

The logo is a circular emblem with a blue and yellow color scheme, featuring a central cross-like shape. The background of the header is blue with a grid pattern of squares and lines.

Sandbach High School & Sixth Form College

EXTERNAL QUALIFICATIONS POLICY

Objective:

To set out the school's approach to all external qualifications and their assessment whether by examination, controlled assessment or other means.

Access to Fair Assessment

- 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 Assessment 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.

Access

Students are made aware of the existence of this policy and have open access to it. It can be found online at www.sandhigh.cheshire.sch.uk

All tutors are made aware of the contents and purpose of this policy.

This policy is regularly reviewed and may be revised in response to feedback from students, tutors 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:

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

Examinations

Objective

To provide an efficient exam system with clear guidelines for all users.

Departmental Responsibility

Each department will have a nominated person responsible for liaison with the Exams Officer (EO) usually the Curriculum Leader (CL). This person will be the only point of contact for exam correspondence.

Departments will be responsible for completing Estimated Grades, Coursework marksheets and entry information for return to the EO by the deadline set.

Entries

The EO will gather data from CL's and compile provisional statements of entry. These will be checked carefully by each department, signed and dated before being returned to the EO by the date specified. It is the department responsibility to ensure that this information is correct.

Entries will be submitted to each examining body by Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) by the deadline date.

Prior Attainment

In the case of students joining the school during Years 10-13, entries may be governed by prior attainment. The EO will contact the previous centre for details and validate with awarding bodies before transferring credit where applicable.

Late Entries

All possible action must be taken to avoid late entries. Where it is not possible to avoid, departments concerned will be responsible for the late fees.

Amendments

Amendments, (including change of tier), and withdrawals will be accepted by the EO up to the deadline date specified by the board. Any amendments/withdrawals thereafter will be charged to the department.

External Exams

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

- All exams will be conducted in accordance with JCQ booklet 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations' and individual examining bodies.
- Final confirmation of entry information will be passed to CL.
- Individual statement of entries will be forwarded to each candidate. It is the responsibility of the candidate to check this information and query if necessary.
- Individual timetables will be produced and forwarded to candidate
- Any clashes will be dealt with and candidates notified of any action to be taken.
- Exam rooms will be booked and any room changes notified in registers.
- Exam papers will be checked and stored in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

- Teachers will not have sight of exam papers until the end of the exam.
- Registers will be taken at the start of each exam/assessment by the EO or nominated person for identification of candidates.
- Exam papers will stay in the exam room until the end of the session.
- Exams will be started by the EO or a nominated person.
- Subject representation should be available for all exams.
- Candidates will not be permitted to leave the exam room until 1 hour after the start of the exam and then only at the discretion of the EO (or in the absence of the EO an invigilator).
- Exam papers will be collected and ordered by the invigilators and passed to the EO for checking and despatch using JCQ agreed procedures.
- Any unusual circumstances must be recorded on the 'Unusual Circumstance Log' and brought to the attention of the EO. This log will be filed with the exam registers in case of any query.
- Suspected misconduct will be brought to the attention of the relevant awarding body by the EO using the agreed procedure.
- Candidates arriving late for exams will usually be allowed to sit the exam unless they arrive after their paper has finished. The full time allowance will be given and the relevant exam board notified.

Coursework/Controlled Assessment/Non-examined Assessment

Coursework/Controlled Assessment/NEA will be conducted in accordance with JCQ and AB guidelines and alongside staff responsibilities outlined in Annex 1. It is departmental responsibility to ensure that assessed work is despatched in accordance with exam body deadlines. Labels and packaging materials can be obtained from the EO. All relevant paperwork should be complete and enclosed with the assessed work.

Candidates should be made aware of marks before submission to awarding bodies allowing them time to challenge the marking process.

In the event that a candidate disagrees with a mark awarded (Controlled Assessments/ Coursework or NEA) they have the right to appeal as per Internal Appeals procedure (Annex 2)

Year 11 Trial Exams

The EO will oversee the organisation for these exams, from accommodation to invigilators. Each department will be responsible for producing exam papers and representation should be available for the start of each exam. At the end of the exam the subject teacher will collect the scripts from the exam room or exams office.

Misconduct

This is a serious issue and will be logged by the invigilator and reported to the EO who will take appropriate action.

Malpractice

In the case of suspected malpractice, reference will be made to the current JCQ publication 'Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments, Policies and Procedures', the guidelines set out will be followed. If necessary guidance will also be sought from the relevant awarding body.

Invigilation

It is the responsibility of the EO to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to maintain the integrity of all exams.

- All invigilator posts will be subject to DBS clearance as per Safeguarding Policy and Recruitment Policy.
- The EO will ensure that each session has the relevant number of invigilators according to JCQ guidelines.
- Invigilators must not take any work into the exam room but give full attention to the conduct of the examination.
- Walkie talkies will be available for direct contact with the EO.

Results

Results will be available for collection on the day notified by the awarding bodies.

Any enquiries must be requested using the EAR form available from the EO. The EO will then submit the enquiry track and report its progress.

Enquiries about Results (EaRs)

Enquiries raised by a CL will be funded by the department concerned with approval from the Head Teacher.

Where an enquiry is raised by a candidate, full payment must be submitted before the enquiry is lodged with the AB. In the event that an overall grade goes up as a result of the EaR, payment will be refunded. For enquiries relating to coursework refer to Internal Appeals Policy.

