

North Halifax Grammar School

Exams Policy



This policy was considered and recommended to the Principal	February 2021
To be reviewed every three years. Next review:	Spring 2024

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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 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 North Halifax Grammar School 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 Leadership Group (LG) and the Heads of Faculty/Subject.

2. Exam Responsibilities

- Exams Office (Exams Officer and Assistant Exams Officer) manages the administration of public and internal exams including:
- Advising LG, 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/Subjects 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 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 exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams.
- Submitting candidates' coursework marks on behalf of Heads of Faculty/Subjects required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule.
- Arranging for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and liaising with exam boards on issues regard appeals/re-mark requests.
- Maintaining systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.
- Liaising with HR Manager to make necessary room bookings and cover arrangements for available staff to start exams.
- Liaising with Catering Manager to ensure candidates requiring early lunches are catered for.

3. Heads of Faculty/Subject Responsibilities:

- Ensuring that all candidates are entered for the correct units and tiers during each exam series.
- Ensuring that internal assessment marks are completed on schedule in accordance with exam board regulations.
- Updating the Exams Office 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 HR Manager and Exams Office for rooming and invigilation requirements for internal assessments when appropriate.
- NEA Policy

4. Heads of Year/6th Form Management Team Responsibilities:

- Advising the Exams Office of any relevant changes in candidate details affecting exam entries including: new students, leavers, repeating year, dropping or picking up subjects (GCE).
- Advising the Exams Office of candidates potentially eligible for special consideration.
- Being present, if required, at the beginning of external exams to identify candidates in accordance with exam board regulations – all exam candidates are required to wear ID badges which carry photographic ID. If there is any doubt as to the identity of a student, the relevant Year Group Leader will be asked to assist.
- Checking on absentees during external exams and coordinating absences, informing the Exams Office of any developments/problems which arise out of the process.
- Liaising with HR Manager to ensure appropriate supervision arrangements for Year 11 candidates requiring early lunch.

5. Teachers' Responsibilities:

- Identification to Learning Support of potential SEND access arrangements for Learning Support to follow up and investigate.
- Understanding internal assessment regulations and ensuring that each candidate signs a declaration that authenticates the internal assessment as their own.
- Being familiar with the contents of the relevant specification(s).
- Being familiar with procedures on requesting re-marks and copies of scripts.

6. Learning Support/SEND Coordinator (SENDCo) Responsibilities:

- Identification and testing of candidates and subsequent identification of requirements for special access arrangements in exams.
- Providing EO 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.
- Requesting AA from relevant exam boards

7. Invigilators' Responsibilities:

- Understanding the external regulations and internal procedures pertaining to the conduct of external exams as set out in the JCQ Guidelines Booklet.

8. Candidates' Responsibilities:

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

9. Qualifications

The qualifications offered at North Halifax Grammar School are decided by the LG in conjunction with Heads of Faculty/Subject. The qualifications offered are: GCE, EPQ, and GCSE.

Informing the Exams Office 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 Year Group Leaders 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 in December May and June and held under external exam conditions.

External exams are scheduled in November (resits only) and May and June of each academic year. 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 Office will circulate the generic exam timetable for internal exams and each external exam series on the intranet and internet. Individual timetables will be issued to candidates following entries being sent to the exam boards.

11. Entries, Entry Details and Late Entries

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

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

Entry deadlines are circulated to Heads of Faculty/Subject via email and internal post/pigeon hole. Late entries are authorised by the Exams Office in consultation with Heads of Faculty/Subject.

Re-sits are allowed in accordance with the rules set out in each specification. Re-sit 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 NHGS. Late entry or amendment fees are paid by NHGS 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/fail to sit an exam/do not meet the necessary internal assessment requirements without medical evidence or evidence of other mitigating circumstances.

GCE re-sit fees for first and any subsequent attempts are paid by candidates.

GCSE re-sit fees pre-certification are paid by NHGS.

Candidates must pay the fee for an enquiry about a result or to request a re-mark or copy/original of exam script.

13. The Disability Discrimination Act, Special Educational Needs and Access Arrangements

Overview

It is the responsibility of the Principal and Learning Support to ensure that NHGS meets the requirements of the DDA by ensuring that NHGS is accessible and improves candidate experience.

The Equality Act 2010 extends the application of the Equality Act to general qualifications. All examination centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law.

Introduction

This policy aims to ensure that every student who has additional needs will be supported through every examination series, this ensures that there is equality of opportunity.

