

Exam Policies

One of the most frequently asked questions of The Exams Office concerns exams-related policies. We have received countless emails and phone calls asking us to confirm which policies centres are required to produce.

The answer to that question is that there are five policies which are required for Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) purposes. They are:

1. Procedure for the emergency evacuation of the examination room

Section 18 of JCQ's [Instructions for Conducting Examinations](#) booklet states:

'You must have a written centre policy for dealing with an emergency evacuation of the examination room, which will be subject to inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.'

You can find a template for this policy on [The Exams Office website](#).

2. Examination contingency plan/Examinations Policy

Section 5 of JCQ's [General Regulations for Approved Centres](#) booklet states:

The centre agrees to *"have in place a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to have a robust contingency plan in place, minimising risk to examination administration, should the examinations officer be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle;"*

You can find a template for this policy on [The Exams Office website](#).

3. Internal Appeals Procedure

It is an Ofqual and JCQ requirement for centres to have an internal appeals procedure relating to internal assessment decisions and enquiries about results.

JCQ's [General Regulations](#) (section 5.8) states that the centre must:

*"have in place, and be available for inspection purposes, a **written** internal appeals procedure relating to internal assessment decisions" while (section 5.14) states that the centre agrees to: "have available for inspection purposes and draw to the attention of candidates and their parents/carers, a **written** internal appeals procedure to manage disputes when a candidate disagrees with a centre decision not to support an enquiry about results or an appeal; (A centre may place its internal appeals procedure on the school/college website or alternatively the document may be made available to candidates upon request)."*

Ofqual's [Code of Practice](#) (section 9.13) states that:

"The awarding organisation must require centres offering its examinations to ensure that they have in place:

- I. a procedure for candidates or their carers to request access to the enquiry and appeals system
- II. a procedure for lodging enquiries about results in cases where the centre supports an enquiry lodged by a candidate or carer
- III. a formal, codified procedure for handling disputes when a candidate or carer disagrees with a decision by the centre not to support an enquiry.

Centres must be required to ensure that the procedures are published and made widely available and accessible to all candidates and their carers."

You can find a template for this policy on [The Exams Office website](#).

4. Policy covering the management of GCSE controlled assessments, including risk management and staff responsibilities

Section 1 of JCQ's [Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessments](#) booklet states:

Since September 2010 the JCQ has required each centre to have a controlled assessment policy in place:

- to cover procedures for planning and managing controlled assessment;
- to define staff roles and responsibilities with respect to controlled assessment;
- to manage risks associated with controlled assessment.

A JCQ Centre Inspector will ask the examinations officer to confirm that a controlled assessment policy is in place. The guidance provided in this document will help the head of centre to ensure that the centre's controlled assessment policy is fit for purpose.

5. Disability policy showing the centre's compliance with relevant legislation, i.e. Equality Act 2010.

For more information, see page 4 of JCQ's [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#) booklet.

It is possible that some exams policies may be incorporated within whole-school guidance. This may apply to the Disability Policy, and also DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) clearance to satisfy current legislative requirements in relation to invigilators.

However, there are two further points to note regarding exam policies.

Firstly, they are not the responsibility of the exams officer. Yes, your exams officer may contribute to a particular policy, but the development and oversight for all policies must lie with a member of SLT. Take the 'Examination Contingency Plan' as an example. Yes, your exams officer may detail the procedure if he/she is absent for a prolonged period, however, your exams officer would find it very difficult to outline the contingency measures if IT systems failed on the day that results are released to centres, or your school hall being unavailable for an exam due to structural damage, or if the SENCo is absent during the JCQ inspection.

Secondly, policies must not be produced solely to satisfy the requirements of the JCQ inspection. SLT should draft policies where they feel that clarity is required within their centre, or amongst parents and students. This could be to explain how [transgender students will be supported during the examination process](#), [the rules around separate invigilation/rooming](#), the process for dealing with late and absent candidates, or a policy on the use of word processors.

Once policies are devised they should be updated on an annual basis to reflect the practice in your centre. Simply copying another school's policy defeats the object and may lead to issues in the longer term.