

Exams policy

Holland Park School

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1. Introduction and aims

Holland Park School committed to ensuring that exams are managed and administered effectively.

The aim of this policy is to ensure:

- The planning and management of exams is conducted in the best interest of candidates
- Our system of exams administration is efficient and clear, and staff and pupils understand what is required and expected of them
- We comply with requirements and guidance set out by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and awarding bodies

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Everyone

Everyone involved in our exam processes, including staff and pupils, must read, understand and implement this policy.

2.2 Head of centre

The head of centre:

- Has overall responsibility for Holland Park School as an exams centre
- Is the individual who is accountable to the awarding bodies for ensuring that the centre is compliant with the JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements
- Is responsible for ensuring that all staff comply with the [JCQ guidelines](#)

- Is responsible for ensuring that all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice are reported, in line with the JCQ guidance on [malpractice in examinations and assessments](#)
- Ensures that [JCQ guidance for centres on cyber security](#) is followed
- Ensures that accurate candidate contact information is obtained and maintained
- Ensures appropriate controls are in place that allow accurate data to be submitted to the awarding bodies, e.g. entries and internally assessed marks
- Ensures that candidates are entered under names that can be verified against suitable identification such as a birth certificate, driver's license or passport. A candidate should only be entered under alternative names in exceptional circumstances

Our head of centre is Dame Sally Coates, Principal

2.3 Exams officer

The exams officer is responsible for the administration of exams. They:

- Manage the administration of internal and external exams
- Advise the senior leadership team (SLT), subject and class tutors, and other relevant support staff on annual exams timetables and procedures as set by awarding bodies
- Oversee the production and distribution of an annual calendar for all exams in which candidates will be involved, and communicate regularly with staff about imminent deadlines and events. This calendar must be provided to all staff and candidates
- Ensure that candidates and their parents/carers are informed of, and understand, aspects of the exams timetable that will affect them
- Check with teaching staff that the necessary coursework and/or controlled assessments are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines
- Provide and confirm detailed data on estimated entries
- Maintain systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams
- Receive, check and securely store all exam papers and completed scripts, and ensure that scripts are dispatched as per the guidelines
- Administer access arrangements and make applications for special consideration following the regulations in the JCQ [guidance on the special consideration process](#)
- Identify and manage exam timetable clashes
- Account for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges
- Line manage the senior exams invigilator in organising the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams
- Ensure candidates' coursework/controlled assessment marks are submitted correctly and on schedule, along with any other material required by the awarding bodies
- Track, dispatch and store returned coursework/controlled assessments
- Arrange for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates, and forward, in consultation with the SLT, any post-results service requests
- Report all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice, in line with the JCQ guidance on suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments
- Advise on appeals and re-marks
- Are one of the key holders to the secure room with question papers and pre-release materials

Our exams officer is Sahar Heydarian (Sahar Rian) and our Vice Principal overseeing external examinations is Victoria Webb.

2.4 Heads of Department

Heads of department are responsible for:

- Advising the exams officer of any changes to syllabus or assessment details for their subjects
- Advising the exams officer of entries for their subjects
- Guidance and pastoral care for candidates who are unsure about exams entries or amendments to entries
- Accurately completing entry and mark sheets, and adhering to deadlines as set by the exams officer
- Accurately completing coursework/controlled assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets by the deadlines set by the exams officer
- Decisions on post-results procedures

2.5 Teachers

Teachers are responsible for:

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

2.6 Special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO)

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Identifying and testing candidates' requirements for access arrangements and notifying the exams officer in good time so they can put exam day arrangements in place
- Processing any necessary applications in order to gain approval (if required)
- Working with the exams officer to provide the access arrangements required by candidates in exam rooms

Our SENCO is Catherine Hill.