Procedures

- All exam rooms are accessible, chairs are available when queuing outside when required.
- There is an appropriate toilet near or in all of these areas.
- Emergency evacuation procedures are appropriate for all candidates and risk assessments are carried out as appropriate prior to the examination series.
- All areas have had internal risk assessments carried out.
- If any candidate needs to take regular medication, invigilators will make this possible.
- The Exams Officer should be notified if there are any exceptional health issues.
- Any specialised equipment will be provided and an appropriate examination area selected.
- Invigilators will be briefed of any exceptional issues concerning communication or other factors which may affect the candidate.
- Recruitment of invigilators will follow normal school policy with regards to disabled applicants.
- All invigilators will either receive group training including disability issues or will work alongside an experienced invigilator.

- The SENDCO will make the Exams Officer aware of any issues concerning individuals in the main exam rooms.
- The SENDCO/Exams Officer will take the lead in making access applications based on their close knowledge of the needs of students under their care. They will produce a list of the students involved together with their concessions and this list will be available in all exam rooms in the files.
- Any complaints made by candidates with disabilities should be directed in the first instance to the Examinations Officer who will initiate an enquiry.

Use of Laptops

The use of laptops can only be because of medical difficulties (painful wrists, hypermobility etc), supported by an Occupation Therapy (OT) report (or similar), or where the student's handwriting is so difficult to read, or their speed of handwriting is so slow, that to not allow the use of a laptop would disadvantage them. Students who require the use of a laptop must have supporting evidence from an OT, or be clearly identified by their class teacher(s).

Review

The Reviewing of this policy will take place at the start of each academic year. The Schools reaction response to any policy will be evaluated and any amendments to this policy made as appropriate.

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 SENDCo 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 Office.

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 HR Manager.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the Exams Office.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 extends the application of the DDA to 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

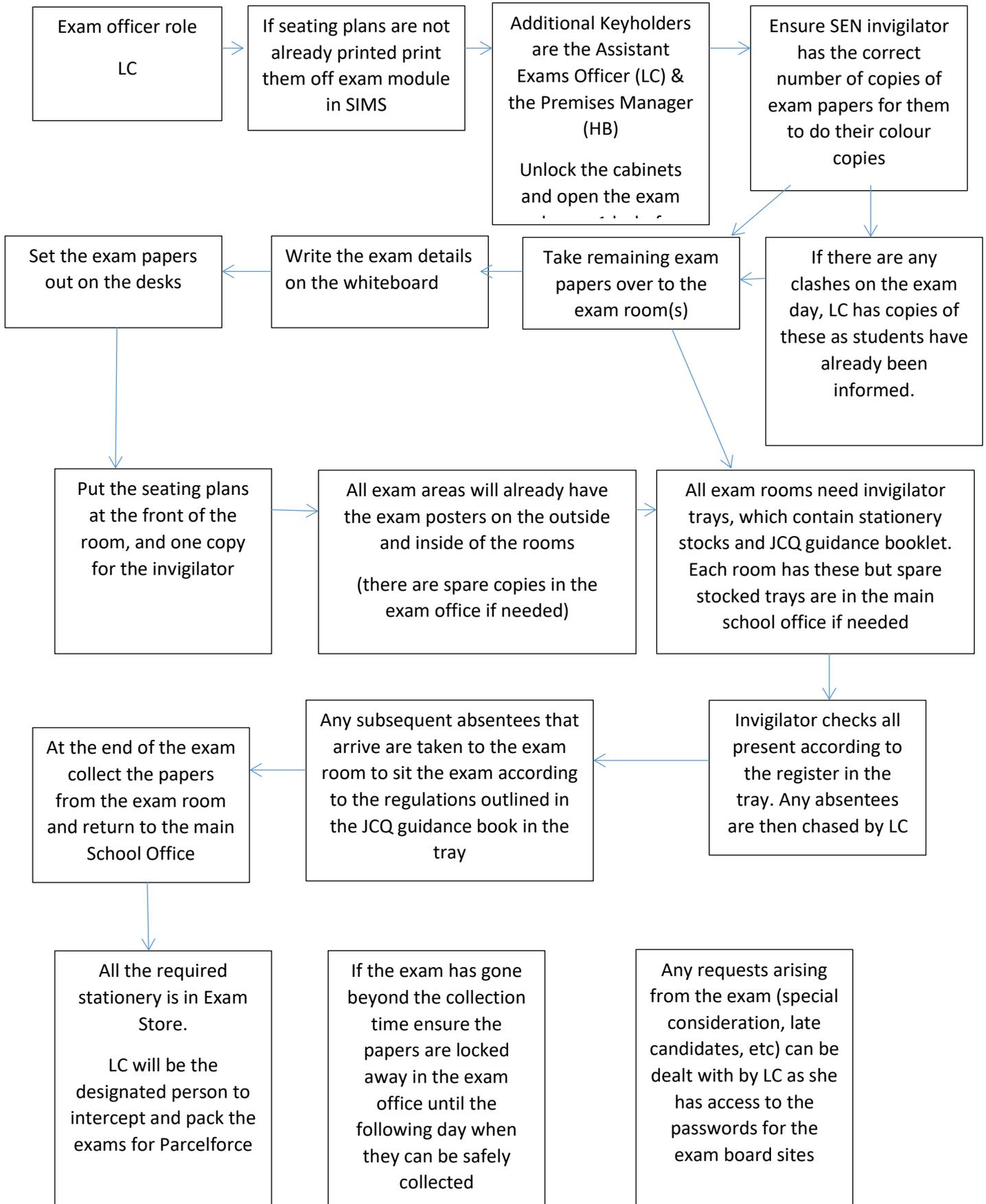
Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of Leadership in consultation with the Exams Office.

