

Policy Name: Exams	
Last updated:	September 2025
Date of next review:	September 2026
Member of staff responsible for the policy:	Tabitha Travis / Beth Warren
Dissemination of the policy:	Management Committee, staff, website

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;
- there is an efficient exams system in place with clear guidelines for all relevant staff;
- all staff involved in the exams process understand their roles and responsibilities;
- all exams and assessments are conducted according to JCQ and awarding body regulations, guidance and instructions, thus maintaining the integrity and security of the exam/assessment system at all times

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

The policy will be reviewed every year, by SLT and the Exams Officer

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

Exam responsibilities

The Headteacher:

- has overall responsibility for Gloucestershire Hospital Education Service (GHES) as an exams centre for Functional Skills and advises on appeals and re-marks;
- Understands the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including, Instructions for Conducting Examinations, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments
- ensures that all relevant procedures and policies are in place (see end of document);
- ensures GHES staff are supported and appropriately trained to undertake key tasks within the exams process;
- ensures all reasonable steps are taken to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice/maladministration and is responsible for reporting all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice - refer to the JCQ document *Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments*;
- takes all reasonable steps to maintain the integrity of the examinations/assessments, including the security of all assessment materials;
- Ensures that the centre promptly reports any incidents to the relevant awarding body/bodies which might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery such as a cyber-attack.
- Ensures the National Centre Number Register annual update is responded to by the given date in October and takes responsibility for confirming, that they are both aware of and adhering to the latest version of the JCQ's regulations.

Exams officer¹, supported by the exams assistant:

- manages the administration of internal exams and external exams;
- is familiar with the contents of annually updated information from JCQ together with awarding bodies' administrative procedures, key tasks, dates and deadlines and ensures said tasks are undertaken and deadlines met;
- communicates and advises the senior leadership team, subject teachers, link tutors, and other relevant support staff of exams timetables, deadlines and procedures as set by the various awarding bodies and direct staff to JCQ regulations and information, as appropriate;
- produces a master timetable for all exams;
- ensures that candidates and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the exams timetable that will affect them;
- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes;
- carries out contingency planning for exams administration;
- checks with teaching staff that the necessary coursework and/or controlled assessments are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Then arranges for the secure delivery to the candidate's school;
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams and communicates this with their main schools so that external deadlines for submission can be met;
- liaises with schools to organise the transferring of candidates, where appropriate;
- receives, checks and stores securely all papers for transferred candidates, Functional skills exam papers and completed scripts and ensures that scripts are dispatched as per the guidelines;
- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges;
- organises training and monitoring of a team of exam invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams;
- liaises with the candidates' main schools and provides evidence, as necessary, of invigilator training in line with JCQ/Exam Board requirements
- ensures invigilators are aware of access arrangements/reasonable adjustments for candidates and of their roles in this area;
- collates entries and results, disseminating data to staff and SLT, as necessary;
- arranges for dissemination of Functional Skills exam results and certificates to candidates.

Teachers:

- supplying information on entries (including subjects and tiers), coursework and controlled assessments as required by the exams officer, meeting all deadlines;
- submitting estimated grades to the exams officer if requested;
- undertaking invigilation training and any other exam related CPD deemed necessary;
- notifying the exams officer of required access arrangements/reasonable adjustments, where appropriate;
- providing evidence to support application for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments, as necessary.

Link tutors:

- guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exam entries and processes;
- in conjunction with teachers, decide on what subjects / tiers candidates should be entered;
- advising exams officer on where candidates should sit exams and whether school or GHES should invigilate;
- undertake invigilation training and any other exam related CPD deemed necessary;

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

- gather evidence needed to support Access Arrangements, e.g. signed Data Protection forms, medical evidence letters from medical professionals;

The special educational needs coordinator (SENDCo):

- working with a qualified access arrangements assessor on all matters relating to assessing candidates and ensuring the correct procedures are followed.
- co-ordinating and collating the evidence to support applications for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments.
- determining candidate eligibility for arrangements or adjustments that are centre-delegated. liaises with the candidates' main schools and provides evidence, as necessary, to support the application for access arrangements, special consideration, alternative site.
- working with the Exams Officer to provide the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments required by candidates in exams rooms.

