

The Lowry Academy



The best in everyone™

Exams Policy

2023/24

Contents

Exams policy	3
Exam responsibilities	3
Qualifications offered	6
Exam series	6
Exam timetables	6
Entries, entry details and late entries	6
Exam fees	7
Equality Legislation	7
Access arrangements	7
Contingency planning	8
Conflicts of Interest	8
Managing invigilators	9
Malpractice	9
Exam days	9
Candidates	10
Private candidates	10
Clash candidates	10
Special consideration	11
Internal assessment	11
Results	11
Enquiries About Results (EAR)	11
Access To Scripts (ATS)	12
Certificates	12
Appeals Process	12
Recognising Prior Learning (RPL)	13

Exams policy

The policy is next due for review in September 2024

The purpose of this exams policy is:

- To ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interests of candidates;
- To ensure the operation of an efficient exams system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the centre's exam processes to read, understand and implement this policy.

The exams policy will be reviewed every 12 Months.

The exams policy will be reviewed by Vice Principal– Curriculum and Outcomes (**VP**)

Where references are made to JCQ regulations/guidelines, further details can be found at www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office

Exam responsibilities

Key staff

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	Claire Coy
Exams Officer	Samantha Wells
Data Protection Officer	Rosie Aylward
IT Manager	Stephen Caffrey
Data Manager	Ben Redmond

The Head of Centre:

- Has overall responsibility for the school as an exams centre and advises on appeals and re-marks.
- Is responsible for reporting all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice - refer to the JCQ document *Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments*.

VP responsible for Exams:

- Is responsible for line managing exams.
- Oversees the exam process, consulting with stakeholders.
- Works in consultation with the Principal and Exams Officer to ensure administration of exams follows JCQ regulations.

Exams Officer¹:

- Manages the administration of *internal and external exams*.
- Advises the senior leadership team, subject and class tutors, and other relevant support staff on annual exams timetables and procedures as set by the various awarding bodies.
- Oversees the production and distribution, to all centre 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 exams timetable that will affect them.
- Checks with teaching staff that the necessary coursework and/or controlled assessments are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
- Provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries.
- Maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.
- Receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts and ensures that scripts are dispatched as per the guidelines.
- Administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration following the regulations in the JCQ publication *A guide to the special consideration process*.
- Identifies and manages exam timetable clashes.
- Accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges.
- Line manages the team of exam invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams.
- Ensures candidates' coursework / controlled assessment marks are submitted, and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule.
- Tracks, dispatches, and stores returned coursework / controlled assessments.
- Arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the VP, any post results service requests.

Heads of Faculty (HOF) are responsible for:

- Guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exams entries or amendments to entries.
- Accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the Exams Officer.
- Accurate completion of coursework / controlled assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets.
- Decisions on post-results procedures.

Pastoral Team (VP (Pastoral), Behaviour Manager and HOY11) are responsible for:

- Informing Leadership of exam entries for students that are dual registered.

¹ This is the individual to whom the Head of Centre has delegated responsibility for the administration of exams in their centre.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Supplying information on entries, coursework and controlled assessments as required by the HOF and/or Exams Officer.

SEnCo is responsible for:

- Identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements and notifying the Exams Officer in good time so that they are able to put in place exam day arrangements
- Processing any necessary applications in order to gain approval (if required).
- Working with the Exams Officer to provide the access arrangements required by candidates in exams rooms.

Invigilators are responsible for:

- Assisting the Exams Officer in the efficient running of exams according to JCQ regulations.
- 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 ensuring their return to the exams office.

Candidates are responsible for:

- Confirmation and signing of entries.
- Understanding coursework / controlled assessment regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.
- Ensuring they conduct themselves in all exams according to the JCQ regulations.

Qualifications offered

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the HOF/Principal/VP.

The types of qualifications offered are GCSE/BTEC/NCFE/Camb Nat/Level 2 VA.

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

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by HOF in consultation with the VP.

Exam series

Internal exams (mock or trial exams) and assessments are scheduled throughout the year.

External exams and assessments are scheduled according to Exam Boards in the summer series.

Internal mock exams *are* held under external exam conditions.

The VP decide which exam series are used in the centre.

The centre *does* offer some assessments on an on-demand basis. If offered, on-demand assessments can be scheduled only in windows agreed between the HOF/VP.

Exam timetables

Once confirmed, the Exams Officer will circulate the exam timetables for *internal and external exams* at a specified date decided by VP before each series begins.

Entries, entry details and late entries

Candidates of parents/carers can request a subject entry in writing to the member of Leadership responsible for exams. The decision to agree to or disagree with the request will be made by the Principal/VP and communicated to parents via letter 4 weeks of the original letter.

The centre accepts entries from private candidates.

The centre does not act as an exams centre for other organisations.

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of faculty via *email, briefing meetings, and internal post/pigeonhole.*

HOF will provide estimated entry information to the Exams Officer to meet JCQ and awarding body deadlines.

