2.0. Compliance

2.11.5 Exams Policy (Exams)

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Version Control Statement

Version	Date	Changes	Reason	Author	Next review
1	Sept 2024		New Policy Statement	Head of Centre	Sept 25
2	Sept 2025		JCQ guidance	Head of Centre	Sept 2026
6					

External Reference Points

- JCQ Regulations
- JCQ ICE Regulations

Related Policies and Documents

Affects all other policy documents. This document should however be read together with the following documents:

- 2.11.4 Computer in Exams Policy
- 2.11.3 Access Arrangements Policy
- 2.11.2 Appeals Policy
- 2.11.0 Applicant Data Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Contents

Purpose

The centre is committed to ensuring that the exams management and administration process is run effectively and efficiently and in compliance with the published JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements. This exam policy will ensure that:

- all aspects of the centre's exam process are documented, supporting the exams contingency plan, and other relevant exams-related policies, procedures and plans are signposted to
- the workforce is well informed and supported
- all centre staff involved in the exams process clearly understand their roles and responsibilities
- all exams and assessments are conducted according to JCQ and awarding body regulations, guidance and instructions, thus always maintaining the integrity and security of the exam/assessment system
- exam candidates understand the exams process and what is expected of them

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure ways of working in the centre are accurately reflected and that exams and assessments are conducted to current JCQ (and awarding body) regulations, instructions and guidance.
This policy will be communicated to all relevant centre staff.

Roles and responsibilities overview

The head of centre is the individual who is accountable to the awarding bodies for ensuring that the centre is always compliant with the published JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements to ensure the security and integrity of the examinations/assessments. This individual must have the authority to deploy the necessary resources to ensure that the centre is always compliant in meeting those published JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements.
Heads of centre must ensure that senior leadership teams and exam office personnel familiarise themselves with the entire contents of JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres booklet.
Heads of centre must familiarise themselves with sections 5.1, 5.3 and 5.4.
Heads of centre must ensure that relevant members of staff respond promptly to requests for information from awarding bodies relating to the administration and conducting of examinations/assessments

The examinations officer is the person appointed by the head of centre to act on behalf of, and be the main point of contact for, the centre in matters relating to the general administration of awarding body examinations and assessments.

The head of centre may not appoint themselves as the examinations officer. A head of centre and an examinations officer are two distinct and separate roles.

Responsibilities

Head of centre responsibilities

The **head of centre** is the individual who is accountable to the awarding bodies for ensuring that the centre is always compliant with the published JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements to ensure the security and integrity of the examinations/assessments. **It is the responsibility of the head of centre to ensure that all staff comply with the** (Instructions for

conducting examinations) **instructions in this booklet**. Failure to do so may constitute malpractice as defined in the JCQ publication *Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures, 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025:* https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice (ICE Introduction).

Head of Centre

Understands the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including:

- General Regulations for Approved Centres (GR)
- Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE)
- Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AA)
- Suspected Malpractice - Policies and Procedures (SM)
- Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments (NEA) (and the instructions for conducting coursework)
- A guide to the special consideration process (SC)
- Ensures the centre has appropriate accommodation to support the size of the cohorts being taught including appropriate accommodation for candidates requiring access arrangements for exams and assessments
- Where/if using a third party to deliver any part of a qualification (including its assessments) at the centre: • maintains oversight of, and responsibility for, the delivery of the qualification in accordance with JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements
- has in place a written agreement, if required with the third party to ensure there is a shared understanding of the arrangement and will manage the risk of failure by the third party to deliver the expected service
- ensures that a copy of the written agreement is available for inspection if requested by the awarding body
- Ensures that relevant members of staff respond promptly to actions raised by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service, understanding that failure to do so could result in penalties (see National Centre Number Register and other information requirements section)
- Ensures that the centre promptly reports any incidents to the relevant awarding body/bodies which might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery such as a cyber-attack
- Ensures other relevant centre staff where they may be involved in the receipt and dispatch of confidential exam materials are briefed on the requirements for maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of the exam materials
- Ensures members of centre staff do not forward emails and letters from awarding body or JCQ personnel without prior consent to third parties or upload such correspondence onto social media sites and applications
- Ensures members of centre staff do not advise parents/candidates to contact awarding bodies/JCQ directly nor provide them with addresses/email addresses of awarding body examining/assessment personnel or JCQ personnel