The Assistant Exams Officer is capable of running an exam season on her own, with the support of LG. LG members are trained to start external examinations. Invigilators are fully trained to run an exam independent of the EO.

See separate Examination Contingency Plan.

Contingency Planning

In the event of the examinations officer not being present during exam period



Emergency Closure Planning

In the event of an emergency school closure, the Exams Officer is able to contact all students via SIMs InTouch.

Trinity Academy will be contacted in the first instance to see if they have the space to accommodate our needs. We would also contact one of the three local primary schools or the local community centre, to use their hall or sports' facilities.

The examination papers can be accessed on the day direct from the examination boards.

15. Private Candidates

Managing private candidates is the responsibility of the Exams Office. Normally, private candidates will be restricted to former NHGS students who wish to take exams which are part of the current curriculum. Private candidates will be charged a fee to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of entries and results in addition to the exam entry fee costs.

Private candidates will be required to produce photographic identification.

16. 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 11 mocks, and all external exams.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by NHGS.

Invigilator rates of pay are set by NHGS.

17. Malpractice

The Exams Officer is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice in accordance with JCQ regulations.

18. Exam Days

The premises team is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms. The Exams Officer will book all exam rooms after liaison with the premises team and the HR Manager and make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials and equipment available for the invigilators.

The Exams Officer/Invigilators/LG will start all exams in accordance with the JCQ guidelines. 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 day. Note that if there is a clash with candidates taking the exam the following day, then the papers will not be released until after they have taken the exam.

19. Candidates, Clash Candidates and Special Consideration

19.1 Candidates

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

Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and NHGS 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.

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.

19.2 Clash Candidates

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

19.3 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 NHGS, 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.

20. Internal Assessment and Appeals

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

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

NHGS will ensure that:

- Internal assessments submitted by students have been authenticated as original work according to the guidance issued by the JCQ
- 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.
- Departments give students adequate and appropriate time to produce the internal assessment;
- Internal assessments are conducted by staff who have an appropriate level of knowledge, understanding and skill;
- The consistency of the internal assessment is secured through the departmental mark scheme or marking criteria;

- Each type of internal assessment has a fit-for-purpose internal standardisation process.
- The staff responsible for internal standardisation of a subject will attend required training sessions given by the relevant awarding body

21. Controlled Assessment

For full guidance refer to JCQ publication 'Instructions for conducting controlled assessments'

Controlled assessment is currently an integral and important part of the examined courses that students undertake at KS4 and 5. It constitutes varying proportions of the marks in different subjects and is vital for students to gain success in external examinations at the end of the Key Stage.

Definitions

Controlled assessment is defined as work assigned to and completed by a student during a course of study. It makes up a proportion of the student's final grade at the end of the course. It is designed to measure skills that are not effectively assessed by external assessment. Controlled assessment replaced coursework in GCSE and A-level subjects from September 2009.

External Dependencies

Controlled assessment forms an element of the assessment procedures of both the internal and external examination system of students and as such is subject to regulation by the relevant examining body and JCQ.

