

EXAMS POLICY

RATIONALE

Public examinations are the main tool for measuring the success of a school and its students both in qualitative and value added terms. In addition other internally set and marked examinations take place at other stages in a student's progress through the school in order to both prepare for public examinations and check student learning.

We have a moral duty to ensure students do as well as they can in exams to ensure they can progress to the next stage of education or employment.

At key stage 4 and post-16

- All students should be entered for appropriate qualifications in all the subjects they are studying.
- If a student's entry in any subject is to be withdrawn there must be an initial concern form completed by the subject teacher in consultation with the subject leader. The student, Head of House, parents/carers, the head of key stage, the subject leader, subject teacher and if necessary Connexions and the head of careers should be involved before a final decision is made.
- All students will be monitored carefully throughout their time at the school, concerns notified to the head of key stage and Head of House using concern forms as soon as they arise.
- Any proposed major changes to the examination board, style or timing of examinations, eg modular courses, must be discussed and approved by the SLT based on information given by the relevant subject leader.
- Amendment of entries which incur a financial penalty from the examination boards will be charged to subjects if they arise from that subject's error or omission.
- Changes of tier, withdrawals made by the proper procedures and alterations arising from administrative processes will not be charged to subjects.

The school may impose a charge equal to the financial charges levied by examination boards on:

- Students whose entries are withdrawn because of lack of coursework.
- Students who make a decision to sit or not to sit an examination after the late entry/withdrawal deadline.
- If Students fail to attend an examination and do not produce medical evidence or evidence of other mitigating circumstances. This will be communicated in writing to students and parents/carers at the start of GCSE and post 16 courses.

At post-16

- It is expected that AS modules will be completed during year 12
- Under normal circumstances, students will pay for all re-sits.
- Re-sit decisions will be made in consultation with the student, subject teacher and subject leader, head of post-16 and examinations officer.
- After the release of results, subject teachers may request the return of papers or a re-mark at the school's expense. If a student requires this service against the judgment of the subject teacher, he/she will be charged.

Internal Examination Appeals Procedures

The school is committed to ensuring that whenever its staff assess students' work for external qualification, this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the specification for the qualification concerned. Assessments should be conducted by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills. Students' work should be produced and authenticated according to the requirements of the examination board. Where a set of work is divided between staff, consistency should be assured by internal moderation and standardisation. If students believe that this may not have happened in relation to his/her work, he/she may make use of this appeals procedure. **Note that appeals may only be made against the process that led to the assessment and not against the mark or grade.**

The existence of this procedure is made known to students by reference in a letter and at the start of examinations courses and in this examinations policy, which is available for inspection on request.

1. Appeals should be made as soon as possible, and must be made at least two weeks before the end of the last externally assessed paper in the examinations series.
2. Appeals should be made in writing to the examinations officer who will investigate the appeal. If the examinations officer was directly involved in the assessment in question, he/she will appoint another member of staff of similar or greater seniority to conduct the investigation. Likewise if the examination officer is not able to conduct the investigation for any other reason.

3. The person conducting the investigation will decide whether the process used for the internal assessment conformed with the requirements of the awarding body and examination code of practice of the QCA. This will be done before the end of the series.
4. The result of the appeal will be made known in writing to the parties concerned, together with any correspondence with the awarding body, any changes made to the assessment of the piece of work in question and any changes made for the future.
5. A written record of the appeal will be kept and made available to the awarding body at their request. Should the appeal bring any significant irregularity to light, the awarding body will be informed.

After work has been assessed internally it is moderated by the awarding body to ensure consistency between centres. **Such moderation frequently changes the marks awarded for internally assessed work. That is outside the control of the school and is not covered by these procedures.** Details of the appeals procedure for the relevant awarding body are available from the examination officer.

GCSE and A level Results

- When results are published examination staff will distribute results, be available to give guidance to students and prepare data for publication and monitoring purposes.
- This service will be supported by the Data Manager, Exams Assistant and other members of support staff.

Internal examinations

- The exact nature of summative assessment in each subject will be determined ultimately by the subject leader within the rationale and purposes of this policy and other related policies.
- The examinations officer will co-ordinate end of year written examinations in KS3 to ensure an even distribution of testing across the allotted time span.
- The cost and printing of internal examination papers is the responsibility of subject areas.

