

## Policy No. 15

### EXAMS & EXAMS CONTINGENCY POLICY

#### Purpose

The purpose of the exams policy is to ensure the:

- planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interests of candidates
- operation of an efficient exams system with clear guidelines for all relevant employees

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the School'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 examinations officer.

Where references are made to JCQ regulations/guidelines, further details can be found at [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk).

#### Exam responsibilities

##### The Headteacher:

- has overall responsibility for the school/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*.

##### Exams officer<sup>1</sup>:

- Manages the administration of external exams
- Advises the senior leadership team, subject and class tutors, and other relevant support employees on annual exams timetables and procedures as set by the various awarding bodies
- Oversees the production and distribution, to all centre employees and candidates, of an annual calendar for all exams in which candidates will be involved and communicates regularly with employees concerning imminent deadlines and events
- ensures that candidates and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the exams timetable that will affect them

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<sup>1</sup> This is the individual to whom the Head of Centre has delegated responsibility for the administration of exams in their centre.

- checks with the teaching team that the necessary coursework and/or controlled assessments are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines
- provides 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 publication *A guide to the special consideration process*
- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes
- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges
- line manages the senior exams invigilator in organising 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

**Heads of department, class teachers and the exams officer are responsible for;**

- guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exams entries or amendments to entries
- 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
- decisions on post-results procedures

**Teachers are responsible for;**

- supplying information on entries, coursework and controlled assessments as required by the head of department and/or exams officer

**The SENCO and Headteacher are responsible for:**

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

**Lead invigilator/invigilators are responsible for;**

- assisting the 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 the School are decided by the Headteacher. The types of qualifications offered are;

- GCSE's
- Entry Level Certificates
- Functional Skills

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the School's published prospectus.

Informing the exams office of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the all teaching employees.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by teachers in consultation with the Headteacher

**Exam timetables**

Once confirmed, the exams officer will circulate the exam timetables at a specified date before each series begins.

**Entries, entry details and late entries**

Candidates or parents/carers can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal.

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

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department/curriculum via email.

Heads of department/curriculum 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 the Headteacher.

GCSE re-sits are allowed.

Functional skills re-sits are allowed.

Re-sit decisions will be made the Headteacher.

### **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 exams officer will publish the deadline for actions well in advance for each exams series.

GCSE entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

Functional skills entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the centre.

### **Equality Legislation**

All exam centre employee 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 to candidates in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies, and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the exams officer.

### **Access Arrangements**

The SENCO will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs and any special arrangements that individual candidates will need during the course and in any assessments/exams.

A candidate's access arrangements requirement is determined by the Educational Psychologist.

Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement is the responsibility of the exams officer.

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

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the exams officer.

### **Estimated grades**

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

### **Managing invigilators**

External employees will not be used to invigilate examinations.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Headteacher.

Securing the necessary Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the Headteacher. DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre.

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

### **Malpractice**

The head of centre in consultation with the exams officer 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 employees are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms, and will be advised of requirements 1-2 weeks in advance.

The Exams officer will start and finish all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Subject teaching employees may be present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates. Any employees present must be in accordance with the rules defined by JCQ concerning who is allowed in the exam room 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 teachers or removed from the exam room before the end of a session.

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

### **Candidates**

The 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 exams officer.

The centre's published rules on acceptable dress 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 Headteacher.

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

The Headteacher is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day.

### **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 Headteacher or exams officer that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within 7 days of the exam.

The exams officer will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body within 14 days of the exam.

### **Internal assessment**

It is the duty of heads of department to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for dispatch at the correct time. The 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 teachers. The exams officer will inform employees 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 results slips either in the post or in person at the centre.

Arrangements for the centre to be open on results days are made by the Headteacher and the provision of the necessary employee resource on results days is the responsibility of the Headteacher.

### **Enquiries about Results (EAR)**

EARs may be requested by centre employees 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 centre.

All decisions on whether to make an application for an EAR will be made by the Headteacher.

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 exams officer following the JCQ guidance.

### **Certificates**

Candidates will receive their certificates either via the Royal Mail postal service, by recorded delivery.

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 4 years.

A new certificate will not be issued by an awarding organisation.

## **Exam Contingency planning**

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at the Phoenix Academy School. By outlining actions/procedures to be followed in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process. Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by information contained in the Joint contingency plan for the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland where it is stated that *“Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.”*

### **Causes of potential disruption to the exam process**

#### **1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)**

##### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including:

- Planning
  - a. annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered
  - b. annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines
  - c. sufficient invigilators not recruited and trained
- Entries
  - a. awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff
  - b. candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment
  - c. awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred
- Pre-exams
  - a. exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
  - b. candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates
  - c. exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions
  - d. internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators



- Exam time
  - a. exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies or required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
  - b. candidates' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies
- Results and post-results
  - a. access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
  - b. the facilitation of the post-results services

#### Centre actions

- Head of Centre to appoint member of administrative staff to take over responsibilities should absence of EO have the potential to affect the meeting of deadlines
- Staff member to work closely with EO to ensure they are up to date with the exam cycle and responsibilities at each point in time. This will be done under the supervision of the Deputy Headteacher responsible for exams and Head of Centre

## **2. SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle**

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the exam cycle not undertaken including:

