St Dominic's Grammar School, Belfast

Examinations and Controlled Assessment/Coursework Policy

November 2026

Related Policies and Documents

1. Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy
2. Learning and Teaching Policy
3. Curriculum Policy
4. Special Educational Needs Policy
5. JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) documents (www.jcq.org.uk)
6. CCEA Compliance and Malpractice documents (www.ccea.org.uk)
7. Positive Behaviour Policy

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1. Aim

St Dominic's Grammar School, Belfast, is a successful grammar school with an enrolment of 1052 pupils. Our aim within the school is to develop the whole person and to enable our students to realise their academic potential to the full.

Performance in public examinations is an important means of measuring our success and it is vital therefore, that all examinations run smoothly and in a manner which allows our students to achieve the best possible results.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- to ensure that the planning and management of examinations is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of candidates;
- to ensure the operation of an efficient examinations system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the centre's examinations processes to read, understand and implement this policy. It will be reviewed every three years by the Head of Centre, Vice Principal (Curriculum), Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Departments and the Examinations Officer.

3. Examinations Responsibilities

Head of Centre

- Has overall responsibility for the school as an examinations centre.
- Is responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice (Refer to the **JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures** documents and the **CCEA Compliance and Malpractice** documents).

Examinations Officer

Manages the administration of public examinations:

- Advises the Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Department, subject teachers and other relevant support staff on annual examinations timetables and application procedures as set by the various examinations 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 are informed of those aspects of the examinations timetable that will affect them.
- Consults with teaching staff to ensure that necessary controlled assessment/coursework is completed on time in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
- Provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries.
- Receives, checks and stores securely all examinations papers and completed scripts.
- In liaison with the SENCO, administers access arrangements, and, in conjunction with the Pastoral Team, makes applications for **special consideration** using **JCQ A Guide to the Special Consideration Process.**
- Identifies and manages examinations timetable clashes.
- Accounts for income and outgoings relating to all examinations costs/charges.
- Produces seating plans for examinations.

- Organises the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of examinations invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams. Issues work schedules to the invigilator team.
- Assists with the preparing of reports for the Senior Leadership Team showing results achieved.
- Submits candidates' controlled assessment/coursework marks, tracks dispatch of controlled assessment/coursework and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule.
- Arranges for dissemination of examinations results and certificates to candidates and forwards any appeals/re-mark requests.
- Ensures that all unclaimed certificates are returned to the relevant examinations board.
- Maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their examinations.
- Provides guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about examinations entries or amendments to entries.
- Deals with any queries raised by parents with respect to external examination issues.

Head of Department

- Provides guidance and curriculum advice to subject teachers and candidates who are unsure about examinations entries or amendments to entries.
- Provides guidance for candidates on Enquiries About Results.
- Ensures that coursework/controlled assessment in their subject is completed in line with JCQ regulations and school policy. (**Refer to section 12: Controlled Assessment/Coursework Internal Appeals)**
- Oversees the accurate completion of controlled assessment/coursework mark sheets and declaration sheets in adherence with deadlines set by the Examinations Officer.
- Oversees the accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets in adherence with deadlines set by the Examinations Officer.
- **Informs the Examinations Officer, Vice Principal (Curriculum) and relevant Head of School if a candidate withdraws from their subject.**
- Provides all advance examination materials required in their subject, including that for candidates completing resits, in adherence with deadlines set by the Examinations Officer.
- Makes candidates aware of their responsibility to provide any advance materials required in their subject should they decide to resit.
- **Seeks permission from the Vice Principal (Curriculum) and the Examinations Officer if they intend to introduce a new course or change the specification used in their subject. This must be done by September of the first year of teaching.**
- Is available in the school at the start of each examination in their subject to check all candidates are present. They are permitted to assist with general queries about the examinations in question but must not advise on which questions are to be attempted.
- Ensures that contact is made with pupils who do not turn up for the exam.
- Oversees the submission of estimated grades in their subject in accordance with deadlines set by the Examinations Officer.

Head of Careers

- Provides guidance and careers information for candidates.

