



Examinations Policy

Designated Teacher: Deputy Headteacher

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“Educating for Life”

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:-

- To ensure the planning and management of exams are 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.
- To ensure that all aspects of the examination systems, including internal assessments and appeals, are conducted in accordance with the exam board regulations.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the exam processes at St John Fisher to read, understand and implement this policy.

The exam policy will be reviewed every three years and will be reviewed by the Exams Officer in consultation with the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Heads of Faculty/Subject.

2. Exam Responsibilities

The Exams Officer manages the administration of public exams including:-

- Advising SLT, Heads of Faculty/Subject, teaching staff and other relevant staff on annual exam timetables and application procedures as set by the various awarding bodies.
- Overseeing the production and distribution to staff and candidates of an annual calendar for all exams in which candidates will be involved and communicating regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events.
- Ensuring that candidates and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the exam timetable that will affect them.
- Consulting with Heads of Faculty/Subject to ensure that necessary internal assessments are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
- Providing and confirming detailed data on estimated entries by the exam board deadlines.
- Receiving, checking and storing securely all exam materials.
- Despatching of completed scripts and exam materials to the exam boards.
- Administering access arrangements and making applications for special consideration using the latest JCQ publications Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration.
- Identifying and managing exam timetable clashes.
- Accounting for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges.
- Line managing the team of invigilators in organising the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of exam invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams.
- Submitting candidates' coursework marks, on behalf of Heads of Faculty/Subjects, as required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule only if the subject requires these sent electronically instead of in paper form.
- Arranging for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and liaising with exam boards on issues regarding appeals/remark requests.
- Maintaining systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.
- Liaising with the Cover Supervisor to make necessary room bookings.

3. Heads of Faculty/Subject Responsibilities:

- Ensure the students are following programmes of study that prepare them for the examinations and other assessments to be taken during and at the end of the course.
- Ensuring that all candidates are prepared for and entered for the correct units and tiers during each exam series.
- Ensuring that estimated grades and internal assessment marks are completed on schedule in accordance with exam board regulations.

- Updating the Exams Officer of changes in the curriculum affecting exam entries to enable the Exams Office to process “Intention to Enter” and “Estimated Entry” submissions where appropriate.
- Ensuring that all internal assessments are conducted in accordance with exam board regulations.
- Liaising with the Cover Supervisor and Exams Officer for rooming and invigilation requirements for internal assessments when appropriate.

4. Attainment Co-ordinators (Heads of Year)

- Advising the Exams Officer of any relevant changes in candidate details affecting exam entries including new students and leavers.
- Advising the Exams Officer of candidates potentially eligible for special consideration.
- Being present at the beginning of external exams when possible to help identify candidates in accordance with exam board regulations.
- Checking on absentees during external exams and co-ordinating absences with the Attendance Officer and informing Exams Officer of any developments/problems which arise out of the process. In the event of the Attainment Co-ordinator being unavailable this will be carried out by the Exams Officer.

5. Teachers’ Responsibilities:

- Identification to Head of Inclusion of potential SEN access arrangements for Learning Support to follow up and investigate.
- Understanding and full adherence to internal assessment regulations including arrangements for controlled assessments, and ensuring that each candidate signs a declaration that authenticates the internal assessment as their own.
- Identifying to Data Office candidate changes in sets/subjects.
- Being familiar with the contents of the relevant specification(s).
- Being familiar with procedures on requesting remarks and copies of scripts.

6. Learning Support/Head of Inclusion Responsibilities:

- Identification and testing of candidates and subsequent identification of requirements for special access arrangements in exams.
- Providing Exams Officer with necessary evidence to enable an application for special access arrangements to be made.
- 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.

7. Invigilators’ Responsibilities:

- Understanding the external regulations and internal procedures pertaining to the conduct of external exams as set out in the SJF Invigilators Handbook.

8. Parents' & Candidates' Responsibilities:

- Confirmation and signing of exam entries.
- Understanding internal assessment regulations and candidates signing a declaration that authenticates the internal assessment as their own.
- Knowing when they have exams (date and time).
- Ensuring that the correct equipment is brought to each exam.
- Abiding by the relevant JCQ regulations as set out in the SJF Guidance for Students & Parents on GCSE Examinations booklet.