Controlled Assessment Scheduling

Due to the number and range of subjects in which students will take controlled assessment it will not be possible to ensure that students are not undertaking more than one piece of controlled assessment at once and therefore students may be under considerable pressure at certain points during their courses with controlled assessment preparation and deadlines.

Therefore the school will:

- Take reasonable steps to minimise this by producing an annual controlled assessment calendar in order to provide a structured guide for students and parents/guardians as to when controlled assessment will be happening during the academic year.
- Ensure that students are supported and appropriately paced throughout their controlled assessments (as far as is possible).
- Ensure that students are supported through the tutorial system with the recording and management of controlled assessment deadlines and preparation pressures.
- Where feasible provide catch up sessions for students who miss a controlled assessment session when initially scheduled.

The School's Responsibilities are:

- Ensure that all students have equal access to everything they need to complete their controlled assessments in a fair way.

- Ensure that an effective communications strategy is in place to make sure that parents are fully informed about their child's preparation and progress in controlled assessments in alignment with the whole school policy on reporting.
- Ensure that each academic department develops, maintains and implements its own internal assessment procedures in line with the whole school policy for assessment and recording.

The Department Leader's Responsibilities are:

- Decide on the awarding body and specification for a particular GCSE.
- Where appropriate, develop new assessment tasks or contextualise sample awarding body assessment tasks to meet local circumstances, in line with awarding body specifications and control requirements.
- Ensure the assessment procedures as outlined in the Department's policy are in accordance with the examination board's policy and are implemented fully in practice.
- Ensure the deadlines are clear, realistic, agreed and shared with department teaching staff, other school staff with an interest (AL, pastoral team etc), students and parents/guardians as appropriate.
- Ensure that individual teachers understand their responsibilities with regard to controlled assessment.
- Ensure that individual teachers understand the requirements of the awarding body's specification and are familiar with the relevant teachers' notes, and any other subject specific instructions.
- Ensure that all teacher feedback refers to published mark schemes and guidelines.
- Standardise internally the marking of all teachers involved in assessing an internally assessed component.
- Keep records of controlled assessment preparation and task taking maintained and up to date.
- Supply to the exams officer details of all unit codes for controlled assessments.
- Ensure that all staff in the department follow the same procedures.

Individual Subject Teachers' Responsibilities:

Each subject teacher is responsible, under the guidance of the DL, for the implementation of external and internal assessment of classes allocated to them in the relevant academic year. Classroom teachers will be supported in all of these activities by the management structure of the school and specifically their DL. Therefore class teachers are required to:

- Understand and comply with the general guidelines contained in the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting controlled assessments, a copy of which is available on the VLE.
- Understand and comply with the awarding body specification for conducting controlled assessments, including any subject-specific instructions, teachers' notes or additional information on the awarding body's website.
- Understand the scheduling of controlled assessments in their department.
- Ensure that students are fully aware of the implications of controlled assessment and the procedures for task marking, internal standardisation and external moderation.
- Mark internally assessed components using the mark schemes provided by the awarding body. Submit marks through the exams office to the awarding body when required, keeping a record of the marks awarded.
- Understand the application of task setting, task taking and task marking as relevant to the examination body of the course their classes are undertaking.

- Supervise assessments (at the specified level of control). Undertake the tasks required under the regulations, only permitting assistance to students as the specification allows.
- Ensure students are fully aware of controlled assessment requirements by giving them the task requirements, course specification and marking criteria in advance of the task being taken.
- Retain candidates' work securely between and after assessment sessions.
- Ensure that students and supervising teachers sign authentication forms on completion of an assessment.
- Post-completion, retain candidates' work securely until the closing date for enquiries about results. In the event that an enquiry is submitted, retain candidates work securely until the outcome of the enquiry and any subsequent appeal has been conveyed to the centre.
- Ask the appropriate special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) for any assistance required for the administration and management of access arrangements.

Exams office staff

- Enter students for individual units, whether assessed by controlled assessment, external exam or on-screen test, before the deadline for final entries.
- Enter students' 'cash-in' codes for the terminal exam series.
- Where confidential materials are directly received by the exams office, to be responsible for receipt, safe storage and safe transmission, whether in CD or hard copy format.
- Distribute marksheets from the exam board (where these are provided) for teaching staff to use, and collect and send marksheets to awarding bodies before deadlines.
- On the few occasions where controlled assessment cannot be conducted in the classroom arrange suitable accommodation where controlled assessment can be carried out, at the direction of the senior leadership team.