All enquiries will be submitted in accordance with JCQ Post Results procedures.

Access Arrangements

The SENCO and the EO will liaise regarding arrangements for candidates with special needs. The EO will maintain a file of evidence and submit requests for access arrangements and modified papers before the deadlines set down by the examining bodies. Details of access arrangements can be found in the booklet 'Access Arrangements and Special Consideration' produced by the JCQ.

Special Consideration

Where a candidate has suffered a trauma or illness which affects their performance in the exam, the EO may apply for Special Consideration. Medical or psychological evidence is usually required except in the case of bereavement.

Resits

Resits will only be funded at the discretion of senior members of the leadership team (Head, Deputy or Head of Sixth Form).

Where a candidate wishes to enter themselves for resits, they may do so but will be charged for entry in accordance with the school charging policy.

Payment

Payment for exams is in accordance with the school charging policy.

Contingency

In the absence of the EO at a critical point in the Examination Process, the Data and Finance Technician will act as EO, until the return of the EO or a new EO is appointed, ensuring that the Examination Process is unaffected. All procedures will be carried out in accordance with this policy and current JCQ requirements.

In the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency, candidates will be directed to Sandbach School and held in supervised conditions whilst the relevant awarding bodies are contacted and alternative arrangements are made.

Annex 1

Controlled Assessment/Non-examined Assessment (staff responsibilities)

Senior Leadership Team

- Accountable for the safe and secure conduct of controlled assessments.

Curriculum Leaders

- Decide on awarding body and specifications for each subject.
- Standardise internally the marking of all teachers involved in assessing an internally assessed component.
- Ensure that individual teachers fully understand their responsibilities with regard to controlled assessment.

- Ensure that individual teachers fully understand the requirements of the awarding body's specification, are familiar with the relevant teachers' notes and any other subject specific instructions.
- Where appropriate, develop new assessment tasks or adapt sample awarding body's specification and control requirements.
- Supply to the EO details of all unit codes for controlled assessments
- Submit marks to the awarding body by the published deadline with EO, keeping a record of marks awarded.
- Despatch work samples to moderators' within the required deadlines with support from EO.

Teaching Staff

- Understand and comply with the general guidelines detailed within JCQ publications 'Instructions for conducting controlled assessments' and 'Instructions for conducting non examined assessments' for the relevant academic year.
- Understand and comply with the awarding body's specification for conducting controlled assessments/NEA's, including and subject specific instructions, teachers' notes or additional information on the awarding body's website.
- Obtain confidential materials/tasks set by awarding bodies in sufficient time to prepare for the assessment and ensure that such materials are stored securely at all times.
- Supervise assessments at the specified level of control. Undertake the tasks required under the regulations, only permitting assistance to candidates as the specification allows.
- Ensure that candidates and supervising teachers sign authentication forms on completion of an assessment
- Mark internally assessed components using the mark scheme provided by the awarding body. Retain candidates' work securely between assessment sessions if more than one.
- 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.
- Request any assistance required for the administration and management of access arrangements.
- Ensure marks are made available to candidates prior to submission allowing time for any internal review to take place.

Examinations Officer

- Responsible for receipt, storage and transition of confidential materials regardless of format.
- Submit marks to the awarding body by the published deadline with CL.
- Support CL's in the despatch of work samples to moderators.

Annex 2

Appeals against Internally Assessed Marks (Controlled Assessments, Coursework, Non-examination Assessment)

Sandbach High School and Sixth Form College is committed to ensuring that candidates' work is marked 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 had the relevant training. SHSSFC will ensure 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, internal moderation and standardisation will take place to ensure consistency.

If a candidate believes that this has not happened in relation to his/her work, he/she may make use of this appeals procedure.

NB: an appeal may only be made against the assessment process and not against the mark to be submitted to the awarding body.

Appeals should be made as early as possible in order to ensure that the internal appeals process is completed prior to the submission of centre marks to the awarding body.

Appeals must be made in writing

The head of centre will appoint a senior member of staff to conduct the investigation. This member of staff will not have had any involvement in the internal assessment process for that subject.

The purpose of the appeal will be to decide whether the process used for internal assessment conformed to the awarding body's specification and subject-specific associated documents

The appellant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including any relevant correspondence with the awarding body, and any changes made to internal assessment procedures.

The outcome of the appeal will be made known to the head of centre and will be logged as a complaint. A written record will be kept and made available to the awarding body upon request. Should the appeal bring any irregularities in procedures to light, the awarding body will be informed.

After candidates' work has been internally assessed, it is moderated by the awarding body to ensure consistency in marking between centres. The moderation process may lead to mark changes. This process is outside the control of SHSSFC and is not covered by this procedure.

Annex 3

Exams Evacuation Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm sounding during an exam

Invigilators

- On hearing the alarm remind students to remain silent and to leave all papers and belongings on their desks
- Retrieve the registers for all exams in session
- Supervise the evacuation of the room with one invigilator supervising no more than 30 students
- Assemble the candidates silently on the area of the all-weather pitch marked for exams
- Register candidates and report any missing students to the EO
- Remind candidates that they remain under examination conditions await further instructions
- Exams will resume if it is safe to do so
- EO will notify awarding bodies of the incident

Students

- On hearing the alarm students should remain silent and follow instructions from invigilators above
- All equipment/papers to be left in the exam room
- Leave the building silently and assemble on the area of the all-weather pitched marked for exams
- Remain silent and await further instructions