2.7 Lead invigilator(s)

The lead invigilator(s) are responsible for:

- Assisting the exams officer to run exams efficiently, according to JCQ regulations
- Collecting exam papers and other material from the exams office before the start of the exam
- Collecting all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and ensuring they are returned to the exams office

Our lead invigilators for 2026 are Rita Kong and Henrietta Edozie.

2.8 Candidates

Candidates are responsible for:

- Confirming and signing entries
- Understanding coursework/controlled assessment regulations, and signing a declaration that confirms the coursework to be their own
- Ensuring they conduct themselves in all exams according to the JCQ regulations

3. Qualifications offered

The Headteacher decides the qualifications we offer.

We offer the following types of qualifications:

- A Levels
- GCSEs
- Limited BTECs

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any school year may be found on the school's website and in the Options booklet.

If there will be a change to a specification for the next year, the exams office must be informed by 5th September.

Informing the exams office of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the Head of Department.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by SLT in association with the Head of Department, Head of Year and SENDCO.

4. Exam series

Internal exams (mock or trial exams) and assessments are scheduled in the following exam series:

- For Year 11 and 13: Autumn 1 and Spring 2
- For Years 7-10 and 12: Spring 1 and Summer 2.

Please see the separate assessment calendar for specific dates and deadlines.

External exams and assessments are scheduled in the following exam series:

- November: English and Maths GCSE Resits
- March – April: Speaking and practical exams
- May – June: GCSE and A Level examinations

Internal exams are, as far as is feasible within the constraints of the school building, held under external exam conditions.

The Headteacher decides which exam series are used in the centre.

The centre does not offer assessments on an on-demand basis. If offered, on-demand assessments can be scheduled only in windows agreed between the Headteacher and the Exams Officer.

5. Exam timetables

Once confirmed, the exams officer will circulate the exam timetables for internal and/or external exams at a specified date before each series begins.

[Only applies to AQA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC AS Further Mathematics, AS Mathematics, A-level Further Mathematics or A-level Mathematics examinations:]

Where a candidate has a timetable clash involving an AS Further Mathematics, AS Mathematics, A-level Further Mathematics or A-level Mathematics examination, a centre cannot move the examination to the morning session.

An AS Further Mathematics, AS Mathematics, A-level Further Mathematics or A-level Mathematics examination must always be sat in the published afternoon session as per the awarding body's timetable.

6. Entries (including entry details and late entries)

Candidates or parents/carers cannot request subject entry, change of level or withdrawal. Entry and withdrawal is determined by the school alone as informed by the curriculum students have studied.

We do not accept entries from private candidates.

Students are not permitted to sit exams at external centres for any qualification. All qualification must be taken in school.

The school does not support individuals to take examinations early (e.g. out of line with their cohort), except in exceptional circumstances. These exceptions are granted with the Head's permission only. Whilst each exception is unique, the school will only consider early entry if the following conditions are met:

- The relevant Head of Department and class teacher fully support the early entry decision;
- The school is satisfied with a plan for the continued education of the student the following year and such a plan does not place an unnecessary burden on the school's resources;
- The school and class teacher is absolutely confident that the student will attain only the highest possible grade and there is plentiful evidence (from within school) to support this; and
- School mock exams indicate the student will obtain the highest possible grade.

Please note that results or statements from tutors or outside providers will not be accepted as evidence that the student is working at the highest possible grade.

The school reserves the right to withdraw a student's early entry if subsequent mock data (after entry has been confirmed) reveal any doubts about the student attaining the highest grade. The school's decision is final on this matter.

We do not act as an exams centre for other organisations.

Entries and amendments to entries made after an awarding organisation's deadline require authorisation, in writing, by the Headteacher.

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department via email.

Heads of department will provide estimated entry information to the exams officer to meet JCQ and awarding body deadlines.

Entries and amendments made after an awarding organisation's deadline require authorisation, in writing, by the Headteacher.

