



Exam Policy 2025-2026

The Acorns School Fair Assessment, Internal Moderation and Examinations Policy

The purpose of this policy is:

To ensure that the planning and management of all internal, external assessment and examination activity is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of candidates.

To ensure the operation of an efficient system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff.

So that everyone involved in the centre's assessment and examination processes, understands and implements this policy.

ACCESS TO FAIR ASSESSMENT POLICY

This statement relates to all our qualification awarding bodies; AQA, EDUQAS, OCR, TLM, PEARSON and ASDAN qualifications. We aim to provide a variety of qualifications which provide all students with the opportunity to achieve their full potential by the most appropriate and direct route. Our overarching policy is based on the concepts of equality, diversity, clarity, consistency and openness. We will endeavour to ensure that the assessment processes are implemented in a way which is fair and non-discriminatory. Students are made aware of the existence of this policy and have open access to it. It can be found in the 'Introduction to exams and assessments' on the P shared drive. It is also found on the T drive which teachers have access to. All teachers are made aware of the contents and purpose of this policy. This policy is reviewed annually and may be revised in response to feedback from students, teachers and external organisations.

What students can expect from us:

- We aim to ensure that all assessment of work is carried out fairly and in keeping with the awarding body's requirements.
- All portfolio-based work will be assessed fairly against the qualification standards and teachers involved will be fully trained.
- Internal assessments will be carried out fairly and according to awarding body instructions.
- Externally marked tests and exams will be according to the requirements of the awarding body.

Students can also expect:

- To be fully inducted onto a new course and given information that can be shared with parents and carers.

- Learning outcomes, performance criteria and other significant elements of learning and assessment to be made clear at the outset of the course and when assignments are set.
- To be given appropriate assessment opportunities during the course with feedback provided on the quality of the work.
- All work to be marked within two weeks of submission by the student.
- Where equivalents and exemptions can be applied, we will ensure this is pursued with the relevant awarding body.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

A fair assessment of student's work can only be made if that work is entirely the student's own. Therefore, students can expect an awarding body to be informed if:

- o They are found guilty of copying, giving or sharing information or answers, unless part of a joint project
- o They use an unauthorised aid during a test or examination
- o They copy another student's answers during a test or examination
- o They talk during a test or examination.

All allegations of cheating and plagiarism will lead to a full investigation which will follow the guidance of the relevant awarding body. If a student feels he/she has been wrongly accused of cheating or plagiarism, they should be referred to the Complaints Policy.

INTERNAL MODERATION

This statement relates to all internal moderation processes relating to all awarding bodies the centre make entries for; AQA, EDUQAS, OCR, PEARSON, ASDAN, TIM.

The aim is to ensure that internal moderation practices are valid and reliable, cover all teachers and assessors and meet the requirements of the awarding body organisation. The internal moderation procedures are fair and open and accurate and detailed records are kept of internal moderation decisions. These records are kept on T drive.

The Acorns School will:

- Ensure all assessment activities are valid, appropriate and fit for purpose.
- Ensure that moderation meetings are held regularly to ensure consistent standards are applied in accordance with specification requirements.
- Plan internal moderation dates in relation to all assessment activities.
- Enable staff involved to access training as appropriate.
- Provide standardised documentation to support internal moderation activity and record-keeping.
- Ensure that feedback and outcomes of internal and external moderation support future development of good practice.
- Carry out an annual evaluation and review of internal moderation policy and procedures.

REVIEWS OF MARKING - CENTRE ASSESSED MARKS

The Acorns School is committed to ensuring that whenever its staff mark candidates' work this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the awarding body's specification and subject-specific associated documents.

Candidates' work will be marked by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skill, and who have been trained in this activity. The Acorns School is committed to ensuring that work produced by candidates is authenticated in line with the requirements of the awarding body. Where a number of subject teachers are involved in marking candidates' work, internal moderation and standardisation will ensure consistency of marking.

1. The Acorns School will ensure that candidates are informed of their centre assessed marks so that they may request a review of the centre's marking before marks are submitted to the awarding body.
2. The Acorns School will inform candidates that they may request copies of materials to assist them in considering whether to request a review of the centre's marking of the assessment.
3. The Acorns School will, having received a request for copies of materials, promptly make them available to the candidate.
4. The Acorns School will provide candidates with sufficient time in order to allow them to review copies of materials and reach a decision.
5. Requests for reviews of marking must be made in writing.
6. The Acorns School will allow sufficient time for the review to be carried out, to make any necessary changes to marks and to inform the candidate of the outcome, all before the awarding body's deadline.
7. The Acorns School will ensure that the review of marking is carried out by an assessor who has appropriate competence, has had no previous involvement in the assessment of that candidate and has no personal interest in the review.
8. The Acorns School will instruct the reviewer to ensure that the candidate's mark is consistent with the standard set by the centre.
9. The candidate will be informed in writing of the outcome of the review of the centre's marking.