9. Qualifications:

The qualifications offered at SJF are decided by the SLT in conjunction with Heads of Faculty/Subject. The qualifications offered are: ELC, GCE, GCSE, BTEC, ASDAN CoPE, NFER Radio Production and DIDA. The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the SJF published prospectus for that year.

Informing the Exams Officer of changes to a syllabus is the responsibility of Heads of Faculty/Subject. Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by the Attainment Co-ordinators in consultation with Learning Support, Heads of Faculty/Subject and teaching staff.

10. Exam Series and Timetables:

10.1 Exam Series

Internal exams are scheduled as appropriate and held under external exam conditions.

External exams are scheduled in November, January, March, May and June of Year 11 (2012/13).

Internal assessments are scheduled at the discretion of Heads of Faculty/Subject to meet appropriate exam board deadlines.

10.2 Timetable

Once the entries are confirmed, the Exams Officer will circulate the generic exam timetable for each external exam series on the SJF intranet and internet.

Individual timetables will be issued to candidates following entries being sent to the exam boards. The Exams Officer will not give actual dates to parents or candidates in advance.

11. Entries, Entry Details and Late Entries

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the Heads of Faculty/Subject in consultation with teaching staff.

Parents/guardians may request a subject entry change of level or withdrawal. However, the final decision rests with Heads of Faculty/Subject. Candidates may be withdrawn from a qualification if they have not satisfied attendance and internal assessment requirements.

Entry deadlines are circulated to Head of Faculty/Subject via e-mail and internal post trays. Late entries are authorized by the Exams Officer in consultation with Heads of Faculty/Subject.

Resits are allowed in accordance with the rules set out in each specification. Resit decisions will be made in consultation with candidates, Heads of Faculty/Subject and teaching staff.

12. Exam Fees

External exam entry fees are paid by SJF. Late entry or amendment fees are paid by SJF or the candidate depending on the circumstances.

Candidates or Faculties/Subjects 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.

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

GCSE resit fees are paid for by students unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Candidates must pay the fee for an enquiry about a result or to request a remark or copy/original of exam script, unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed by the school.

13. The Equalities Act 2010, Special Educational Needs and Access Arrangements

- 13.1 The Equalities Act 2010
SJF staff must ensure that they are aware of the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and Learning Support to ensure that SJF meets the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 by ensuring that SJF is accessible and improves candidate experience.

13.2 Access Arrangements

Learning Support will inform teaching staff of candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a qualification leading to an assessment. The Head of Inclusion can then inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates can be granted during the course and in exams.

A candidate's access arrangements requirement is determined by Learning Support.

Making access arrangements for candidates taking exams is the responsibility of both Learning Support and the Exams Officer. Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the Exams Office.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Exams Office in consultation with Learning Support and the Cover Supervisor.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates (eg readers/scribes etc) will be organised by the Exams Office and Learning Support.

The Equalities Act 2010 applies to all general qualifications. All exam centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law.

14. **Contingency Planning**

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of SLT in consultation with the Exams Officer.

15. **Private Candidates**

St John Fisher only accepts private candidates in exceptional circumstances.

16. **Estimated Grades**

Heads of Faculty/Subject are responsible for submitting estimated grades to the Exams Officer as requested.

17. **Managing Invigilators**

External staff are employed on a casual basis and used to invigilate examinations.

Invigilators are allocated, briefed and trained by the Exams Officer.

These invigilators will be used for internal exams for the Year 10/11 mocks (as appropriate) and all external exams.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

CRB fees for securing such clearance are paid by SJF and invigilator rates of pay are set by the LEA.

18. Malpractice

The Exams Officer is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice in accordance with JCQ regulations and reporting findings to the Headteacher.

19. Exam Days

Site & Facilities are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms.

The Exams Officer will book all exam rooms after liaison with Site Facilities and the Cover Supervisor and make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials and equipment available for the invigilators.

In practical exams teaching staff may be on hand in case of any technical difficulties.

Exam papers must not be read by teaching staff or removed from the exam room before the end of a session. Papers will be distributed to Heads of Faculty/Subject at the end of the exam session. NB: if there is a clash with candidates taking the exam later than published, then the papers will not be released until after they have taken the exam.