6.1 Re-sits

Re-sit decisions will be made by the Headteacher in association with the Head of Sixth Form. The school will cover the costs of re-sits for English and Maths for students entering Year 12 with a grade less than a 5 and any resits that the school has explicitly taught students towards. All other re-sits are permitted at the discretion of the Head of Centre with costs covered by the candidate/ candidate's parents. Re-sitting Year 13 qualifications are rarely permitted by the school.

7. Exam fees

Candidates or departments will not be charged for changes of tier, or 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 of each exams series.

QUALIFICATION TYPE	WHEN CANDIDATES WILL BE CHARGED	COSTS
GCSEs & A Levels	Private exam entries Re-sits at parents/carers' request and approved by the school that the school has not been prepared for at school ➤ Exams not on the list of prescribed public exams. ➤ Missed exams (without medical or other extenuating circumstances) ➤ Withdrawal from an exam, if after the entry deadline and agreed with the school.	Dependent on the charges of the examining body. Entry fees: Edexcel: Academic and vocational fees Pearson qualifications AQA Entry and Post Results Services Fees https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/admin/library/AQA-ENTRY-FEES-SUMMER2024.PDF OCR Fees: https://www.ocr.org.uk/administration/fees/ WJEC Fees: https://www.wjec.co.uk/media/vslo4qq0/wjec-entry-fees-2023-24-all-series-english-high-level.pdf

We may waive these fees in certain circumstances if finances are a barrier to academic advancement. If you would like to discuss waiving relevant fees, please contact the Head of Centre.

8. Equalities

All our staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of any equality legislation.

We will comply with the legislation, including making reasonable adjustments to the service that we provide to candidates in accordance with the requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the Exams Officer and the SENDCO.

9. Access arrangements

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

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

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

Room arrangements for candidates using access arrangements will be organised by the Exams Officer in association with the SENDCO.

Invigilation and support for candidates using access arrangements, as defined in the [JCQ access arrangements regulations](#), will be organised by the Exams Officer and Lead Invigilators. Where candidates sit their examinations in a smaller environment away from the main examination room (the suitability of which is to be assessed in conjunction with JCQ guidelines).

9.1 Use of word processors

We may allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate as part of access arrangements or as a reasonable adjustment where appropriate, including:

- When it is their normal way of working;
- If they need support with handwriting;
- If they have: a physical disability; learning difficulty that has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to write legibly; a medical condition.
- If they have a sensory impairment

The SENCO will use their judgement, in collaboration with relevant members of staff where necessary, to make decisions about when a word processor is appropriate outside the specific listed examples above.

We will make sure that:

- The proposed arrangement will not disadvantage or advantage a candidate.
- The use of a word processor will not compromise the assessment objectives or the integrity of the assessment and will be used under secure conditions. Where these objectives would be compromised, then a word processor will not be granted for use by a candidate

We will also make sure that the word processor:

- Has the spelling and grammar check and predictive text software disabled
- Does not have internet connectivity during the exam
- Has been cleared of any previously stored data, along with any portable storage medium used (and where any authorised memory stick is provided to or used by the candidate, the memory stick will be cleared of any previously stored data)
- Does not allow access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited), spreadsheets or emails
- Does not have graphic packages or computed-aided design software, unless permission is given
- Does not have computer reading (text to speech) software, unless the candidate has permission
- Does not have speech recognition technology, unless the candidate has permission

The word processor will not be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

All equipment will be checked to make sure it's in working order and sufficiently charged for the duration of the examination.

Candidates provided with the use of a word processor will be accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen. Where we accommodate a candidate in another room, a separate invigilator will be present.

Candidates will be:

- Reminded to make sure that the centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer, or to handwrite their details on the printed documents where this feature is not available (where the candidate needs to handwrite their details, they will be supervised to make sure that's solely what they're doing and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way)
- Reminded to save their work at regular intervals, unless 'autosave' has been set up on the device to make sure that the candidate's work is not lost because of a technical issue
- Advised to use a minimum font size of 12pt and double spacing

Each page of the typed script will be numbered.