Teachers

- Accurately completes entry and all other mark sheets in adherence with deadlines set by the Examinations Officer.
- **Reports any amendments to the entry details of their class to the relevant Head of Department. This includes requests to withdraw or change a tier of entry**.
- Provides guidance and curriculum advice to candidates who are unsure about examinations entries or amendments to entries.
- Acts on information provided by the SENCO regarding the support of those candidates with special requirements in exams.
- Ensures that controlled assessment/coursework is completed in line with JCQ regulations and College policy. **Candidates should be informed of the marks that they have been awarded after internal standardisation**. **(Refer to section 12: Controlled Assessment/Coursework Internal Appeals)**
- **Examinations papers must not be read by subject teachers or removed from the examinations room before the end of a session.** To ensure the integrity of the examination, question papers will NOT be distributed to Heads of Department until 24 hours after the examination, as per JCQ regulations.
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SENCO/Assistant SENCO

- Works with the Examinations Officer to ensure effective administration of **access arrangements**, including the uploading of access arrangements to examination boards.
- Identifies and tests candidates' requirements for **access arrangements**.
- Works with various agencies to ensure the provision of additional support — with spelling, reading, mathematics, dyslexia, hearing impairment, learners who have English as a second language, IT equipment — to help learners achieve their course aims.

Chief Invigilator/Invigilators

- Collects examinations papers and other material from the Examinations Office before the start of the examinations.
- Invigilates exams in accordance with JCQ regulations. (Refer to the JCQ document **Instructions for Conducting Examinations)**
- Reports to the Examinations Officer any issues which arise during an examinations period.
- Collects all examinations papers in the correct order at the end of the examinations and returns to the Examinations Office.

Candidates

- Confirms and signs for their examinations entries.
- Reads JCQ Information for Candidates – Non-Examination Assessments and signs a declaration that authenticates the work as their own.
- Reads and signs declarations that they have understood the content of:
  - JCQ Information for Candidates – For Written Examinations;

- JCQ Information for Candidates – Using Social Media and Examinations and Assessments;
- JCQ Information for Candidates – For On-screen Tests (where applicable)

- Submits any materials required for an examination in line with deadlines set by the Head of Department.
- A candidate or parent/carer who wishes to request a subject entry, change of tier or withdrawal must consult with the relevant Head of Year who will liaise with subject teachers, Heads of Department and the Examinations Officer as necessary. If they fail to do so in advance of the examinations, they will be expected to pay a fee. (**See Section 7: Examinations fees**)
- Informs their subject teacher if they decide to resit the controlled assessment/coursework component or the practical examinations in a subject.
- Informs the Examination Officer or the Invigilator if they are too ill to sit an examination, suffer bereavement/other trauma or take ill during the examination itself. (**Refer to Section 11: Candidates, Clash Candidates and Special Consideration.**)
- Provides the Examination Officer with the appropriate evidence to support a claim for special consideration within five days of the examination.

4. The Statutory Tests and Qualifications Offered

The statutory tests and qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Head of Centre, Vice Principal (Curriculum), Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Department. The statutory tests and qualifications offered are GCSE and A-/AS-levels.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus for that year. Heads of Department must seek permission from the Vice Principal (Curriculum) and the Examinations Officer if they intend to introduce a new course or change the specification used in their subject. This must be done by September of the first year of teaching. (Refer to Section 3. Examinations Responsibilities)

Key Stage 4
All candidates will be entitled to enter for public examinations.

Decisions on whether candidates should **not** take an individual subject will be taken in consultation with the candidates, parents/carers, subject teachers and the Vice Principal (Curriculum). Written consent will be required.

At Post-16
It is expected that AS-level modules will be entered for all courses at the end of Year 13. A2 modules will be entered for all courses at the end of Year 14.

(The school reserves the right to remove a student's examination entries if her attendance and/or application are deemed to be unsatisfactory.)

5. Examinations Seasons and Timetables

5.1 Examinations Seasons
Internal exams are scheduled in December and May/June. (Refer to the school's **Internal Assessment and Reports Calendar.)**

At GCSE, external examinations are scheduled in Winter, January, Spring and May/June.

At A-/AS-level, external examinations are scheduled in May/June.

All internal exams are held under strict external examinations conditions.