Recruitment and Training of staff

- Retains a workforce of an appropriate size and competence, including sufficient managerial and other resource, to undertake the delivery of the qualification as required by an awarding body. This includes taking reasonable steps to ensure occupational competence where this is required for the assessment of specific qualifications
- Provides fully qualified teachers to mark non-examination assessments, and/or fully qualified assessors for the verification of centre-assessed components

- Enables the relevant senior leader(s), the examinations officer and the SENCo to receive appropriate training and support in order to facilitate the effective delivery of examinations and assessments within the centre, and ensure compliance with the published JCQ regulations
- Appoints a SENCo/Competent person who will determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities
- Ensures that the ALS lead/SENCo has sufficient time to both manage the access arrangements process within the centre and familiarise him/herself with the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*
- Ensures that the examinations officer has sufficient time to perform their role and familiarise him/herself with relevant awarding body and JCQ documentation.
- Ensures that the examinations officer is line managed and actively supported by a member of the senior leadership team who has a good working knowledge of the examination system

External and Internal governance arrangements

- Has in place a written escalation process should the head of centre, or a member of the senior leadership team with oversight of examination administration, be absent
- Has in place a member of senior leadership team who will provide effective support and supervision to the examinations officer to ensure that the integrity and security of examinations and assessments is maintained throughout an examination series
- Ensures centre staff undertake key tasks within the exams process and meet internal deadlines set by the EO
- Can confirm to an awarding body the external governance arrangements so that the awarding body has confidence in the integrity of centre activities such as the delivery of qualifications and the conducting of examinations and assessment
- Makes sure that any teacher, a teaching assistant, a tutor or a senior member of centre staff who teaches the subject being examined, or a learning Support Assistant who has supported one or more candidates, is not an invigilator during the examination

Delivery of qualifications

- Delivers qualifications, as required by the awarding body, in accordance with relevant equality legislation. This includes but is not limited to ensuring that qualifications are made available to all candidates capable of undertaking them and seeking reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates
- Enables candidates to receive sufficient and up to date laboratory experience, or relevant training where required by the subject concerned

Timetable clash:

If candidates are taking two or more examinations in a session and the total time is three hours or less, the centre may decide the order of the examinations within the timetabled session. Candidates may also be given a supervised break of no more than twenty minutes between papers within a session. This must be conducted within the examination room, under formal examination conditions at all times*. This means that candidates cannot use this time to revise.

*For candidates with approved supervised rest breaks, the rest break may be conducted outside of the examination room, with the candidate being supervised at all times. Where reference is made

to supervised rest breaks, this is a supervised rest break as defined in section 5.1 of the JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

If candidates are taking two or more examinations timetabled for the same session and the total time is more than three hours including approved extra time allowances and/or supervised rest breaks, the centre may conduct one examination in a later or earlier session within the same day. There is no need to complete any paperwork for this. Prior permission from an awarding body is not required. The centre may determine the examination which is to be conducted in a later or earlier session within the same day. Where reference is made to supervised rest breaks, this is a supervised rest break as defined in section 5.1 of the JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

Public Liability

Complies with local health and safety rules which are in place and that the centre is adequately covered for public liability claims

Security of assessment materials

- Takes all reasonable steps to maintain the integrity of the examinations/assessments, including the security of all assessment materials • the location of the centre's secure storage facility in a secure room for the purpose of administering secure examination materials
- the secure room only contains exam-related material
- there are between two and six keyholders only, each keyholder must fully understand their responsibilities as a key holder to the secure storage facility
- access to the secure room and secure storage facility is restricted to the authorised two to six keyholders (the exams officer must be one of the keyholders) and staff and approved by the head of centre are accompanied by a keyholder at all times
- appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that confidential examinations materials are handed over to authorised members of centre staff
- appropriate arrangements are in place for handling secure electronic materials
- the relevant awarding body is immediately informed if the security of question papers or confidential supporting instructions is put at risk
- that when it is permitted to remove question paper packets from secure storage, and to avoid potential breaches of security, arrangements are in place to carefully check and record that the correct question paper packets are opened (If it is ever subsequently identified following this check that the wrong question paper packet has been opened, it will be resealed and the incident reported to the relevant awarding body's Malpractice Investigation Team immediately)
- Makes arrangements to receive, check and store question papers and examination material safely and securely at all times and for as long as required in accordance with the current JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations
- Makes arrangements to receive and issue material received from the awarding bodies to staff and candidates, and notify them of any advice and instructions relevant to the examinations and assessments
- Allows candidates access to relevant pre-release materials on, or as soon as possible after, the date specified by the awarding bodies