- o Coursework/Controlled Assessment. If any candidate or their parents/carers disagrees with a coursework/controlled assessment they should contact the Examinations Officer for a copy of the school's formal appeals procedure.

EXAMINATIONS

Examination responsibilities, processes and procedures

Head of Centre

Overall responsibility for the school as an exam centre. Advises on appeals and re-marks. The head of centre is responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice.

Exams Officer

- Manages the administration of public exams,
- Advises the senior management team, subject and class teachers and other relevant support staff on annual exam timetables and application procedures as set by the various exam boards.
- Oversees the production and distribution to staff, governors and candidates of an annual calendar for all exams in which candidates will be involved and communicates regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events. • Ensures that candidates and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the exam timetable that will affect them.
- Consults with teaching staff to ensure that necessary coursework is completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines
- Provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries receives,
- Checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts
- Administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration using the JCQ Access arrangements and special considerations regulations and Guidance relating to candidates who are eligible for adjustments in examinations
- Identifies and manages exam timetable clash
- Organises a team of exams invigilators, responsible for the conduct of exams
- Submits candidates' coursework marks, tracks despatch and stores returned coursework and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards any appeals/re-mark requests maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.
- Administers access arrangements.

Deputy Head

- Organisation of teaching and learning.
- External validation of courses followed at key stage 4
- Monitoring evaluation, review of procedures.
- Informs students of regulations via assemblies
- Follow up of disciplinary action necessary where students do not comply with exam regulations.

Subject Leaders

- Guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exam entries or amendments to entries.
- Involvement in post-results procedures.
- Accurate completion of coursework mark sheets and declaration sheets.
- Accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the exams officer.

SENCO

- Identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements.
- 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.

Lead invigilator/invigilators

- Collection of exam papers and other material from the exams office before the start of the exam.
- Collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and their return to the exams office.

Candidates

- Confirmation and signing of entries.
- Understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.

Administrative staff

- Support for the input of data.
- Posting of exam papers.

The statutory tests and qualifications offered

The statutory tests and qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the senior leadership team. The statutory tests and qualifications offered are GCSE, key skills, functional skills and vocational skills. At key stage 4 all candidates will be entitled, and enabled, to achieve an entry for qualifications from an external awarding body.

Exam seasons and timetables

Internal exams are scheduled in the spring term. External exams are scheduled in June. All internal exams are held under external exam conditions. Which exam series are used in the centre is decided by the subject leaders. The exams officer will circulate the exam timetables for both external and internal exams once these are confirmed.

Entries, entry details, late entries and retakes

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the subject leaders and the subject teachers. The centre does accept entries from external or private candidates. Entry deadlines are circulated to subject leaders via email. Late entries are authorized by SLT

Exam fees

GCSE initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre. Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the centre and candidates/parents or host schools. Candidates or departments will not be charged for changes of tier, withdrawals made by the proper procedures or alterations arising from administrative processes, provided these are made within the time allowed by the awarding bodies. Candidates must pay the fee for an enquiry about a result, should the centre not uphold the enquiry and the candidate insist on pursuing the enquiry.

The Equality Act and SEN

All exam centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the Equality Act 2010. A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the educational psychologist / specialist teacher. The SENCO will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an exam, and the date of that exam. The SENCO can then inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates may be granted during the course and in the exam.

Access arrangements

Pupils are assessed as to whether they need Access arrangements by the SENCo. A copy of her Qualification certificate is in the front of the exam folder. Pupils who are identified as requiring a need as their normal way of working; liaising with teaching staff to gather evidence be applied for and suitably provided for during examinations according to need.

Estimated grades

The subject leader will submit estimated grades to the exams officer when requested by the exams officer.

Managing invigilators and exam days

Internal invigilators will be used for exam supervision. They will be used for all exams, with occasional support from other non-teaching staff in other schools. Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the exams office. The exams officer will book all exam rooms after liaison with other users and make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials available for the invigilator. Site management is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms on instructions from the exams officer. The lead invigilator will start all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Subject staff may be present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates but must not advise on which questions are to be attempted. In practical exams subject teachers may be on hand in case of any technical difficulties. 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/faculty at the end of the exam session.