Senior Leadership Team will make decisions regarding the examinations series used by each curriculum year.

5.2 Timetables
The Examinations Officer will circulate the examinations timetables for external examinations once these are confirmed.

6. Entries, Entry Details, Late Entries and Resits

6.1 Entries
The school reserves the right to enter candidates for exams and to act as an examinations centre.

Candidates are selected for their examination entries by their subject teachers.

The centre will only accept former students as private candidates and this must be agreed with the Principal. Restrictions may apply in those subjects with a practical examination.

6.2 Late entries
Entry deadlines are communicated to Heads of Department via email and in written form on entry marksheets. Late entries can only be authorised by the Examinations Officer.

6.3 Resits
Candidates are allowed to resit AS-level examinations in May/June of Year 14.

GCSE resit decisions will be made in consultation with the candidates, subject teachers, the Head of Senior School and the Examinations Officer.

(**Also, see section 7: Examinations Fees**)

6.4 Withdrawals
A candidate or parent/carer who wishes to request a subject entry, change of tier or withdrawal must consult with the relevant Head of School, who will liaise with subject teachers and Heads of Departments as necessary. **The Examinations Officer must be informed immediately.**

7. Examinations Fees

GCSE initial registration and entry examinations fees are paid by the centre.

AS-level initial registration and entry examinations fees are paid by the centre.

A-level initial registration and entry examinations fees are paid by the centre.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the candidates.

Candidates or departments will not be charged for changes of tier or withdrawals made in accordance with the procedures laid down in this policy and in awarding body guidelines.

Reimbursement will be sought from candidates who fail to sit an examination or meet the necessary coursework/controlled assessment requirements.

Details of examinations charges will be communicated to candidates at the start of GCSE and post-16 courses.

Resit fees for first and any subsequent resits are paid by the candidates.
(Refer to section 6.3: Resits)

Candidates must pay the fee for an enquiry about a result.
(Refer to section 13.2: Enquiries About Results [EARs])

8. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Order

8.1 SENDO

The SENDO (2005) extends the application of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) to general qualifications. All examinations centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with this policy.

8.2 Special Educational Needs

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the SENCO and the educational psychologist.

The SENCO will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an examination. The SENCO can then inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates may be granted during the course and in the examinations.

8.3 Access arrangements

Access arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres, others require prior JCQ awarding body approval.

Access arrangements allow candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way awarding bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make **'reasonable adjustments'**.

The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make **'reasonable adjustments'** where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment. A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements.

How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

There is no duty on the awarding bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.

Making special arrangements for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer and the SENCO.

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

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the SENCO/Assistant SENCO.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the SENCO/Assistant SENCO.

9. Estimated Grades

Heads of Department will submit estimated grades in accordance with deadlines set by the Examinations Officer.

10. Managing Invigilators and Examinations Days

10.1 Managing Invigilators

External invigilators and classroom assistants will be used for the supervision of all public exams.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer.

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

CRB fees for securing such clearance are paid by the invigilator.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by CCEA.

10.2 Examinations Days

The Examinations Officer will book all examinations rooms after liaison with the School Business Manager, the Vice Principal (Curriculum) and other users, and will make the question papers, other examinations stationery and materials available for the Invigilator Team.

The Invigilator Team will invigilate all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Heads of Department must be available in the centre at the start of each examination in their subject. They are permitted to assist with general queries about the examinations in question but must not to advise on which questions are to be attempted. They will ensure that contact is made with any pupil who doesn't turn up for the exam.

In practical exams subject teachers must be present in case of any technical difficulties.

Examination papers must not be read by subject teachers or removed from the examination room before the end of a session. To ensure the integrity of the examinations, question papers will NOT be distributed to Heads of Department until 24 hours after the examination, as per JCQ regulations.

11. Candidates, Clash Candidates and Special Consideration

11.1 Candidates

The centre's normal rules on school uniform and behaviour apply at all times.

Notes, a mobile phone, a MP3/4 player or similar device, a smartwatch or a wristwatch which has a data storage device must not be brought into an examinations room.
Any pencil case taken into the examinations room must be see-through.

Labels must be removed from any bottles of water brought into an examinations room.

