. If the EO was directly involved in the assessment in question, the Head of Senior School or Principal will appoint another member of staff of similar or greater seniority to conduct the investigation. Likewise if the EO is not able to conduct the investigation for some other reason.

The purpose of the appeal will be to decide whether the process used for the internal assessment conformed to the published requirements of the awarding body and the examinations code of practice of the QCA.

The appellant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including any relevant correspondence with the awarding body and any changes made to the procedure relating to internal assessment.

The outcome of the appeal will be made known to the Head of Senior School and Principal and will be logged as a complaint. A written record will be kept and made available to the awarding body upon request. Should the appeal bring any significant irregularity to light, the awarding body will be informed.

If a candidate wishes to request an internal review of the teacher's marking of the centre assessed unit, this request must be made by the student in writing, supported by the parent/guardian, no later than 10 days prior to the final submission of marks deadline.

On receiving a request for a review of marking or grade, the department head will review the piece of work against the criteria applied to assess it. This will be done within five working days of the request being received.

The outcome of the review will be communicated to the student and parents/guardians in writing prior to the final submission of marks deadline. The outcome may be to alter the mark/grade or to leave it as originally assigned.

After work has been assessed internally, it is moderated by the awarding body to ensure consistency between centres. Such moderation frequently changes the marks awarded for internally assessed work. That is outside the control of Finborough School and is not covered by this procedure. If you have concerns about it, please ask the EO for a copy of the appeals procedure of the relevant awarding body.



Finborough School - Risk Management for Controlled Assessments			
Risks and Issues		Remedial Action	Staff
Forward Planning		Action	
Timetabling Assessment schedule clashes with other activities	Plan/establish priorities well ahead at start of academic year	Plan dates in consultation with school calendar – negotiate with other parties	Deputy Head
Too many assessments close together across subjects or lines or learning	for all subjects and school activities Plan assessments so they are spaced over the duration of the course	Space assessments to at least allow candidates some time between assessments	Deputy Head
Accommodation Insufficient space in classrooms for candidates	Once group sizes are known at the start of the year, flag instances where regular classroom space may not be suitable to conduct controlled	Use more than one classroom or multiple sittings where necessary	Subject teachers in consultation with Deputy Head
Insufficient facilities for all candidates	assessment Careful planning ahead and booking of rooms/centre facilities		Subject teachers and department heads
Demands upon ICT facilities	Booking of rooms and prior checking of equipment Relevant HOD to ensure security of any work saved on school network		Subject teachers liaise with head of IT.



Downloading Awarding Body Set Tasks			
IT systems unavailable on day of assessment	Download tasks well ahead of scheduled assessment date in all cases	Book IT equipment well ahead and download tasks before scheduled date of assessment	Subject teachers liaise with head of IT
Teaching staff/assessors unable to access task details	Test secure access rights ahead of schedule every year and every session	Ensure teaching staff/assessors have access rights for correct area of awarding body secure extranet sites ahead of time	Examinations officer
Loss of task details in transmission	Download tasks well ahead of scheduled assessment date	Report loss to awarding body for replacement. Download again	Examinations officer and head of IT
Absent Candidates			
Candidates absent for all or part of assessment (various reasons)	Plan alternative session(s) for candidates		Subject teacher
Candidates have a scheduling clash for exams or assessment	Always consider candidate timetables well ahead and decide on priorities in advance to scheduling clashes	Check before booking the date; provide an alternative date where necessary and consult awarding body procedures for dealing with timetabling clashes N.B retakes of controlled assessment are limited	Subject teacher and deputy head
Control Levels for Task Taking			
Assessment is undertaken under incorrect levels of control (time, resources, supervision and collaboration)	Ensure teaching staff/assessors know what level is applicable and understand what is involved. Circulate relevant documentation and review at HOD meetings	Seek guidance from the awarding body	Subject leader and examinations officer