Malpractice

Through taking an ethical approach and working proactively to avoid malpractice among students and staff takes all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice (which includes maladministration) before, during and after assessments have taken place

Ensures any person involved in administering, teaching or completing examinations/assessments is advised that where malpractice is suspected, or alleged, personal data about them will be provided to the awarding body (or bodies) whose examinations/assessments are involved. Personal data about them may also be shared with other awarding bodies, the qualifications regulator or professional bodies in accordance with the JCQ publication *Suspected malpractice – Policies and procedures*

Ensures irregularities are investigated and informs the awarding bodies immediately of alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice or maladministration, involving a candidate or a member of staff, by completing the appropriate documentation

As required by an awarding body, ensures evidence of any instances of alleged or suspected malpractice (which includes maladministration) is gathered in accordance with the JCQ publication *Suspected Malpractice - Policies and Procedures*

Policies/Procedures

Malpractice Policy (exams)

- Ensures risks to the exam process are assessed and appropriate risk management processes/contingency plans are in place (that allow the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence where the head of centre, the examinations officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle.
- The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency. All relevant centre staff must be familiar with the examination contingency plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

Exam Contingency Plan

- Ensures an internal appeals procedure is in place and drawn to the attention of candidates and (where relevant) their parents/carers.
- Ensures the centre's Equality and Diversity Policy/Access Arrangements Policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place and details the processes followed in respect of identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements
- Ensures a Complaints Policy covering general complaints regarding the centre's delivery or administration of a qualification is in place and drawn to the attention of candidates and their parents/carers
- Ensures the centre has a safeguarding policy in place, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance, which satisfies current legislative requirements
- Ensures the centre has a data protection policy in place that complies with General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 regulations
- Ensures the centre has a Whistleblowing policy in place
- has documented processes in place relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments- Access Arrangement Policy

Conflicts of interest

- Ensures the relevant awarding bodies are informed before the published deadline for entries for each examination series of any potential conflict of interest where
- a member of centre staff is taking a qualification at the centre which includes internally assessed components/units (taking at the centre as a last resort where unable to find an alternative centre)
- a candidate is being taught and prepared for a qualification which includes internally assessed components/units by a member of centre staff with close relationship to the candidate
- a member of exams office staff has a close relationship to a candidate being entered for exams and assessments at the centre or at another centre
- a member of centre staff is taking a qualification at the centre which does not include internally assessed components/units (noting that being entered by the centre must be as a last resort where unable to find an alternative centre)
- a member of centre staff is taking a qualification at another centre
- Ensures staff are only entered for qualifications through the centre as a last resort where the member of centre staff is unable to find another centre
- Maintains clear records that confirm the measures taken/protocols in place to mitigate any potential risk to the integrity of the qualifications affected by the above

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

- Provides contact details and an address to which all correspondence in connection with the administration of examinations and assessments can be directed which must be the registered address of the centre
- Ensures the National Centre Number Register annual update is responded to by the end of October every year
- Takes responsibility for confirming, on an annual basis, that they are both aware of and adhering to the latest version of the JCQ's regulations. This confirmation is managed as part of the National Centre Number Register (NCNR) annual update by completion of the Head of Centre Declaration
- Understands that this responsibility cannot be delegated to a member of the senior leadership team or the examinations officer, and acknowledges that failure to respond to the NCNR annual update, and/or the head of centre's declaration, will result in:
- the centre status being suspended
- the centre not being able to submit examination entries
- the centre not receiving or being able to access question papers and ultimately, awarding bodies could withdraw their approval of the centre