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 and the Positive Behaviour Policy.

Candidates may only leave the examinations room in an emergency; in which case a member of staff must accompany them.

The Examinations Officer/centre administration staff will attempt to contact any candidate who is not present at the start of an examination. The Examinations Officer will deal with them in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

11.2 Clash Candidates
The Examinations Officer will be responsible as necessary for dealing with clashes and deal with them in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

11.3 Special Consideration
Should a candidate be too ill to sit an examination, suffer bereavement/other trauma or take ill during the examination itself, it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre or the examination invigilator to that effect.

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

The Examinations Officer will then forward a completed special consideration form, along with the relevant evidence gained, to the appropriate awarding body within seven days of the examinations.

12. Controlled Assessment/Coursework Internal Appeals

12.1 Controlled Assessment/Coursework
Candidates who have to prepare portfolios should do so in line with deadlines set down by Heads of Department.

Heads of Department will ensure all controlled assessment/coursework is ready for dispatch at the correct time and the Examinations Officer will keep a record of what has been sent when and to whom.

Teachers are obliged to **inform students of the marks they have been awarded for internally assessed work, after internal standardisation**. They should also be informed that these marks may change after moderation by the awarding body. **(Refer to section 3: Examinations Responsibilities – Teachers)**

Marks for all internally assessed work must be provided to the Examinations Officer by the Heads of Department.

12.2 Internal Appeals on Controlled Assessment/Coursework
The centre is obliged to publish a separate procedure on this subject (**Refer to Appendix 1**).

The main points are:

- If a parent/carer feels that they have grounds for appeal, they should put their concerns in writing to the Examinations Officer before using the appeals procedure.
- Appeals will only be considered if they apply to the **process** leading to an assessment. There is no appeal against the mark or grade submitted to the awarding body.
- Candidates may appeal if they feel that their controlled assessment/coursework has been assessed unfairly, inconsistently or not, in accordance with the specification for the qualification.
- Appeals should be made as early as possible, and no later than two weeks before the last timetabled examination in the series (e.g. the last GCSE written paper in the June GCSE examination series).
- Appeals **must** be made in writing by the candidate's parent/carer to the Examinations Officer.

13. Results, Enquiries About Results (EARs) and Access to Scripts (ATSs)

13.1 Results
Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days in person at the centre or by post to their home address.

Arrangements for the school to be open on results days are made by the Senior Leadership Team.

The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team.

The centre cashes-in at the end of Year 13 for AS-level grades and at the end of Year 14 for A-level grades.

13.2 Enquiries About Results (EARs)
EARs may be requested by candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking. The cost must be met by the candidate.

(**Refer to Section 7: Examinations Fees**)

13.3 Access To Scripts (ATSs)
After the release of results, candidates may ask for a copy of the examinations script.

In certain circumstances, if a result is queried, the Vice Principal (Curriculum), Examinations Officer and teaching staff 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.

14. Certificates

Certificates are presented in person at the appropriate Awards Ceremony.

If a student cannot attend, certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, provided they have been authorised to do so with written consent. In the case of a Year 11/12 student, that written consent MUST come from the parent. In the case of a Year 13/14 student, it may come from the candidate.

The centre retains certificates for one year in line with JCQ requirements and then they are returned to the relevant examinations board.

15. How to Raise a Concern or Make a Complaint about the Administration of this Policy

If you have a concern or complaint about the administration of this policy, please contact Mr McArdle Senior Teacher, in the first instance. If necessary, you may then access and follow the school's Parental Complaints Procedure which is available on the school website. Should you remain dissatisfied with the school's response after completing the internal complaints procedure, you can bring your complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman within six months. Contact details for the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman are provided in the Parental Complaints Procedure.

Appendix 1:

APPEALS AGAINST INTERNALLY ASSESSED MARKS
(GCSE Controlled Assessments and GCE Coursework Units)

St Dominic's is committed to ensuring that whenever its staff mark candidates' controlled assessment/coursework 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. St Dominic's is committed to ensuring that work produced by candidates is authenticated in line with the requirements of the awarding body. Where several subject teachers are involved in marking candidates' work, internal moderation and standardisation will ensure consistency of marking.