Invigilators:

- undertaking invigilator training at the start of the new academic year via The Exams Office
- be aware of and facilitate any access arrangements to which the candidates are entitled.
- assisting the Exams Officer in the efficient running of exams according to JCQ regulations.
- collection of exam papers and other material from the candidate's main school before the start of the exam and ensuring their direct return at the end of the exam -using the Receipt of Work form.

Candidates :

- 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 and exam entries

The qualifications offered at GHES are decided by the senior leadership team. The types of qualifications currently on offer at GHES are Functional Skills, Edexcel Award, Arts Award, UAS plus GCSE through mainstream school. English, maths and sciences are our standard offer for students in any academic year, but other subjects can be taken by negotiation. The specification will be decided by the subject leads, who will inform the exams officer.

GHES is an exam centre for Functional Skills. We offer English and maths Functional Skills up to Level 2. However, GHES does not act as an exam centre for other organisations or private individuals.

Although we are an exam centre for GCSEs, all entries and access arrangements continue to and must be made by the candidates' main schools. In liaison with teachers and Link Tutors, the Exams Officer will organise the timely and accurate collection of all information regarding exam entries and communicate this with the candidates' main schools, ahead of any deadlines.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by subject teacher and link tutor and in conjunction with the candidate and their main school. Late entries or amendments (including withdrawal) require written authorisation by a member of SLT.

Where appropriate, we allow students to re-sit exams. Decisions will be made by Exams Officer in consultation with SLT.

Exam series

GCSE external exams are scheduled in May and June. Functional Skills are on-demand assessments and can be scheduled at any time throughout the year, in response to a request made by the subject teacher to the exams officer.

Internal (practice/mock) exams are held under external exam conditions, where appropriate to the individual pupil.

Timetables

Once entries have been made, GCSE timetables are sent to GHES from the candidates' schools. Via link tutors, the Exams Officer will ensure that all students have a copy of their exam timetable (provided by the school) and record all timetables onto a master timetable on the relevant exams calendar.

Exam fees

GCSE entry exam fees are paid by the candidate's main school.

Candidates or GHES will not be charged for changes of tier or withdrawals made by the proper procedures or alterations arising from administrative processes provided these are made within the time allowed by the awarding bodies.

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

Fee reimbursements *could be* sought from candidate's main school, in line with their policy, if:

- *if they fail to sit an exam*
- *GHES request late entries, change of tier or withdrawals after the deadline*
- *if they do not meet the necessary coursework requirements without medical evidence or evidence of other mitigating circumstances*

Principal Learning entry exam fees, including Functional Skills, are paid by GHES - including re-sit fees.

Equality Legislation

All exam staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010.

GHES will comply 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 headteacher/exams officer.

There is also a separate Equalities Policy for exams.

Access Arrangements

The SENCo /link tutor 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.

Where a candidate's Access Arrangements requirement have been identified by the school, it is the main school's responsibility to provide the appropriate applications. When this is not possible, because students have been with GHES for a longer period of time, then a candidate's Access Arrangements requirement is determined by the SENCO, in consultation with the Exams Officer, Qualified Assessor, Link Tutors and teachers. Appropriate evidence is collected and provided to the candidate's main school so that they can make the applications.

Invigilation and support for Access Arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the exams officer – in liaison with the students' main schools.

There is also a separate Access Arrangements Policy for further information.

Managing invigilators

Wherever possible, invigilation is provided by the candidate's main school. However, due to an individual's specific needs, sometimes it is preferable for a student to be invigilated by a member of GHES staff. When using GHES Offices for exams, GHES may recruit external invigilators.

The exams officer will organise training, timetable, and brief invigilators as necessary so that examinations are conducted in accordance with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), awarding body and GHES's regulations and instructions.

Exam days

For any exams taken in GHES offices, the Exams Officer will book rooms after liaison with other users and ensure the question papers, other exam stationery and materials are available for the invigilator.