20. Candidates, Clash Candidates and Special Consideration

20.1 Candidates

The published rules on acceptable dress, behavior and candidates' use of mobile phones and other electronic devices apply at all times.

Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and SJF accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

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 Exams Officer.

Candidates may only leave the exam room for a genuine purpose and are required to return immediately to the exam room. They must be accompanied by a member of staff at all times.

The Exams Officer is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day or subsequently.

20.2 Clash Candidates

The Exams Officer will be responsible as necessary for supervising escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight stays.

20.3 Special Consideration

Should a candidate be ill before an exam, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be taken ill during the exam itself or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert SJF, the Exams Officer or the invigilator to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within three days of the exam, for example by providing a letter from the candidate's doctor.

The Exams Officer will then make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the exam.

21 Internal Assessment and Appeals

In accordance with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Code of Practice, SJF must:-

- Have in place a published appeals procedure relating to internal assessment decisions.
- Make this document available and accessible to students.

The school will ensure that:

- 21.1 Internal assessments submitted by students have been authenticated as original work according to the guidance issued by the JCQ.
- 21.2 Staff are fully aware of the guidelines issued by JCQ and individual examination boards in relation to the procedures for the undertaking of internal assessments.
- 21.3 Students are given written guidance about the regulations issued by awarding bodies on the production of internal assessment, the internal deadlines for submission and consequences of not meeting deadlines as well as information about the appeals procedure.

- 21.4 Departments give students adequate and appropriate time to produce the internal assessment.
- 21.5 Internal assessments are conducted by staff who have an appropriate level of knowledge, understanding and skill.
- 21.6 The consistency of the internal assessment is secured through the departmental mark scheme or marking criteria.
- 21.7 Each type of internal assessment has a fit-for-purpose internal standardisation process.
- 21.8 The staff responsible for internal standardisation of a subject will attend required training sessions given by the relevant awarding body.

22 **Internal Assessment Procedure**

- 22.1 Internal assessment is defined as any piece of written or practical work which is marked by SJF staff or an external examiner and which contributes to a public qualification. This includes coursework and controlled assessments.
- 22.2 Staff must adhere to guidelines issued by JCQ and individual exam board.
- 22.3 Students must read and understand fully the relevant JCQ Notices to Candidates.
- 22.4 Irregularities in the internal assessment discovered prior to the student signing a declaration of authentication will not be reported to the awarding body, but dealt with as an internal disciplinary matter. The work will not gain any credit.
- 22.5 Irregularities in the internal assessment discovered after the signing of the declaration of authentication by the student may be reported to the awarding body which may lead to disqualification from the subject.
- 22.6 Internal assessment must be handed in by the agreed published deadline.
- 22.7 All students are given the same and sufficient time to complete the internal assessment – see point 13 re exceptions.
- 22.8 Students are given clear instructions as to the time and place for handing in the internal assessment.
- 22.9 The internal assessment must be handed in by the student to the designated teacher and not given to another student to hand in.

- 22.10 If the student is absent from school on the deadline day, a parent/carer or friend must bring the work to school to be handed in to meet the deadline.
- 22.11 If it is impossible to deliver the work to school, the Head of Subject must be contacted by phone on the deadline day for advice.
- 22.12 If the internal assessment has not been completed by the deadline, the incomplete work must be handed in on the deadline day to receive a mark. There will be no further opportunity to complete this work for an improved mark.
- 22.13 Normally there will be no extension of an internal assessment deadline if a student is absent for a day or two during the period that the internal assessment is being completed.
- 22.14 In exceptional circumstances e.g. a school exchange, play, rehearsals or a prolonged absence covered by a medical certificate, an extension may be requested, but this must be negotiated with the Head of Subject. The extension should be confirmed in writing to the student and parent.
- 22.15 It is the duty of Heads of Faculty/Subject to ensure that all internal assessments are ready for dispatch at the correct time. Faculties/Subjects must keep a record of each dispatch including the recipient details and the date and time sent. All dispatches must be sent with a Certificate of Postage arranged through Reception/Main Office.