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

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

1. If a parent/carer feels that they have grounds for appeal, they should first put their concerns in writing to the Examinations Officer before using the appeals procedure.

2. Appeals should be made as early as possible and no later than two weeks before the last timetabled examination in the series (e.g. the last GCSE written paper in the June GCSE examination series).

3. Appeals **must** be made in writing by the candidate's parent/carer to the Examinations Officer.

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

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. The outcome of the appeal will be made known to the Principal 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 irregularity 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 St Dominic's and is not covered by this procedure.

Appendix 2:

CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT/COURSEWORK POLICY

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Senior Leadership Team

- Accountable for the safe and secure conduct of controlled assessments and coursework. Ensures assessments comply with JCQ guidelines and awarding bodies' subject-specific instructions.
- At the start of the academic year begins coordinating with Heads of Department to schedule controlled assessments/coursework. It is advisable that controlled assessments/coursework is spread throughout the academic year.
- Creates, publishes and updates an internal appeals policy for controlled assessments/coursework.

Heads of Department

- Seeks permission from the Vice Principal (Curriculum) and the Examinations Officer if they intend to introduce a new course or change the specification used in their subject. This must be done by September of the first year of teaching.
- Ensures that at least 40% of overall assessment (controlled assessments/coursework and/or external assessment) is taken in the examinations series in which the qualification is certified, to satisfy the terminal assessment requirement in accordance with the awarding bodyspecification.
- Standardises internally the marking of all teachers involved in assessing an internally assessed component.
- Supplies to the Examinations Office details of all unit codes for controlled assessments/coursework.
- Ensures that individual teachers understand their responsibilities with the regard to controlled assessment/coursework.
- Ensures 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.
- Where appropriate, develops new assessment tasks or contextualises sample awarding body assessment tasks to meet local circumstances, in line with awarding body specifications and control requirements.

Teaching Staff

- Understands and complies with the general guidelines contained in the JCQ publication ***Information for Candidates – Coursework***.
- Understands and complies with the awarding body specification for conducting controlled assessments/coursework, including any subject-specific instructions, teachers' notes or additional information on the awarding body's website.
- Obtains confidential materials/tasks set by awarding bodies in sufficient time to prepare for the assessment(s) and ensures that such materials are always stored securely.
- Supervises assessments (at the specified level of control). Undertakes the tasks required under the regulations, only permitting assistance to students as the specification allows.
- Ensures that **students and supervising teachers sign authentication forms on completion of**

an assessment.

- Marks internally assessed components using mark schemes provided by the awarding body.
- **Informs candidates of the marks that they have been awarded** after internal standardisation in school and that these marks may change after moderation by the awarding body.
- Submits marks through the Examinations Office to the awarding body or uploads marks directly to the awarding body when required, keeping a record of the marks awarded.
- Retains candidates' work securely between assessment sessions (if more than one). Ensures that candidates' work on memory pens is stored securely in locked cabinets.
- Asks the SENCO for any assistance required for the administration and management of access arrangements.

Examinations Officer

- Enters students for individual units, whether assessed by controlled assessment/coursework, external examinations or on-screen test, before the deadline for the final entries.
- Enters students' 'cash-in' codes for the terminal examinations series.
- Where confidential materials are directly received by the Examinations Office, to be responsible for receipt, safe storage and safe transmission, whether in digital or hard copy format.
- Downloads and distributes marksheets for teaching staff to use, collect and send marksheets to awarding bodies before deadlines.
- On the few occasions where controlled assessments/coursework cannot be conducted in the classroom, arranges suitable accommodation where assessments can be carried out, at the direction of the Senior Leadership Team.

SENCO

- Ensures access arrangements have been applied for (liaising with the Examinations Officer when necessary).
- Works with teaching staff to ensure requirements for support staff are met.

Appendix 3:

STUDY LEAVE FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS

Study Leave will be applied to public examination candidates during the examination period.

Decisions on study leave will be made by Senior Leadership Team.

Parents/carers will be given a minimum notice of three weeks that study leave is being awarded.

Signed:
(Chairperson of Board of Governors)

Signed:
(Principal)