The word processor will be connected to a secure shared drive so that the script can be printed off and will be done once the examination is over by a senior member of staff. The candidate must be present to verify that the work is their own and then the script will be attached to any answer booklet that contains some of the answers. We may also be required by the awarding body to include a word processor cover sheet with the candidate's typed script.

We may retain electronic copies of a word-processed script and this may be accepted by an awarding body where the printed copy has been lost and it is demonstrated that the file has been kept securely.

10. Contingency planning

Contingency planning for exam administration is the responsibility of the Headteacher and Head of Centre and all centres must have a written examination contingency plan that covers all aspects of examination administration, in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

All relevant centre staff must be familiar with the contingency plans, which are available via email and on the shared L:Drive and are in line with the [guidance provided by Ofqual](#), [JCQ](#) and awarding organisations.

11. Estimated grades

Heads of Department are responsible for submitting estimated grades to the exams officer when requested. The school will retain copies of the November and March mock series as evidence to support estimated grades where necessary. Such materials will be retained only until the closure of post-results services and then the materials will be disposed of confidentially.

12. Managing invigilators

External staff will be used to invigilate examinations when not enough internally employed invigilators can be recruited. The head of centre, a senior member of centre staff, such as an assistant headteacher, or the exams officer must ensure that a teacher, teaching assistant, tutor or senior member of centre staff who teaches the subject being examined, or a learning support assistant who has supported 1 or more candidates, is not an invigilator during the examination.

These invigilators will be used for internal and external examinations.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams Officer and any new invigilators and/or those facilitating an access arrangement for a candidate under examination conditions must receive thorough training on JCQ guidelines. Any invigilators employed through an agency must provide evidence of the JCQ training they have received.

If invigilators require Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, the Exams Officer and HR are responsible for obtaining these.

DBS fees are not paid by the centre.

Invigilators rates of pay are set by the School Business Manager.

Invigilators are recruited, timetabled, trained and briefed by the Exams Officer, or by Victoria Webb. Records of training are maintained for inspection.

13. Malpractice

The head of centre, in consultation with the Exams Officer is responsible for ensuring that suspected malpractice is thoroughly investigated. Malpractice doesn't necessarily involve an intention to cheat or gain an unfair advantage. Examples of malpractice include, but are not limited to:

- Unauthorised use of a mobile phone or internet-enabled device in examinations

- Copying or allowing work to be copied
- Posting work on social media prior to an exam
- Collusion or working collaboratively

Candidates are advised to avoid committing malpractice in person through assemblies, tutor times and pre-exam briefings before each exam and in writing through communication home to parents and students. Any instances of suspected malpractice will be investigated by the Head of Centre then escalated to the Awarding Body.

14. Exam days

The exams officer will:

- Book all exam rooms (after liaising with other relevant users)
- Make question papers, exam stationery and materials available for the invigilator

Site management staff are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms, and will be advised of requirements at least 14 days in advance.

The exams officer, Lead Invigilator or Vice Principal in charge of examinations will start and finish all exams in accordance with [JCQ guidelines](#).

Subject staff may not be present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates; the Head of Year will fulfil this role. 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 heads of department in accordance with JCQ's recommendations and no later than 5 hours after candidates have completed them.

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

Emergency evacuation of the examination room will be outlined within the centre's exam contingency policy, which will be subject to inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.

In the event of an emergency, a full report of the incident must be produced and retained on file and any breach of question paper security or malpractice must be reported to the awarding body immediately.

15. 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 Head of Centre before the exam season begins.

Our published rules on acceptable dress and behaviour apply at all times. Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and we accept 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 devices with text or digital facilities.

Any precluded items must not be taken into the exam room.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates are expected to stay for the full exam time.

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

The Vice Principal in association with the Exams Officer is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day.