Supervision			
Student study diary/plan not provided or completed*	Ensure teaching staff/assessors are aware of the need for study diary/plans to be completed early in the course	Ensure candidates start, continue and complete study diary/plans that are signed after every session	Subject leader
Teaching staff/assessors do not understand supervision of controlled assessment is their responsibility	Ensure teaching staff/assessors understand nature of controlled assessments and their role in supervision	Check that teaching staff have full understanding of controlled assessment requirements	Subject leaders and examinations officer
Suitable supervisor has not been arranged for an assessment where teaching staff/assessors are not supervising	A suitable supervisor must be arranged for any controlled assessment where a teacher/assessor is not supervising, in line with the awarding body specification	Assign suitable supervisor	Deputy Head
*not all controlled assessments whether for the Diploma or GCSE's will require the completion of a study diary or study plan			
Task Setting Teaching staff/assessors fail to correctly set tasks	Ensure teaching staff/assessors understand the task setting	Seek guidance from the awarding body	Subject leaders and examinations officer.
Assessments have not been moderated as required in the awarding body specification	arrangements as defined in the awarding body specification** Check specification and plan required moderation appropriately	Seek guidance from the awarding body	Subject leader and examinations officer



Security of Materials			
Assessment tasks not kept secure before assessment	Ensure teaching staff understand importance of task security	Request/obtain different assessment tasks	Subject leaders and examinations officer
Candidates' work not kept secure during or after assessment	Define appropriate level of security in line with awarding body requirements, for each department as necessary	Take materials to secure storage	Subject leader and examinations officer
Insufficient or insecure storage space	Look at provision for suitable storage early in the course	Find alternative spaces	Subject leader

**** All tasks whether set by the awarding body or the centre must be developed in line with the requirements of the specification**



Deadlines Deadlines not met by candidates	Ensure all candidates are briefed on deadlines/penalties for not meeting them	Mark what candidates have produced by deadline and seek guidance from awarding body on further action	Subject leader and examinations officer
Deadlines for marking and/or paperwork not met by teaching staff	Ensure teaching staff/assessors are given clear deadlines (prior to awarding body ones) to complete marking/paperwork so the exams office can process and send off marks ahead of AB deadlines		
Authentication			
	Seek guidance from awarding body subject leaders		

Candidate fails to sign authentication form	Ensure all candidates have authentication forms to sign and attach to work when it is completed before handing in	Find candidate and ensure form is signed	Subject teacher
Teaching staff/assessors fail to complete authentication forms or leave before completing authentication	Ensure teaching staff/assessors understand importance of authentication forms and the requirement of a signature	Return form to staff for signature. Ensure forms are signed as work is marked, not at end of the season	Subject leader
Marking			
Teaching staff/assessors interpret marking descriptions incorrectly	Ensure appropriate training and practicing of marking. Plan for sampling of marking during the practice phase.	Arrange for remarking. Consult awarding body specification for appropriate procedure	Subject leaders
Centre does not run standardising activity as required by the awarding body	Plan against the requirements for standardisation for the awarding body when and how this activity will be conducted	Check with the awarding body whether a later standardisation event can be arranged.	Deputy Head and examinations officer with subject leaders.

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

Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days in person at the centre / by post to their home addresses.

Arrangements for the school to be open on results days are made by the SLT.

The centre aggregates at the end of Year 13 for AS grades, not at the end of Year 12 (excepting those leaving at the end of Year 12 or who are not continuing a subject to A2 level).

Enquiries About Results (EAR)

EARs may be requested by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking or if a remark is considered on the basis of the result being very close to a grade threshold. Candidates and staff need to be mindful that remarks can lead to marks being lowered as well as raised. Any remark can only be carried out with the written and signed agreement of the candidate. In the case of controlled assessment or coursework marks, a request for re-appraisal will require the consent of all the candidates involved in that assessment.

When the centre does not uphold an EAR, a candidate may apply via the school to have an enquiry carried out.

Access to Scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of papers within three days' scrutiny of the results. Papers are now made available online for downloading.

If a result is queried, the exams officer, teaching staff and head of centre will investigate the feasibility of asking for a re-mark at the centre's expense. Candidates must give their consent for any remark or appeal.

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

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

Certificates

Certificates are posted (first class) and collected and signed for.

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

Certificates are not withheld from candidates who owe fees.

EXAM ENTRY LEVELS

GCSE entries in particular involve decisions about what tier of the examination is appropriate to each pupil.