ACCOUNTABILITY OF DEPARTMENTS

1. One person should be nominated from each department to take responsibility for exam entries/withdrawals etc.
2. Exam withdrawals need to be approved by the Deputy Head responsible for exams (PM) who will advise the Data Manager and Exams Assistant.

Entries

All candidates will be entered by the due date set by the board. It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to ensure that the correct lists are issued to the Exam Assistant. A decision not to enter a student has to be approved by the Deputy Head responsible for Exams (PM). Heads of House should also be consulted and kept informed. If it is agreed that a student will not be entered or will be withdrawn it is the responsibility of the Head of Department to inform parents in writing of the decision. If the student is withdrawn

Amendments/ Change of tier

Withdrawals/amendments will be accepted by the Exam Officer (if approved) up to the date set by the board only if it's put in writing. Any late withdrawals/entries except in exceptional circumstances will be charged to the department.

External exams

The Data Manager is responsible for the organisation and conduct of all external exams.

1. Final confirmation of entry numbers and levels will be made with the department.
2. All exam papers will be counted in by the Data Manager and Exam Assistant and locked away under secure conditions.
3. All sealed exam papers will be checked by the Exam Officer.
4. No exam papers can be removed from the exam room before the end of a session.
5. All exams will be conducted according to the rules laid down by exam boards and within the start and finish times determined by the board.
6. Any misconduct or irregularity must be reported to the Data Manager/Exams Assistant immediately, who will then inform the exam board concerned.
7. In the absence of the Exam Officer at the end of any exam, papers will be collected and taken to the front office and given into the care of the exam admin assistant.
8. Students will not be allowed to leave an exam unless their exam paper has been picked up and secured by an invigilator.

Coursework

Coursework must be kept securely. Copies of all coursework results must be put on the electronic markbook so they are backed up in school.

It is the responsibility of each department to ensure all coursework is despatched at the correct time. Coursework will be despatched using the same method as for exam papers. Copies will be taken of audio or video coursework (arranged by the Head of Department) and kept in school. The department must have a copy of the marks awarded in case coursework goes missing in the post. All coursework must be securely kept and not returned to students for 1 year unless regulations allow work to be returned.

Misconduct

This should be reported to the Data Manager in the first instance, or in her absence the Exams Assistant or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, who will decide what action to take.

Invigilation

Conduct of invigilators

1. The Exams Assistant will ensure that each exam session will have a designated invigilator in charge, whose role will be to deploy invigilators and oversee conduct of each.
2. Senior invigilator of SIE will check attendance according to seating plan.
3. Invigilators must not take any work into the exam room but give full attention to the conduct of the examination.

Results

1. Results will be available for collection on the day notified by the exam boards only.
2. Subjects should check for the possibility of a re-mark/re-grade by 2nd September and provide the Exams Assistant with the details. All re-mark requests must be approved by the Deputy Head or Headteacher unless the student is paying for it.
3. If a result is queried the Exams Assistant will investigate the feasibility of asking for a re-mark.
4. Results will not be given to students or parents over the phone, emailed or faxed.

Special needs

It is the responsibility of the SENCO to liaise with the Exams Assistant about the arrangements for candidates with Special Needs and will provide the necessary supporting evidence before deadlines for access arrangement applications. The Exams Assistant will ensure requests for special consideration will be sent to the boards and process the replies. The SENCO will liaise with parents on the provisions granted by the exam boards for their child.

Special needs exam policy

Staff in departments should inform the SENCO of special needs pupils who are embarking on a course leading to an examination, and the date of that exam. The SENCO can then inform individual staff of any special arrangements which individual pupils can be granted during the course and in the exam. In the case of pupils with specific learning difficulties/visual impairment or certain other medical conditions, these can be any or all of the following:

- Extra time for coursework and examinations
- Rest periods
- A reader
- A scribe
- Enlargements/models
- A helper
- A prompter
- Separate room/invigilator
- Use of word processing/printing facility

Special arrangements can also be made for pupils to take their examinations outside school eg phobic pupils, M.E. sufferers. In these cases invigilation/examination rules must still be adhered to.