Special educational needs coordinator/additional learning support

- Ensure access arrangements have been applied for where applicable. Candidates with a physical disability are allowed to sit their examinations in a ground floor room. A scribe or reader will be provided where appropriate. Students with a mental health condition will be given the option to sit their examinations in a separate, smaller room.
- Work with teaching staff to ensure requirements for support staff are met.

Student and Parental Responsibilities are:

- Parents - avoid taking their child out of school where such actions will impact on their child's ability to complete controlled assessments.
- Parents – providing suitable evidence (such as a doctor's note) for any absence of their son/daughter from a controlled assessment.
- Students – understanding controlled assessment regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the controlled assessment as their own work.

Ownership of Controlled Assessment

Any piece of controlled assessment created by the student remains under ownership of the school and once submitted will be securely stored by the school until it has no further value as examination materials. The examination board will request samples of students work to assess the internal marking of student work. In these circumstances any work sent to the board under this process may be retained by the examination board and used by them for training purposes.

It is recommended that students are given a copy of each piece of controlled assessment for their own records. This may be before or after the work has been marked depending on the requirements of the task. DL's may make their own arrangements to return work to students once it has no further value to the school.

22. Appeals Procedure

- 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 judgements themselves.
- 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.

- The Principal 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.
- 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.
- 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
- 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.

23. Results

Results, enquiries about results (EARs) and access to scripts (ATS)

- Candidates will receive individual result slips on results days, in person at NHGS.
- Results slips not collected will be posted to candidates that day.
- Arrangements for NHGS to be open on results days are made by the Principal.
- The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the Exams Office.
- NHGS aggregates (i.e. cashes in) at the end of year 12 for AS grades (where applicable)

EARs

Where a Head of Faculty/Subject has concerns about a cohort and believes there has been an error in marking then EARs may be requested through the Exams Office in accordance with the JCQ regulations on Post-Results Services. The EARs will be funded by NHGS????? however the Head of Faculty/Subject must obtain the candidates consent before any EAR is requested.

If a result is queried, a candidate may request an EAR at their own expense through the Exams Office in accordance with the JCQ regulations on Post-Results Services.

If the unit grade increases, then the candidate will be reimbursed the fee.

ATS

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

NHGS 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.

24. Certificates and Transcripts

Certificates

Certificates 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 authorised to do so.

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

Certificates are not withheld from candidates who owe fees.

In accordance with NHGS Record Retention & Disposal Schedule certificates are retained for 5 years and then destroyed.

Transcripts

NHGS will provide a transcript of results to a candidate.

25 Emergency Evacuation Procedure

The purpose of this Evacuation Procedure is firstly to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the students. Secondly, to ensure the security of the examination papers.

In the event of a fire alarm being sounded during an external examination the following procedures MUST be followed:

- 1 Ask the candidates to stop writing and put their pens down.
- 2 Collect the Attendance Register.
- 3 Make a note of the time of the disruption – write it down.
- 4 Await the arrival of the Exams Officer or the Assistant Exams Officer.
- 5 Students will be escorted to a secure area of the grounds. This will be on the field at the far side where staff members assemble. Students undertaking different exams will be escorted by a different member of staff to ensure confidentiality of the papers. Students should remain in silence and should not discuss the details of the examination.
- 6 The Exams Officer will ensure that the Examination Room is locked to ensure that security of the papers is maintained.
- 7 Once authorisation has been received to re-enter the building, students will be escorted to the Exam Room. Students will be given a few moments to settle down.
- 8 Make a note of the re-start time of the exam(s).
- 9 The lost time will be added to the finish time and the new end time will be noted on the White Board.
- 10 Write a full report of the incident and action taken.
- 11 A note for special consideration will be processed for each group and sent to the relevant awarding body.

26 Use of Word Processors

Use of Word Processors in Examinations

Background from JCQ document Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties

Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments

Managing the needs of candidates with disabilities and learning needs

Word Processors may be required by candidates with the following needs:

- Cognition and Learning
- Communication and Interaction
- Sensory and Physical
- Social, Mental and Emotional

The use of a word processor as an access arrangement is to ensure the removal of barriers to an assessment for a disabled candidate preventing him/her being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.

The use of the word processor must allow the integrity of the assessment to be maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to the assessments for a disabled candidate.

The use of a word processor cannot be granted where it will compromise the assessment objective of the specification in question.

Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for use of a word processor should be considered on a subject-by-subject basis.

