



External Examinations Policy

The purpose of this exam policy is to ensure the effective planning and management of exams:

- (a) is conducted efficiently
- (b) is in the best interests of candidates
- (c) has clear guidelines for all relevant staff

1. The statutory tests and qualifications offered

The statutory tests and qualifications offered at this Centre are decided by the Head of Centre in consultation with subject leaders and the Board of Governors. The statutory tests and qualifications offered will include GCSE, A Levels, Occupational Studies and BTECs. All qualifications should be present on the NIEFQAN file.

2. Exam seasons and timetables

2.1 Exam seasons

External exams are scheduled by awarding organisations at various junctures during the academic year. GCSE Mathematics and English retakes may, if necessary, be scheduled in November or Summer. The Head of Centre and Council of Studies decide which exam series are used in the Centre.

3. Entries, entry details, late entries, retakes and withdrawals

3.1 Entries

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by Heads of Department. The Centre does not normally accept entries from external candidates, unless by arrangement with the Principal.

3.2 Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to Heads of Department in writing via email. Late entries are authorised by Heads of Department in consultation with the Principal.

3.3 Retakes

Candidates in Sixth Form are allowed retakes in GCSE Mathematics and English in November, January and/or June of Sixth Form. Candidates are not allowed retakes in A2, unless repeating Year 14 or if they have completed A2 Maths in one year. Retake decisions will be made in consultation with the candidates, subject teachers and the Head of Department.

3.4 Withdrawals

Deadlines for withdrawals are circulated to Heads of Department in writing and are in line with each awarding body. All withdrawals must be authorised by the Principal.

4. Exam fees

GCSE and Occupational Studies exam entry fees are paid by the Centre.

AS exam entry fees are paid by the Centre.

A2 exam entry fees are paid by the Centre.

BTEC registration fees are paid by the Centre.

In the case of late entry or amendment fees the school reserves the right to pass on any costs to the parent/guardian.

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.

Retake fees for first and any subsequent retakes are paid by the candidates.

Candidates must pay the fee for an enquiry about a result, should this be requested by the candidate.

5. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), special needs and access arrangements

Provision of Access arrangement will be consistent with the law as set out in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

6. Candidates, clash candidates, special consideration and conducting exams

6.1 Candidates

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. Candidates have been advised of the JCQ regulations in relation to mobile phones and smart watches. Posters highlighting these regulations will be clearly visible prior to entry to exam venues.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Candidates may leave the exam room for a genuine purpose in which case an invigilator must accompany them.

The School administrative staff will attempt to contact any candidate who is not present at the start of an exam (excluding AS retakes) and the chief invigilator will deal with them in accordance with JCQ guidelines. A candidate who misses the start time must make every effort to get into school as soon as possible and before the end of the examination session.

6.2 Clash candidates

The Exams Officer will be responsible for identifying escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight supervision.

6.3 Special consideration

Should a candidate be too ill to sit an exam, suffer bereavement or other trauma or be taken ill during the exam itself, it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the Centre to such issues.

Any special consideration claim must be supported by appropriate evidence within five days of the exam, for example a letter from the candidate's doctor.

The teacher in charge of Access Arrangements and Special Consideration will then forward a completed special consideration form to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the exam.

6.4 Conducting exams

The JCQ regulations (Instructions for Conducting Examinations) will be followed to ensure the integrity of the exam process at RBAI.

7. Appeals processes, Results, enquiries about results (EARs) and access to scripts (ATS)

7.1 Appeals processes

RBAI will adhere to the JCQ published guidance 'A guide to the Awarding bodies appeals process' (effective from the June 2022 exam series).

7.2 Results

A2 and AS candidates will receive a PIN number to enable them to access their CCEA results on-line. Candidates who have taken an examination with a different exam board must collect results from school.

GCSE candidates must attend school to collect their results.

Arrangements for the school to be open on results days are made by the Head of Centre.

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

7.3 EARs

EARs may be requested by Centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking. Requests must be made by the deadline notified to the candidates by the Exams Officer.

7.4 ATS

After the release of results, candidates may ask the Exams Officer to request the return of papers by the deadline notified to the candidates by the school.

Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates must be obtained.

8. Certificates

Certificates are collected and signed for.

Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, provided they have been authorised to do so.

Appendix 1 – Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Centre / Principal

Overall responsibility for the school/college 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. Refer to the JCQ document *Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments*.

Examinations Officer

Manages the administration of public and internal exams and analysis of exam results:

- advises the SLT, subject and class tutors 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 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
- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes
- provides information with regard to income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges
- line manages the senior exams invigilator in organising the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams
- submits and despatches 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, in consultation with the SLT, any appeals/re-mark requests
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.

Teacher in charge of Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

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

Heads of Department

- Guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exam entries, tiers of entry 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 of pupils with Special Educational Needs and ensuring that the required arrangements are put in place.
- 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.

Appendix 2

Managing invigilators

External invigilators will be used for exam supervision.

They will be used for all CCEA exams except:

- GCSE / AS / A2 Art & Design
- GCSE Music: Listening and Appraising Tests
- GCE AS/A2 Music: Test of Aural Perception
- GCSE Modern Language Listening Tests
- All GCE and GCSE Science practical examinations

The recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

Securing the necessary Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of RBAI.

Appendix 3

The Royal Belfast Academical Institution

Reviews of marking - centre assessed marks (GCSE controlled assessments, GCE coursework, GCE and GCSE non-examination assessments and Project qualifications)

RBAI 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. RBAI 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. RBAI 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. If a candidate requests a review of marking, the Curriculum Vice Principal should be informed immediately.
2. RBAI 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. RBAI will, having received a request for copies of materials, promptly make them available to the candidate.
4. RBAI will provide candidates with sufficient time in order to allow them to review copies of materials and reach a decision.
5. Departments will provide a clear deadline for candidates to submit a request for a review of the centre's marking. This deadline should be at least 2 weeks prior to the submission date of the awarding body. Requests for a review of marking will not be accepted after this deadline. Requests **must** be made in writing by the parent. When a request is made, the Head of Department should immediately inform the Curriculum Vice Principal.
6. RBAI 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. RBAI 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. RBAI will instruct the reviewer to ensure that the candidate's mark is consistent with the standard set by the centre.
9. RBAI will inform the candidate in writing of the outcome of the review of the centre's marking.
10. The outcome of the review of the centre's marking will be made known to the Head of Centre – the Principal. A written record of the review will be kept and made available to the awarding body upon request.

The moderation process carried out by the awarding bodies may result in a mark change, either upwards or downwards, even after an internal review. The internal review process is in place to ensure consistency of marking within the centre, whereas moderation by the awarding body ensures that centre marking is in line with national standards. The mark submitted to the awarding body is subject to change and should therefore be considered provisional.

Appendix 4

Candidates may appeal the decision of a teacher to not sign the authentication statement.

1. Appeals must be made in writing by the parent before the submission date to the awarding body.
2. Any appeals should be communicated immediately to the Curriculum Vice-Principal and in turn the Head of Centre.
3. A review of the submitted work will be carried out by the relevant Department. The results of this review will be given to the Curriculum Vice-Principal.
4. Should a third party be required for verification or other purposes, this will be organised by the Curriculum Vice-Principal.
5. The candidate may submit his evidence of authentication to the Curriculum Vice-Principal.
6. A meeting of relevant stakeholders will be convened, by the Curriculum Vice-Principal, to explain the findings.
7. Should the teacher's decision to not sign the authentication statement be upheld then the JCQ/ M1 Suspected candidate malpractice form will be completed and sent to the awarding body.