SENCO will inform the exam officer, who will communicate with the exam boards at the beginning of a course, if any pupil is to be given special arrangements for coursework which carries marks towards a final mark.

A separate room and invigilator are required for anyone/group with a reader and a separate room is required for an individual or group who is has use of a word processor or scribe.

It is preferable that the reader/scribe should be a person within the learning support department who is familiar with and has had practice with the pupil taking the examination. It is the duty of learning support to ensure that no unauthorised help is given to these pupils.

The SENCO, in consultation with the exam officer will complete the special arrangement request forms for special needs candidates at the appropriate time and provide the necessary evidence to reach the exam boards on the stipulated dates.

Boards have a timetable of dates for the ordering of modified/-enlarged papers for NCTs and GCSEs which must be complied with.

The early opening and checking of special needs candidates' papers should be conducted in the presence of the exam officer only with the permission of the exam board, at an agreed time and any further enlargements/modifications completed by the designated person in good time for the start of the exam. In cases where extra time has been granted and the examination finishes after school hours, the candidates' papers will be given to the exam officer and locked away.

The necessary re-scheduling of internal and external exams for special needs pupils will be co-ordinated with the exam officer eg pupils who have extra time cannot fit two exams in one day.

Candidates with visual impairments may be granted an early start to examinations to allow time for rest breaks and extra time. Such candidates will be properly supervised at all times and have no contact with other candidates taking the same examinations.

Candidates with extra help/time for coursework must ensure that it is all their own work. It is the responsibility of learning support to ensure that all work is original.

EXTERNAL EXAMS

APPEALS

Decision about appeals for external exams need to be based upon:

- evidence that a student's result is significantly below expectations.
- students who are close to grade boundaries and a change would significantly benefit the school or departmental results.
- evidence that the overall results do not match the teacher assessment and there is a concern that the quality of marking was not adequate.
- concern that results between the two centres at AS/A level are significantly different as there were different markers.
- evidence that coursework has been significantly changed and the moderators report does not explain this.

Papers should be recalled when there is a concern that the department are not fully aware of why there has been underachievement for certain ability ranges or on certain papers.

Decisions to get re-marks or to appeal results needs to be approved by the Head only.

The overall budget for appeals will need to be considered as these are expensive.

ANALYSIS OF EXTERNAL RESULTS - DEPARTMENTAL

The Exams Officer will provide Heads of Subject with:

- the exam results of all students at all levels
- % results for their subjects.
- comparative data on national results, results against FFTD for each department and each teaching group, and residuals differences for subjects and for individual students at A level and teaching groups.
- teaching groups - a breakdown of performance over different papers
- information on the performance of students identified as Gifted and Talented and SEN in different subjects against their targets
- results in the subject over the previous three years against national averages and FFTD targets.
- comparisons of performance for boys and girls in each teaching group and overall.

Heads of Subject will use this data to interpret their results and produce a report for the head which will answer the following:

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- Is the department improving in value added terms and national average terms?
- Are all groups of students performing appropriately, or are some underachieving?
- Are groups of students underachieving in parts of the exam and not others?
- Are there elements of the exam where the department could improve?
- Do exam results match departmental predictions?
- Are students making appropriate progress in each year?
- Are there differences in the performance of different teaching groups?
- Have staff met their targets for their groups?
- How have targeted students performed?
- Which parts of the raising achievement strategies worked?

What actions should be taken to improve results in the future?
(A template for completion will be on the school network)

THE SCHOOL'S ANALYSIS

The Head will produce an overall school's analysis as part of the school's self-evaluation policy. This analysis will be presented to Governors at the first Governors' meeting of the year.