- Planning
  - a. candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements
  - b. evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated
- Pre-exams
  - a. approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body
  - b. modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
  - c. staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained
- Exam time
  - a. access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Centre actions:

- Head of centre responsible for ensuring position is filled should absence have the potential to disrupt exam preparation
- EO to ensure access arrangements are in place by the Spring term of Year 10 for all students where possible
- EO to plan access arrangements for exam days in advance of the Summer series, in consultation with SENCo

**3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received
- Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in: o candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late o late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies
- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines

Centre actions:

- EO responsible for ensuring deadlines are met for estimated entries. Any omissions to be referred to Head of Centre
- Head of Centre responsible for ensuring the priority for teaching is the examination cohort and staff will be covered in good time, by trained professionals, in all circumstances

**4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams
- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days
- Invigilator absence on the day of an exam

Centre actions:

- EO responsible for recruitment of invigilators in the Autumn term of the summer series. Advance planning required to ensure enough are available for the sittings
- Head of Centre to be informed if recruitment necessary
- Cover supervisor and Examinations Administrator Staff to also receive updated exam invigilator training to ensure back up is available in case of invigilator absence

## **5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice**

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Exams officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning
- Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days
- Main exam venues unavailable due to an expected incident at exam time Centre actions:
- EO responsible for ensuring planning of rooms is completed by the end of the Spring term to identify potential rooming issues
- Alternative venues within the school to be made available by teaching staff in the event of an unexpected incident
- Head of Centre to liaise with EO to ensure no disruption due to room shortages

## **6. Failure of IT systems**

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

- MIS system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS system failure during exams preparation
- MIS system failure at results release time

### Centre actions:

- EO to contact awarding bodies directly to arrange alternative methods of information exchange
- Head of Centre to be informed

## **7. \*Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period**

### \*Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning

### Centre actions:

- Head of Centre responsible for finding alternative venues/methods of learning
- Priority given to exam cohort
- Centre to communicate with parents / carers and students

### **8. \*Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period**

#### \*Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations
- *\*In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant awarding body must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations*

#### Centre actions:

- Open for candidates only if possible
- Use alternative venue, in agreement with awarding organisations
- Offer students the opportunity to sit in the next series

### **9. \*Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open**

#### \*Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

#### Centre actions:

- Procedures for absence outlined to students in examination booklet information given each year
- EO to liaise with student and parents / carers to find alternative venue/advise on next opportunity to sit the examination/apply for special consideration as required

### **10. \* Emergency Evacuation Procedure for Examinations**

The invigilator **MUST** take the following action in an emergency such as a fire alarm or a bomb alert:

- Stop the candidates from writing.
- Collect the attendance register (**in order to ensure all candidates are present.**)
- Evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority.
- Advise candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room.
- Candidates should leave the room in silence.
- Make sure the candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room to make sure there is no discussion about the examination.
- Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted.
- Allow the candidates the full working time set for the examination.
- If there are only a few candidates, consider the possibility of taking candidates (with question papers and scripts) to another place to finish the exam.
- Make a full report of the incident and of the action taken and send it to the relevant awarding body.

**11. \*Disruption in the distribution of examination papers**

\*Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Disruption to the distribution of exam papers to the centre in advance of examinations

Centre actions:

- Communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers
- Arrange with exam boards for alternative means of receiving papers, e.g. electronically or alternative courier

**12.\*Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts**

\*Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts Centre actions:
- EO to communicate with awarding bodies for approval of alternative delivery arrangements

**13. \*Assessment evidence is not available to be marked**

\*Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked

Centre actions:

- EO to communicate with awarding bodies immediately
- Student marks to be submitted based on appropriate evidence
- Candidates offered the opportunity to retake in subsequent series



**14. \*Centre unable to distribute results as normal**

\*Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services

Centre actions:

- EO and Head of Centre to assess alternative arrangements for issuing results with the regulators
- Head of Centre to inform transition schools, students and parents carers about delay as soon as possible

\*information taken from the *Joint contingency plan for the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

Head of Centre.....

Exams Officer.....

Date.....

Date.....

**Appendix A**

	<b>General roles</b>	<b>Access arrangements / special consideration roles</b>	<b>Invigilator / invigilation / malpractice roles</b>
<b>Possible role options for inclusion in policy (select as many as required)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of centre</li> <li>• Vice principal</li> <li>• Deputy head</li> <li>• Heads of faculty</li> <li>• Heads of subject</li> <li>• Heads of department</li> <li>• Heads of curriculum</li> <li>• Head of key stage</li> <li>• Senior leadership team</li> <li>• Exams officer</li> <li>• SENCO</li> <li>• Subject teachers</li> <li>• Governors</li> <li>• Trustees</li> <li>• Candidate</li> <li>• Parent/carers</li> <li>• Other (please specify)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SENCo</li> <li>• ALS manager</li> <li>• Doctor</li> <li>• Pastoral teacher</li> <li>• Educational psychologist</li> <li>• Specialist teacher</li> <li>• Exams officer</li> <li>• Other (please specify)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exams officer</li> <li>• Centre administration</li> <li>• Support staff</li> <li>• Senior leaders</li> <li>• External staff</li> <li>• Agency employees</li> <li>• Head of centre</li> <li>• Senior leadership team</li> <li>• Senior Invigilator</li> <li>• Invigilator</li> <li>• Other (please specify)</li> </ul>