Entries and amendments made after an awarding organisation's deadline (i.e. late) require the authorisation, in writing, off VP.

Exam fees

The Exams Officer will publish the deadline for actions well in advance for each exams series.

GCSE entry exam fees are paid by the Examinations department.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the centre *unless a faculty error has been made; this may then result in the faculty paying these fees.*

Fee reimbursements may be sought from candidates:

- *If they fail to sit an exam;*
- *If they do not meet the necessary coursework requirements without medical evidence or evidence of other mitigating circumstances.*

Equality Legislation

It is the responsibility of the **head of centre** to ensure that The Lowry Academy is compliant with JCQ's *General Regulations for Approved Centres*, (sections 5.3, 5.4) requirements for equality legislation by:

- Ensuring all exam centre staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of any equality legislation.
- Ensuring The Lowry Academy complies with the legislation, including making reasonable adjustments to the service that they provide to candidates in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies, and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the *Exams Officer*.
- Ensuring that the Head of Centre/Senior Leadership Team will recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010, particularly Section 20 (7). This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates.

Access arrangements

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

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

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

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the SENCo.

Rooming and invigilation access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Exams Officer/SENCo and VP responsible for exams.

Support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the SENCo.

Contingency planning

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

Contingency plans are available via *email, briefing meetings and internal post/pigeon hole, and are in line with the guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and awarding organisations.* (Refer to 23-23 Exam Contingency Policy).

For further information please refer to Examination Contingency Plan.

Conflicts of Interest

It is the responsibility of the **head of centre** to ensure that The Lowry Academy is compliant with JCQ's *General Regulations for Approved Centres, (sections 5.3)* requirements for conflicts of interest by:

- Ensures the relevant awarding bodies are informed before the published deadline for entries for each examination series of any potential conflict of interest where
 - a member of centre staff is taking a qualification at the centre which includes internally assessed components/units (taking at the centre as a last resort where unable to find an alternative centre)
 - a candidate is being taught and prepared for a qualification which includes internally assessed components/units by a member of centre staff with close relationship to the candidate
- Maintains clear records that confirm the measures taken/protocols in place to mitigate any potential risk to the integrity of the qualifications affected by the above, and where
 - a member of exams office staff has a close relationship to a candidate being entered for exams and assessments at the centre or at another centre (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (eg son/daughter)
 - a member of centre staff is taking a qualification at their own centre which **does not** include internally assessed components/units (taking at the centre as a last resort where unable to find an alternative centre)
 - a member of centre staff is taking a qualification at another centre
- Ensures other relevant centre staff where they may be involved in the receipt and dispatch of confidential exam materials are briefed on the requirements for maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of the exam materials
- Ensures members of centre staff do not forward emails and letters from awarding body or JCQ personnel without prior consent to third parties or upload such correspondence onto social media sites and applications

- Ensures members of centre staff do **not** advise parents/candidates to contact awarding bodies/JCQ directly nor provide them with addresses/email addresses of awarding body examining/assessment personnel or JCQ personnel.

Managing invigilators

Where possible external staff will be used to invigilate examinations.

These invigilators will be used for external and internal exams.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams Officer/VP.

Securing the necessary Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the HR team.

DBS fees for securing such clearance may be paid by the centre.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the Principal.

Invigilators are recruited, timetabled, trained, and briefed by the Exams Officer.

Malpractice

It is the responsibility of the **head of centre** to ensure that The Lowry Academy is compliant with JCQ's *General Regulations for Approved Centres, (sections 5.3)* requirements for malpractice by notifying the appropriate awarding body immediately of all alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice. The only exception to this is candidate malpractice discovered in controlled assessments, coursework or non-examination assessment before the authentication forms have been signed by the candidate. The Head of Centre and VP, in consultation with Exams Officer, are responsible for investigating suspected malpractice. JCQ Guidance: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/.

Please see separate malpractice policy for further information.

Exam days

Site management staff are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms, and will be advised of requirements 3-4 weeks in advance by the Exams Officer.

The Exams Officer will book all exam rooms after liaison with other users.

Question papers, other exam stationery and materials will be available for the invigilator.

The Exams Officer will start and finish all exams in the main exam room in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Students will be identified by means of a photographic ID card, these will be placed on the exam desks according to the seating plan for each exam, and the invigilator can then complete the

attendance. During the exam the ID cards will be collected and returned to the exam office to be re-organised for the next session.

Teaching staff must not be present in the exam room during public exam as per the rules defined by JCQ concerning who is allowed in the exam room and what they can do.

In practical exams, subject teachers' availability will be in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Exam papers must not be read by subject teachers or removed from the exam room. After an exam, the Exams Officer will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed examination scripts to awarding bodies, at which point the surplus exam papers will be distributed to HOF in accordance with JCQ's recommendations.