Exams will start and finish in accordance with JCQ guidelines and any staff present must be in accordance with 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.

In the case of GCSEs, most students sit their exams at home. Invigilators provided by the candidate's main school will arrange for safe and secure transportation of exam papers. When invigilation is provided by GHES, the invigilator will usually collect the exam paper from school and return immediately after the exam has finished. The exception to this is when the candidate has been transferred to GHES.

For Functional Skills, after an exam, the exams officer will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed examination scripts to awarding bodies, working in conjunction with the office manager.

Candidate identification procedure: Some of our students may be known to the invigilator. However, all students have a Candidate Details Form (in line with JCQ requirements) with a photograph on for the member of staff invigilating, identification should then be verified. If further evidence is needed, then the following steps can be taken:

- cross referenced with a photo stored on SIMS, or previously taken by GHES staff
- the candidate will provide photographic documentary evidence, e.g. passport
- if in GHES offices, a member of the admin staff or another teacher may be able to confirm identity.

Candidates

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 watches, mobile phones and other electronic communication or storage devices with text or digital facilities eg smart phones, smart watches, smart glasses. Any precluded items must not be taken into the room in which the exam is being sat. Students are provided with a clear plastic wallet where such items are safely secured in the Admin Office.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates are expected to stay for the full exam time at the discretion of the exams officer and any candidate who leaves an exam room must be accompanied by an appropriate member of staff at all times.

At the discretion of GHES, candidates are able to start their examination late where GHES is satisfied that the correct procedures have been followed and appropriate arrangements for dealing with late starts (in our setting or in a candidate's home) are in place to maintain the security and integrity of the examination. There is a separate policy for Late Arrivals.

Special consideration

Should a candidate be unable to attend an exam because of illness, ~~including Covid~~, suffer bereavement or other trauma, or be otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the main school's exams officer to that effect.

The main school's Exams Officer will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body in accordance with the school's exam policy.

Internal assessment

For Functional Skills, 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 officer by the subject teacher. 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 Procedures document.

Results

Candidates will receive GCSE results directly from their main schools in line with their own procedures.

Results of Functional Skills assessments will be communicated directly to the candidate by their link tutor or subject teacher.

Enquiries about Results (EAR) and Access to Scripts (ATS)

Following the release of results, a candidate can ask his/her main school to request an EAR - a request for a re-mark or clerical check; or for an ATS – where a request is made for the return of written exam papers within 14 days of the receipt of results. The main school can also trigger a request with written consent of the candidate. For re-moderation of internally assessed work, requests may be submitted without the consent of candidates.

The cost of EARs and ATSs are usually paid by the main school or the candidate – see individual school's policy.

The GHES exams officer may provide a role in liaising with the main school and the candidate in this process.

Certificates

A candidate's main school will arrange for the distribution of GCSE certificates in accordance with their own policy and procedures.

For Functional Skills, candidates will receive their certificates:

- in person at the centre
- posted (recorded delivery)

- collected and signed for.

Certificates can be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, provided they have written authority from the candidate to do so, and bring suitable identification with them that confirms who they are.

The centre retains certificates for at least 1 year from the date of issue, after which period any unclaimed certificates are shredded. A record of all certificates destroyed is kept for a further period of four years from the date of their destruction, in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

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.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The candidate's main school's Exam Policy
- GHES Exam Contingency Plan
- GHES Access Arrangement Procedures Policy for GCSEs
- GHES Word Processor Policy for Exams
- GHES Late Arrival Policy
- GHES Candidate Absence Policy
- GHES Managing Behaviour Policy
- GHES Malpractice Policy & Procedures
- GHES Escalation Policy (exams)
- GHES Emergency Evacuation Policy
- GHES Data Protection Policy (exams)
- GHES Equalities Policy (exams)
- GHES Whistleblowing Policy (exams)
- GHES Internal Appeal Procedures
- GHES Complaints and Appeals Procedures
- GHES Non-examination Assessment Policy
- JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres
- Child Protection Policy and Procedures