1. The primary responsibility for this is the subject teacher (ST) who should base recommendations upon:
 - a) Mock Results
 - b) Historic Performance
 - c) A forward projection reflecting pupil motivation, extra tuition available and normal progress up to the time of the examination itself.
2. The ST should then make the pupils aware of the proposed entry level and the Grade implications/ limitations.
3. The ST should listen to any pupil representation on the matter and make a written record of any such representation and explain the ST reasoning behind the proposed entry level. This should be an exchange of views but not become an ongoing debate or dialogue.
4. The next step is to refer the matter to the Departmental Head if there is one, and through the DH to the SLT if there is not a meeting of minds between ST and pupil.
5. Having considered the matter the relevant Head of School should outline the reasons for our recommendation in a letter to the parents. This letter should point out the pros and cons and ask the parent to discuss the matter with their child and let us know what is their final decision.
6. Our primary objective is to do what is in our opinion best for the child. If our recommendation is over-ruled by the parent then we will at least have evidence of that. At no times should the schools "league table" or exam statistics ever be used as any part of the justification for our recommendation.
7. A rational procedural approach to this matter should avoid entry level becoming a contentious issue between ST and pupil that could adversely affect the healthy working relationship and/ or pupil motivation.
8. Wherever a decision is made NOT to enter a pupil for an examination it is up to the ST to ensure the pupil knows and understands.
9. Our report clearly states our policy not to enter G/U grade pupils. If the pupil is keen to be entered then follow steps 4, 5, & 6 above.
10. In all cases refer final decisions back to the Examinations officer in good time.

Contingency planning during public examinations

Exam papers and associated materials are normally collected from the safe storage area by the **examination officer** and dispatched by hand to the exam invigilators or those invigilating special access arrangements.

However, the following people are also familiar with the procedures for collecting and distributing examination materials: Stephen Banks, Senior Teacher
Melissa Hammond, Deputy Head Senior School.

These two named people may assist the examinations officer on particularly busy days, or deputise for her when other commitments or ill health prevent the examinations officer from carrying out the duty.

Exam materials and scripts handling policy

On delivery the Examination officer will check, log and securely store all exam materials

Any materials required for release prior to the examination - such as CDs to check sound quality for MFL - will be removed from secure storage, logged, and returned to secure storage by the examinations officer or one both the named persons deputising for her.

On the day of exams the exams officer, or one of the named persons deputising for the examinations officer, will remove the required exam materials from secure storage, fill out the paper handling log and deliver the materials to invigilators. If there are several access arrangement candidates then the exam officer, or those deputising, may open exam materials in the presence of invigilators and take out the required papers or materials to be taken by the invigilator directly to the location in which the access arrangements will take place. Care must be taken to ensure that no other person can see these materials and that they remain at all times in the possession of either the exams officer, her deputies or the invigilator.

At the end of an examination session the invigilator will take the papers/materials and the scripts/answers to the main school office. Here the school secretary will sign the log to receive the papers and scripts. The scripts will be packed with the appropriate attendance registers and kept securely in the main office until collected by registered parcel service. The exam papers will be returned, by the school secretary, to the secure storage area and the log book completed.

Invigilation and emergency evacuation procedures

All invigilators, scribes and readers are trained and are familiar with the latest JCQ 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations' booklet. The school follows this guidance in all aspects of invigilation, access arrangements and the setting out of rooms used for examination purposes.

In the event of an emergency that forces an interruption of an examination, the following procedure will be followed.

1. All papers and scripts will be left on the examination table.
2. The invigilator will note the time of the alarm
3. Candidates will be instructed to exit via the nearest safe fire exit.
4. Candidates will be instructed to remain silent and not to communicate with any other candidate during the duration of the emergency
5. The invigilator will remain with the candidates at all times and enforce the no communication rule.
6. All candidates and staff will go directly to the assigned assembly area for emergencies - the grass area immediately opposite the main school office- and remain there until the Emergency co-ordinator gives further instructions or tells them that it is safe to return
7. Candidates will return, if safe to do so, with the invigilator and resume the exam with the time lost as a result of the alarm added on as additional time.