15.1 Clash candidates

The Exams Officer will be responsible for making arrangements for clash candidates, including:

- Supervising escorts
- Identifying a secure venue
- Arranging overnight stays where necessary

16. Special consideration

If a candidate is unable to attend an exam because of illness, bereavement, or other trauma, or if a candidate becomes ill or otherwise disadvantaged during an exam, they are responsible for alerting the Head of Centre to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within 3 working days of the exam.

The exams officer will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body within 7 days of the exam providing evidence is supplied on time.

17. GCE and GCSE non-examination assessments

Teaching staff who deliver non-examination assessments will follow the correct specifications and the specification and instructions provided by the awarding body, or JCQ [instructions for conducting non-examination assessments](#) if appropriate.

It is the duty of heads of department to ensure that all non-examination assessment is ready for dispatch at the correct time. The Exams Officer will assist by keeping a record of each dispatch, including the recipient details, and the date and time sent.

Marks for internally assessed work are provided to the exams office by Heads of Department. The exams officer will inform staff of the deadline date for appeals against internal assessments. Deadlines must be strictly adhered to by candidates and heads of department.

Any appeals will be dealt with in accordance with our internal appeals procedure document.

17.1 Artificial intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard. Holland Park School recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also lend itself to cheating and plagiarism.

Pupils **may not** use AI tools:

- During assessments, including internal and external assessments, and coursework
- To write their homework or class assignments, where AI-generated text is presented as their own work

Pupils **may** use AI tools:

- As a research tool to help them find out about new topics and ideas
- When specifically studying and discussing AI in schoolwork, for example in IT lessons or art homework about AI-generated images.,all AI-generated content must be properly attributed

Where a pupil uses an AI tool, the pupil should retain a copy of the question(s) asked and the AI-generated responses. Pupils must submit this along with the assessment.

Staff should:

- Be aware that AI tools are still being developed and should use such tools with caution as they may provide inaccurate, inappropriate or biased content
- Make students aware of the risks of using AI tools and that they need to appropriately reference AI as a source of information to maintain the integrity of assessments

For more information on AI misuse, see [guidance from JCQ on AI use in assessments](#). Any misuse of AI tools may be treated as malpractice.

18. Results and certificates

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days. They will be available to collect in person at 8am on results day and will also be emailed out to student email addresses at 9am. Results will also be sent to the primary parental email address with have on file for GCSE students only.

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 Head of Centre.

The provision of the necessary staff on results days is the responsibility of the Head of Centre.

Dates of results days each year will be publicised for all candidates through the school's In The Know bulletin.

18.1 Enquiries about results (EARs)

Enquiries about results (EARs) may be requested by centre staff or the candidate following the release of results.

A request for a re-mark or clerical check requires the written consent of the candidate. A request for a re-moderation of internally assessed work may be submitted without the consent of a group of candidates.

The cost of EARs will be paid by the centre if the EAR is supported by a Head of Department, or by the candidate if a candidate's request for an EAR is not supported. The candidate may appeal and we will respond by following the process in our internal appeals procedure document. Should the Appeal not be upheld, the candidate will cover the cost of the EAR.

The cost of EARs is set out in section 7 of this policy ('Exam fees') and is determined by each awarding body.

All decisions about whether to make an application for an EAR will be made by Heads of Department.

All processing of EARs will be the responsibility of the Exams Officer following the JCQ guidance.

18.2 Access to scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of written exam papers within 14 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.

Applications for EARs cannot be submitted once an original script has been returned.

The Exams Officer is responsible for processing requests for ATS.

The cost of ATS will be paid by the centre if the ATS is supported by a Head of Department, or by the candidate if a candidate's request for an ATS is not supported. The candidate may appeal and we will respond by following the process in our internal appeals procedure document. Should the Appeal not be upheld, the candidate will cover the cost of the ATS..

The cost of ATS is set out in section 7 of this policy ('Exam fees').

19. Monitoring and review

The head of centre is responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed every 2 years.

20. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Exam contingency plan
- Whistle-blowing policy
- Conflict of interests policy
- Complaints policy
- Data protection policy
- Internal Appeals Policy