Centre inspections

- • Co-operates with the JCQ Centre Inspection Service, an awarding body or a regulatory authority when subject to an inspection, an investigation or an unannounced visit, and takes all reasonable steps to comply with all information and documentation made by an awarding body or regulatory authority as is practical
- • Allows all venues used for examinations and assessments, paperwork and secure storage facilities to be open to inspection
- • Understands the JCQ Centre Inspector will identify him/herself with a photo ID card and must be accompanied throughout his/her tour of the premises, including inspection of the centre's secure storage facility

The Exams Manager Responsibilities

Exams officer

- • Understands the contents of annually updated JCQ publications including:

  General regulations for approved centres
  Instructions for conducting examinations
  Suspected Malpractice- Policies and Procedures
  Post-Results Services (PRS)
  A guide to the special consideration process

- Informs the National Centre Number Register Team **immediately** (e-mail address – ncn@ocr.org.uk) if any changes occur after the National Centre Number Register annual update has taken place
- (Where it may be applicable) Informs the National Centre Number Register Team no later than 6 weeks prior to moving to a new address or a re-location of the secure storage facility
- Informs the National Centre Number Register Team immediately of any other changes in circumstances that could affect the centre's status
- Is familiar with the contents of annually updated information from awarding bodies on administrative procedures, key tasks, key dates and deadlines
- Ensures key tasks are undertaken and key dates and deadlines met
- Recruits, trains and deploys a team of internal/external invigilators; appoints lead invigilators, as required and keeps a record of the content of training provided to invigilators for the required period
- Works with the ALS lead/SENCo to ensure invigilators supervising access arrangement candidates and those acting as a facilitator supporting access arrangement candidates fully understand the respective role and what is and what is not permissible in the exam room
- Supports the head of centre in ensuring that awarding bodies are informed of any declaration/conflict of interest involving candidates and relevant members of centre staff before the published deadline for entries for each examination series
- Briefs other relevant centre staff where they may be involved in the receipt and dispatch of confidential exam materials on the requirements for maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of the exam materials
- Ensures the relevant awarding bodies are informed of any **Conflict of Interest** where
- o a member of centre staff is taking a qualification at the centre which includes internally assessed components/units (taking at the centre as a last resort where unable to find an alternative centre)
- o a candidate is being taught and prepared for a qualification which includes internally assessed components/units by a member of centre staff with a personal connection to the candidate

- Maintains records that confirm the measures taken/protocols in place to mitigate any potential risk to the integrity of the qualifications affected by the above, and where
- a member of exams office staff has a personal connection to a candidate being entered for exams and assessments at the centre or at another centre
- a member of centre staff is taking a qualification at the centre which does not include internally assessed components/units (taking at the centre as a last resort where unable to find an alternative centre)]
- a member of centre staff is taking a qualification at another centre
- Ensures other relevant centre staff where they may be involved in the receipt and dispatch of confidential exam materials are briefed on the requirements for maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of the exam materials
- Ensures that the senior leadership team are familiar with the JCQ guidance
- Ensures that the Support Manager has the up-to-date guidance for special arrangements and access and supports her to do their duties effectively
- Ensures that all Invigilators attend training and accurate records are kept, they are briefed on any access arrangements and protocols and to report and issue no matter how insignificant.
- Reception staff are training in receiving and dispatching the exam materials
- Ensures that all the processes for the exam cycle are completed
- Planning
- Entries
- Pre-exams
- Exam Time
- Results and post results
- Sign post staff to relevant JCQ guidance
- Ensures that all access arrangement applications are processed timely
- Ensures that all applications are completed correctly, identity is checked and candidates are register with the correct awarding body and examination
- Liaise with the candidates before during and after the examination,

Exam Materials/Room

Exams officer

Confirms appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that confidential materials are only handed over to those authorised by the head of centre

Ensures access to the secure room is restricted and staff approved by the head of centre are accompanied by a keyholder at all times.

On delivery of papers to reception: -

- The receptionist will keep a log of the papers and time of arrival at the initial point of delivery recording confidential materials received and signed for
- The exams manager will be called to collect the papers immediately from the reception and take the to the secure facility.
- The Exams manager will carefully checks question paper packets when they are removed from the dispatch packing and keeps a log of the check, this is double checked by a second member of the exam team and signed for.
- Ensures the secure storage facility contains only current and live confidential material, and these papers are locked securely as soon as they have been checked
- Ensures that examinations stationery, e.g. answer booklets and formula booklets are stored in the secure room, with spare poster and other stationary that me be required for the examinations process.