The examinations officer will provide the SLT with:

- comparative data on national results, performance against school targets and FFTB and D predictions,
- % results at levels 5, 6 and 7 for KS3
- % results of 5 A* - C and pass rates overall in the school for all students in a year group at GCSE and students attending school.
- % of 5 A* - C including English and Maths
- % results of A* - A at GCSE
- % A – C, A – B and A – E at AS and A level and against LAC targets
- Results of vocational exams and students sitting exams outside the school.
- Residual differences for teaching groups and subjects at KS3, KS4 and Years 12 and 13
- Data relating to the performance of students in target groups in Year 9, 11, 12 and 13.
- Results of students with 3 or 4 D's at GCSE
- A three year trend in all subjects at all levels
- The performance of AS and A level students in different modules and whether they were taught at Beaminster or SJC
- The performance of boys and girls, SEN and more able students overall and in individual subject areas against national averages (where available) and target grades.
- Results against attendance level

EXTERNAL ANALYSIS OF DATA

The school receives further data about performance from the DfES and Dorset County Council. This will be analysed and shared with staff and governors at the appropriate point and will be incorporated into the School Improvement Plan.

INTERNAL EXAMINATIONS

(PLEASE ALSO SEE SCHOOL ASSESSMENT POLICY)

Students in years 7 – 9 will sit exams in all subjects (unless agreed by the Head) in the summer term and will report on this.

Departments will be responsible for setting papers, marking and reporting on progress. Exams will take place in lesson time in a designated week and all students are required to sit these.

GCSE groups will sit mock exams. The exams officer will be responsible for timetabling these and arranging invigilators, seating plans and informing students.

Heads of department are responsible for laying out exam papers in the exam hall and ensuring students are sitting the correct tier and paper.

ANALYSIS OF END OF YEAR EXAMS

The Exams Officer will supply Heads of Subject with the following information on Year 7 – 10:

- a spreadsheet showing performance of all students across the year group
- a breakdown of performance against targets in each class
- the performance of boys and girls, identified SEN and more able students.

The Head of subject or the person responsible for the Key Stage in a department will produce a report for SLT which analyses:

- the overall performance of the year group against FFTD
- the performance of different teaching groups
- the performance of different ability ranges
- underachieving students

This is part of the exams analysis for the September report.

They should then recommend students who should change groups and Action Points to address underachievement.

MOCK EXAMS

For reports in years 10 and 11 class teachers will include the performance of students in each element of the exam plus, where appropriate, coursework and an overall grade for the mock exam as well as a target grade.

The Exams Officer will collate this information and supply the department with:

- overall performance in the subject
- lists of underachieving students
- performance in each element of the exam
- % of students achieving A* - C and A* - A
- achievement of target groups

This will allow departments to focus their revision strategies with regard to content, skills and individual students.

The exams officer will supply SLT with:

- the % of students achieving 5 A* - C, A* - A and pass rates
- the % of students achieving 5 A* - C including English and Maths
- performance of students against their targets
- performance of each subject against targets and % A* - C
- the performance of targeted students
- students with 3 or 4 C's
- students predicted C's achieving D's
- underachieving students

The Head will produce a report for SLT who will work with their departments to develop appropriate revision strategies. The Raising Achievement team will use this to re-focus work on individuals and target groups.

Questions to consider?

Can Scholaris deliver this?

Is it too much for CB – will we need extra staffing?

Is it too much for HOD's?

Should be say KS3 Co-ordinators do this?

How does the Raising Achievement Team and Heads of House fit in with this and the KS3 tracking systems?

What about coursework – year 10 only? Do we need to be clearer about standards and what to do if suspected cheating and how much staff should help and chase?

What about timetable for coursework?

What about the monitoring of the completion of coursework – who oversees and how do we arrange catch up?

How do we ensure action points are in plans and are kept to the forefront of work – line management meetings? Should we be more structured like Purbeck in ensuring HOD's are tracking coursework etc.

How do we intend to report on end of year exams?

What about 6th form tracking? We have few processes here and the reports just done showed major anomalies.

What about across the two sites for A level? Do we need a common approach with Beaminster?

How do we present this to HOD's and ensure they evaluate exams rather than describing – ie they reach a judgement. How do we ensure that judgement is consistent across the school?

What about other exams not GCSE eg ICT, vocational etc. Common format for reports?

How do we make our data accessible to parents?

We need to ensure this links into reporting and a general assessment pattern and services our need for info on groupings at KS3.

We need clearer criteria for recommendations for accelerated groups etc. which is related to assessment rather than subjective judgement.