



UTC South Durham Exams Policy



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1. Policy aims

The purpose of this exams policy is:

- to ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interests of candidates.
- to ensure the operation of an efficient exams 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 exams policy will be reviewed every year.

The exams policy will be reviewed by the senior leadership team and exams officer.

Where references are made to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations/guidelines, further details can be found at www.jcq.org.uk.

2. Exam responsibilities

The Principal (Head of Centre):

- has overall responsibility for the college as an exams centre and advises on appeals and re-marks.
- is responsible for reporting all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice. Further guidance on suspected malpractice can be found in the JCQ document: **Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments**.

Exams officer (EO)¹:

- manages the administration of internal exams and external exams
- advises the senior leadership team, subject and class tutors, and other relevant support staff on annual exams timetables and procedures as set by the various awarding bodies.
- oversees the production and distribution, to all centre 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 exams timetable that will affect them.
- checks with teaching staff 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 Senior Leadership Team (SLT), any post results service requests.

Faculty Directors (FDs) 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.

¹ This is the individual to whom the Principal has delegated responsibility for the administration of exams in their centre.

Teachers are responsible for:

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

The **special educational needs coordinator (SENDCo)** is 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 materials 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:

- 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.

3. Qualifications offered

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Principal in consultation with the Trustees.

The types of qualifications offered are GCE, GCSE, BTEC, EAL, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals and T levels.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus or similar documents for that year. If there is to be a change of specification for the next year, the exams office must be informed by May of the previous academic year.

Informing the exams office of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the relevant Faculty Director.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by the subject leader in consultation with the Faculty Director.

4. Exam series

Internal exams (mock exams) and assessments are scheduled as per the annual calendar.

External exams and assessments are scheduled in November (resits) and the Summer Series.

Internal exams are held under external exam conditions.

The Vice Principal for Curriculum and Standards decides which exam series are used in the centre.

The centre does not offer assessments on an on-demand basis.

5. Exam timetables

Once confirmed, the exams officer will circulate the exam timetables for internal and external exams at a specified date before each series begins, at least 8 weeks in advance.

6. Entries, entry details and late entries

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

The centre does not usually accept entries from private candidates.

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

Entry deadlines are circulated to Faculty Directors via email.

Faculty Directors will provide estimated entry information to the exams officer to meet JCQ and awarding body deadlines as identified in the annual calendar.

Entries and amendments made after an awarding organisation's deadline (i.e. late) require the authorisation, in writing, of the Vice Principal for Curriculum and Standards.

Some students will need to re-sit exams as part of their post-16 study programmes and they will be informed by staff e.g. GCSE English language or maths. Currently, modular A level exams are being phased out, some students may have an opportunity to re-sit a module during Year 13 if the exam board allows and the SLT / subject teacher recommended this course of action to improve the overall final grade.

Some new specifications of vocational exams, at both Level 2 and level 3, may also require students to re-sit the external examinations; teachers will give advice as required.

It is unusual, but there may be a circumstance when a post-16 student may need to re-sit an entire KS5 year – this strategy will be evaluated on a case- by-case basis after the SLT and Head of Sixth Form have considered the individual circumstances and programme of study, in consultation with teachers.

All final re-sit decisions will be made by Principal in consultation with the SLT.

7. 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 in the annual calendar.

GCSE entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

AS entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

A level entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

Fee reimbursements are sought from candidates:

- if they fail to sit an exam
- if they do not meet the necessary coursework requirements without medical evidence or evidence of other mitigating circumstances
- Re-sit fees are paid by the centre if the SLT makes that decision or by the candidate if appropriate.

8. Equality Legislation

All exam centre staff 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 they provide to candidates in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies, and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the Principal.

9. Access arrangements

The SENDCo 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.

Centre staff may refer students to the SENDCo for assessment before the end of October if they become aware of any student who may need access arrangements.

A candidate's access arrangements requirement is determined by the SENDCo

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

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the SENDCo supported by the EO.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the EO, with support from the Vice Principal.

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

10. Overseas candidates

Managing overseas candidates is the responsibility of the EO should this need arise.

11. Contingency planning

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the SLT.

Contingency plans are detailed fully in a separate document and cover the following scenarios:

- The Exams Officer becomes ill or is absent
- A member of teaching staff is absent for a prolonged period of time when Non-examined assessments (NEAs) are due to be completed
- Disruption to the school/closure of school
- Exam rooms shortage; lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice.
- The UTC is the victim of a Cyber Attack.
- Shortage of trained invigilators.
- Failure of IT Systems
- A student is absent.
- Disruption to distribution of papers.
- Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

These plans are in line with the guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and the awarding organisations.

12. Private candidates

It is not anticipated that there be any private candidates.

13. Estimated grades

Faculty Directors and subject teachers are responsible for submitting signed lists of estimated grades to the EO by the date on the annual calendar.

14. Managing invigilators

Normally, external staff will be used to invigilate examinations. However internal staff can be deployed if necessary.

These invigilators will be used for internal exams and/or external exams.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the EO.

Securing the necessary Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the Business Manager.

DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the Principal.

Invigilators are recruited, timetabled, trained, and briefed by the EO.

15. Malpractice

The Principal in consultation with the EO and invigilators is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice, including the suspected use of artificial intelligence (AI) such as ChatGTP. AI is changing and evolving at a rapid pace. The most recent guidance from JCQ (April 2025) can be found as an appendix to this policy.

16. 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 staff is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms, and will be advised of requirements in advance.

The SLT/EO or lead invigilator will start and finish all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Subject staff may be present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates. Any staff 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. Papers will be distributed to faculty directors in accordance with JCQ's recommendations and no earlier than 24 hours after candidates have completed them.

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

17. 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 Vice Principal.

The centre's published rules on acceptable dress and behaviour will 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 and may be kept safe in the locker provided to them.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates are expected to stay for the full exam time and can only leave at the discretion of the Principal/EO.

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

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

18. Clash candidates

The Vice Principal for Curriculum and Standards will be responsible as necessary for supervising escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight stays.

19. Candidates who arrive late

A candidate who arrives late must report to reception where the EO will take the candidate into the exam room. The candidate will be allowed the full time for the examination, if adequate supervision arrangements are available.

A candidate who is very late (arrives more than one hour after the published starting time which last one hour or more) will be allowed access to the exam in the same way as a late candidate. Form **JCQ/VLA (Very Late Admission) Report on candidate admitted very late to examination** must be completed by the EO.

20. 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 EO to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within 2 days of the exam.

The exams officer will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body within 3 days of the exam.

21. Internal assessment

It is the duty of FD's to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for dispatch at the correct time. The EO 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 FD. The EO will inform staff 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.

22. Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days, from UTC South Durham.

The results slip will be in the form of a centre produced document. Arrangements for the centre to be open on results days are made by the SLT. The provision of the necessary staff on results days is the responsibility of the SLT.

23. Enquiries about Results (EAR)

EARs may be requested by centre staff or by 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 if instigated by an FD or the SLT or student if unsupported by the FD.

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

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 EO, following the JCQ guidance.

24. Access to Scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of written exam papers within 7 days of the receipt of results.

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

An EAR cannot be applied for once an original script has been returned. The cost of EARs will be paid by the centre if instigated by SLT or the candidate at their request.

Processing of requests for ATS will be the responsibility of the EO.

25. Certificates

Candidates will receive their certificates

- in person and signed for at the centre.
- by post to their home address (candidates to provide a self-addressed envelope).
- collected and signed for 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 1 year.

A new certificate will not be issued by an awarding organisation. A transcript of results may be issued if a candidate agrees to pay the costs incurred.