Candidates

The Exams Officer will provide written information to candidates in advance of each exam series. The Exams Officer will deliver an assembly to candidates before each exam series, both internal and external, advising on the conduct and behaviour expected in exams.

The centre's published rules on acceptable dress and behaviour apply at all times. Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

In an exam room candidates must not have access to items other than those clearly allowed in the instructions on the question paper, the stationery list, or the specification for that subject. This is particularly true of mobile phones and other electronic communication or storage devices with text or digital facilities. Any precluded items must be placed in bags beforehand or not taken into the exam room..

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

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

The Exams Officer is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day.

Private candidates

Managing private candidates is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

Clash candidates

The Exams Officer will be responsible as necessary for supervising escorts, identifying a secure venue and all administration in the event of a clash in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Special consideration

Should a candidate be unable to attend an exam because of illness, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be ill or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre's Exams Office to that effect. This must be communicated to VP responsible for exams and the appropriate documentation will be recorded.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within 5 days of the exam.

The Exams Officer will then make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body.

Internal assessment

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

Marks for all internally assessed work are provided to the exams office by the HOF. The Exams Officer will inform staff of the date when appeals against internal assessments must be made by. Any appeals will be dealt with in accordance with the centre's Internal Appeals Procedure (IAP) document.

Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days in person at the centre or by post to their home address, if candidates provide a self-addressed envelope.

Results can be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, provided the third party have written authority from the candidate to do so. The third party must bring suitable identification with them that confirms their identity.

The results slip will be in the form of a centre produced document.

Arrangements for the centre to be open on results days are made by the VP, the Exams Officer and the Site Manager.

The provision of the necessary staff on results days is the responsibility of the Exams Officer and the VP.

Enquiries About Results (EAR)

EARs may be requested by centre staff or the candidate following the release of results. A request for a review of marking or clerical check requires the written consent of the candidate, a request for a re-moderation of internally assessed work may be submitted without the consent of the group of candidates.

The cost of EARs may be paid by the centre.

All decisions on whether to make an application for an EAR will be made by the VP.

If a candidate's request for an EAR is not supported, the candidate may appeal and the centre will respond by following the process in its Internal Appeals Procedure (IAP) document.

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

Access To Scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of written exam papers before the exam board deadline.

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

An EAR cannot be applied for once an original script has been returned.

The cost of EARs may be paid by the centre.

Processing of requests for ATS will be the responsibility of Exams Officer.

Certificates

Candidates will receive their certificates. These should be collected and signed for in person at the centre or they can be posted to the candidate's home address. Candidates are to contact the Exams Officer should they wish to receive certificates by post, there will be a charge involved.

Certificates can be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, provided the third party has written authority from the candidate to do so. The third party should bring suitable identification with them that confirms their identity.

A new certificate will not be issued by an awarding organisation. A transcript of results may be issued if a candidate agrees to pay the costs incurred.

The centre retains certificates for 3 years.

Appeals Process

Awarding bodies accept appeals in relation to three areas of their work. These are:

- Appeals against results
- Appeals against malpractice decision

- Appeals against decisions made in respect of access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special considerations.

An appeal that is requested to be made must be submitted by the head of centre. In all appeal cases the processes that are followed are outlined in the 23-24 JCQ Appeals Booklet.pdf and 23-24 JCQ NEA Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments.pdf

Should a candidate request a review of the centre's mark, this process must be completed within 14 working days and prior to the final marks being submitted to the relevant awarding body:

- Candidate requests copies of the materials
- Candidate can request a review of the mark
- Review of assessment/mark awarded is completed via internal moderation process
- Candidate is updated with outcome of review
- Final mark submitted to awarding body prior to published deadline

Recognising Prior Learning (RPL)

RPL is about using a learner's evidence of earlier learning and achievement towards part of a qualification. An assessor reviews whether the evidence is enough to show that a learner has met the assessment requirements for a current qualification. The learner needs to show that through knowledge, understanding or skills they already have, they do not need to repeat the course or complete extra assessment activity.

If there is evidence that the learner has previously shown the knowledge, skills or understanding required by a qualification, this may be used towards achieving that qualification. The evidence must be:

- valid
- current
- reliable
- authentic
- sufficient

RPL is not normally used to provide evidence against achievement for an entire qualification. This would be called an exemption and is usually used where a learner must gain a specified qualification for a particular purpose (for example, as an entry requirement for further study, employment, or registration). If it is felt that a learner is entitled to an exemption then the head of centre would contact the awarding body to seek further guidance.

Applications for RPL must be carried out by centre staff who are competent to consider and make decisions about RPL.

In all RPL cases the processes that are followed are outlined in our 23-24 Recognition of prior learning policy

Complaints

A candidate (or their parent/carer) may make a complaint on the grounds below:

- Teaching and learning
- Access arrangements and special consideration
- Entries
- Conducting examinations
- Results/post results

Further details about the process involved to raise a complaint can be found in the 23-24 Exams Complaints Policy.