23. **Appeals Procedure**

- 23.1 The grounds for appeal relate only to the procedures used in arriving at internal assessment decisions or the production of externally assessed work and do not apply to the judgement themselves.
- 23.2 The appeal must be made in writing to the Examinations Officer by 31 May of the year that the internal assessment was assessed. The grounds for the appeal must be clearly stated. The student can be supported in the presentation of their case by a parent/carer/friend.
- 23.3 The Headteacher will nominate a member of staff, normally the Examinations Officer (EO), to lead the enquiry provided that the EO has played no part in the original assessment process. An experienced Head of Faculty/Subject to act as an independent member will also be on the panel.
- 23.4 The panel will examine the evidence for the procedures used in the assessment, decide upon their appropriateness and whether the procedures have been properly followed, as required by the awarding body concerned.

- 23.5 The enquiry will be completed within 6 weeks of receipt of the appeal and the panel's findings will be formally reported back to the student/parent/carer within 8 weeks of receipt of the appeal.
- 23.6 Records of the request for the appeal, the evidence, deliberations of the panel and the result will be kept by the Examinations Officer and made available to the awarding body if required.

24. **Results**

- 24.1 Results, enquiries about results (EARs) and access to scripts (ATS). Candidates will receive individual results slips on results day via their Form Tutors. Summer results will be handed to students in person at SJF and students not able to be in school that day will receive their results by post the following day.

Arrangements for SJF to be open on results days are made by the Headteacher.

24.2 **EARS**

Where a Head of Faculty/Subject has concerns about a cohort and believes there has been an error in marking, they should initially discuss the matter with Mr Bryant, Deputy Headteacher and then EARs may be requested through the Exams Officer in accordance with the JCQ regulations on Post-Results Services. The EARs will be funded by SJF if you have Mr Bryant's approval, but please note the Head of Faculty/Subject must obtain the candidates' written consent before any EAR is requested.

If a result is queried, a candidate may request an EAR at their own expense through the Exams Officer in accordance with the JCQ regulations on Post Results Services. If the unit grade or overall GCSE grade increases then the candidate will be reimbursed the fee.

24.3 **ATS**

After the release of results, candidates may request, through the Exams Officer, the return of papers up to the deadline set by the exam boards.

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

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

25. **Certificates and Transcripts**

25.1 **Certificates**

These are presented in person and a signature collected.

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

Candidates can request that their certificates be posted to them subject to receipt of £2.50 to cover the Recorded Delivery charge.

In accordance with Exam Board regulations, SJF are only obliged to retain unclaimed student certificates for a period of 12 months from the date of receipt. These can then be returned to the Exam Board or destroyed.

25.2 **Transcripts**

SJF will provide a transcript of results to a candidate on request.

Appendix 1

Information required by the appeals panel (to be provided by Head of Subject)

1. Departmental minutes from the first meeting of the school year to indicate that the school procedure for internal assessments was discussed and given out to new and existing members of the department. Absentees were given their copy.
2. The mark scheme or marking criteria for the internal assessment provided by the awarding body.
3. The departmental mark scheme or marking criteria given to the teachers for marking the internal assessment if this differs from that of the awarding body.
4. Dates when the internal assessment was set and to be handed in for that student.
5. Evidence that all teaching groups have been given the same length of time.
6. The departmental policy for students who were absent when the internal assessment was set or were absent for part of the period during which the internal assessment was being carried out.
7. Dates when the internal assessment was marked by the teachers.
8. The name of the teacher in charge of the internal standardisation.
9. Dates when members of the department attended the last awarding body standardisation meeting.
10. Evidence that the information from this meeting was disseminated to the department.
11. Date(s) for department standardisation meeting and teacher attendance.
12. If the teacher assessing the internal assessment was absent from the departmental standardisation meeting, what was done to ensure that the information was given to them.
13. Copy of internal assessment marks sent to the awarding body.

In the event of an appeal application being received, the relevant Head of Subject would only have a short time to provide this information for the appeal panel. Appeals have to be made by 31 May in the year that the work was assessed. The evidence above may also be requested by an awarding body inspector visiting the school or the awarding body if a parent makes a further appeal against the panel's decision.