In the event of an emergency the invigilators will take action as described in the JCQ 'Instructions for conducting examinations' document which will be placed in allocated room. Also the school policy for emergency evacuation of the building will come into effect if the need arises (fire, bomb threat, flood, etc).

Candidates, clash candidates and special consideration

The centre's published rules on acceptable dress, behaviour and candidates' use of mobile phones and all electronic devices apply at all times. Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage. Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates may leave the exam room for a genuine purpose requiring an immediate return to the exam room, in which case a member of staff or invigilator must accompany them. The exams officer will attempt to contact any candidate who is not present at the start of an exam and deal with them in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

The following procedures will apply for cases of disturbance and other breaches of the regulations/procedures:

1. Verbal warning by Invigilator
2. Final warning by head teacher with a letter home from the Exams Officer
3. Consideration of withdrawal of candidate from public examinations at the school and notification to the examination board of persistent disruption to public exams.

Invigilators must remove any candidate from the exam room who is creating a disturbance or communicating with other candidates. A written statement with details of the incident must be given to the Exams Officer. Please refer to invigilator's handbook annex 1.

Clash candidates:

The exams officer will be responsible as necessary for identifying escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight stays.

Special Consideration

This is used where a student has temporarily experienced an illness or injury, or another event outside their control, which is likely to have adversely affected their ability to demonstrate their knowledge and skills during the examination.

The JCQ (Joint Qualifications Council) definition of special consideration is:

Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade. This is to reflect temporary illness, temporary injury or some other event outside of the candidate's control at the time of the assessment. It is applied when the issue or event has had or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment. Candidates may be eligible for special consideration due to the impact of COVID-19.

There is a relaxation of the rules in 2022 in applying for special consideration on the grounds of absence. Candidates can still get a grade if they have completed one unit/exam.

COVID-19: Special considerations for students with symptoms or positive test results

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) has updated its guidance on special considerations to take account of the latest UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) guidance.

The guidance explains that an 'acceptable reason' for special considerations includes a student staying at home and avoiding contact with others, in line with UKHSA guidance, at the time of the examination. This could be because of symptoms in the guidance (e.g. a high temperature) or a positive COVID-19 test result.

If a student doesn't attend their examination; their parent/carer will need to fill in Form 14 (self-certification for candidates who have missed an examination).

EXAMINATION GUIDANCE TO PUPIL AND CARERS

- Pupils are required to arrive for an examination at least 15 minutes before the published time
- Pupils will not be allowed to leave the examination room until the end of the examination, except for medical emergencies
- A clock will be clearly positioned in the examination room for candidates
- Pupils will be given a timetable of examinations prior to the exam series
- All examination equipment will be provided by the school, there will therefore be no bags allowed in the examination room.
- In the case of GCSE and Functional Skills examinations Acorns School will ensure all pupils are easily identified by candidate number cards placed on the exam desks. ●
Pupils will be seated in the examination room and a seating plan will be sent to the Awarding Bodies on completion of the examination.
- Pupils will not be allowed in the examination room wearing a wrist watch, with mobile phones, mp3 players, smart watches, or other similar types of electronic equipment.
- Pupils will not be allowed to take drinks into the exam room, these will be provided by the school

- Any pupils caught cheating will be removed from the examination room and the Awarding Body informed immediately.
- Any pupils being disruptive will be removed from the examination room and their papers cancelled. Depending on the severity of the disruption the candidate may not be allowed to return for any subsequent examinations in the current series.

Appeals against internal assessments

The centre agrees to draw to the attention of candidates and their parents/carer their written complaints and appeals procedure which will cover general complaints.

Please see separate "Appeals Policy"

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

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days in person at the centre / by post to their home addresses (candidates to provide sae). Arrangements for the school to be open on results days are made by the exams officer. The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the exams officer.

EARS:

EARS may be requested by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking. When the centre does not uphold an EAR, a candidate may apply to have an enquiry carried out. If a candidate requires this against the advice of subject staff, they will be charged. ATS:

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of papers within three days' scrutiny of the results. If a result is queried, the exams officer, teaching staff and head of centre will investigate the feasibility of asking for a re-mark at the centre's expense. Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates must be obtained. GCSE re-marks cannot be applied for once a script has been returned.

Certificates

Certificates are presented in person. Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, provided they have been authorized to do so. Certificates are not withheld from candidates who owe fees. The centre retains certificates for two years.

Policy last reviewed March 2026

Policy reviewed annually, next review 2027