The use of a word processor should normally be agreed at the start of the course, having a firmly established picture of need and normal way of working.

The only exception to the above would be as a result of a temporary injury or impairment or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start of the course.

The arrangement to use a word processor must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre, for example:

- In the classroom (where appropriate);
- Working in small groups for reading and/or writing;
- Literacy support lessons;
- Literacy intervention strategies;
- In internal tests/examinations;
- Mock examinations.

This is referred to as the 'normal way of working' for the candidate.

In relation to the choice between the use of a scribe or a word processor the JCQ guidelines state the following:

If a word processor (with the spelling and grammar check disabled) is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, then it should be used in examinations in order to encourage independent working and access to marks awarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

A scribe must only be used where a candidate is not sufficiently competent or confident in using a word processor with the spelling and grammar check or predictive text facility disabled (switched off).

At North Halifax Grammar School's the use of a word processor is always considered prior to the application for the use of a scribe.

Additional information regarding the use of a scribe

Where the candidate has been awarded the use of a scribe through Access Arrangements Online and where it reflects their normal way of working the candidate may alternatively use: a word processor with the spelling and grammar facility enabled (with some subject restrictions); a word processor with predictive text/spelling and grammar check facility enabled; speech recognition technology with predictive text when the candidate dictates into a word processor; computer software producing speech which is used to dictate to a scribe. In these cases a scribe cover sheet rather than a word processor cover sheet must be completed.

Key information relating specifically to the use of word processors (Section 5.8 JCQ regulations)

There is not an arrangement to process an application using Access Arrangements Online or to record the use of the arrangement. No evidence is needed to support the arrangement. (This also applies where a candidate is using a word processor on a temporary basis as a consequence of a temporary injury.)

A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations. In addition the JCQ regulations require that a centre has a policy on the use of word processors which can be articulated to parents.

North Halifax Grammar School's School complies with the JCQ regulations regarding the use of word processors as follows:

- Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off).
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre.
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is appropriate to their needs
- Allows the use of word processors in non-examination assessment components and considers this as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.
- Allows a candidate to use a word processor to type certain questions e.g. those requiring longer answers, and handwrite shorter answers. For example candidates may need to type those examinations that place a greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet.
- Regulations for using word processors in examinations see JCQ 'ICE' booklet.
- The use of a word processor is considered on a subject by subject basis.

In all cases a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) must be completed.

North Halifax Grammar School's School complies with the regulations by following the following procedures:

- A word processor is not simply granted to a candidate because he/she wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a key board, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.
- The use of a word processor must reflect the normal way of working within the centre.

The following criteria are used to identify candidates who would benefit from the use of a word processor:

- The use of a word processor is always considered as a preferred option for candidates who may have been considered for using a scribe but are confident and competent in using a word processor (with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled i.e. switched off). However, please see information on the previous page regarding candidates who have been awarded the use of a scribe. We have some students who would have possibly been eligible for a scribe because of slow handwriting speed but who have used a word processor as their normal way of working and in exams.
- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term effect on their ability to write legibly
- A medical condition
- A physical disability
- A sensory impairment
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- Poor handwriting. A decision regarding any illegibility is made using the following evidence: evaluating work in their books; discussions with the student; discussions with teaching staff, SENCo and access arrangements assessor.
- A candidate who has below average free writing speed and who would qualify for extra time. However, if when typing they can produce work at a speed equivalent to an average handwriting rate then a word processor would remove the barrier presented by the candidate's slow handwriting. The use of a word processor would therefore be appropriate and 25% extra time applied for in exams where the candidate handwrites the answers e.g. shorter answer papers. (Example p. 55 JCQ regulations) We use Lucid Exact to provide a standardised measure of a candidate's writing and typing speeds. In addition the access arrangements assessor will use the DASH handwriting assessment to provide additional information. We will record the w.p.m. scores of these candidates for handwriting speed and typing speed to ensure equality of access. We decide when we would apply for 25% extra time and when use a word processor using the above criteria, preference and skills of candidates. Normal way of working is a key factor again here.
- Where a candidate moves from GCSE to GCE examinations within our school then they can continue the arrangement to use a word processor providing that it remains their normal way of working and they continue to have an identified need. If a candidate moves to North Halifax Grammar School's 6th form from another school then North Halifax Grammar School's would contact their exams officer to ascertain the need for any access arrangement.

North Halifax Grammar School

October 2020



Signed:

Principal

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 internally 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 departmental 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.