- Ensures the integrity and security of any electronic question paper is maintained during the downloading, printing and collating process (ensuring printing is carried out in a secure environment to prevent unauthorised personnel accessing live assessment materials and ensuring only authorised members of centre staff have access to electronic question papers)
- The papers must be left until the exam session and only access for the examination

Pre exam Information to candidates

Once a candidate has applied for an exam it is the responsibility of the Exams Manager to make sure that all documentation has been received and that the invoice is raised timely. The exams manager will email the candidate with the term and conditions and ask the candidate to confirm they have read and understood the conditions.
Once the candidate has paid the exams manager must book the candidates exams and send conformation to the candidate's email, any further correspondence from the awarding body to candidate must also be emailed to ensure tracking is available.

The exam officer is responsible for emailing the candidates 1 week before the exams to give any further centre information this will include: -

- Reminder of their timetable
- Arrival times
- Information and what they can bring to the exam
- Reminder that no food and drink are allowed
- Arriving late for the exam
- Unauthorised items in exam rooms

On the day of the exam

The exams manger will prepare all rooms required and work with the Support manager to ensure that all rooms meet and access requirements. The rooms must follow the guidance, with desks being appropriately spaced and have the appropriate JCQ signage, clock, whiteboard with centre number and start and end time. Along any other resources required for the candidates. If computers are required IT department need to check they are set up according to the policy.

On the arrival of the candidates, the reception staff will send them to the recreation area and ask them to put anything not allowed in the exam room into a locker. A member of the exams team will do a visual check to make sure on unauthorised items are taken to the room.

On arrival at the exam room door the invigilator will do a further check for unauthorised items, before the candidate being seated. They will check the ID against the register and confirm the paper they are there to sit. The ID will be left on the table during the exam so seating plan can be confirmed. If the candidate has forgotten their ID, it will be the Exams Managers responsibility to check the ID that was submitted with the application form and confirm identity through held copy of passport or driving licence. If these are not available a bank card with candidate's name and questioning e.g. DOB and Address details from application form or use other ID on the candidate's person to confirm their identity.

Once all candidates have been seated the standard statement is read to all candidates about what they have to do and the process, and again making sure that no unauthorised activities happen during the exam time.

The exams manager will bring papers to the exam room and both them and the invigilator will sign of the papers. The exam will start, and times noted on the board
The exam manager will

- Ensure that any late arrivals are appropriately processed and complete any documentation to awarding bodies. Late arrivals up to 30 minutes, will be accommodated.
- Brief invigilators on the day of any additional time or other accommodations
- Ensure that sole invigilators have a phone to be able to summon help as required
- They will take last arrives to the exam room and confirm end time with the invigilators
- Ensure the security of the exam papers both to the exam room and back to the safe storage
- Confirm that all paper and scripts have been removed from the exam room and back to the safe storage.
- Process the completed scripts to the awarding bodies using the correct documentation and secure bag system and wait for the post office to come and collect.

Results

It is the exams manager who will access the results on results day and support candidates to get them on time.

- Results could be collected in person on the day or emailed to the email on your application form.
- Certificates can be collected in the following 2 ways:
    - Deliver to a UK address - free of charge: If you prefer to have your certificate delivered to a UK address, the accurate details for delivery are required:
        - Recipient Name
        - Recipient Contact Number
        - Full UK Address
    - Pick up from the Exam Centre - free of charge: You may choose to collect your certificate in person from our exam centre. The indication of your preference and in-advance notification of the collection date and time are required during the regular working hours, i.e. 9:00 am to 5:00 pm (UK Time), Mondays to Fridays (excluding bank holidays).
        - Photo ID Required
        - Or, the written consent for someone else to pick up the certificates on behalf with his/her photo ID required

Certificate will be held for 1 year at the centre, the candidate will receive a reminder email from the exams manager after month 3. If they have not been collected they will be returned to the awarding organisation, details for returned certificates will be held by the exams manager.

Candidates should be given access to the complaints and appeals policy if they are not happy with, the results they have received. They may be given access to the grade boundaries if required. Any appeals should follow the appeals process laid down in the policy.