Discovery Exams Policy

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Contents

MacIntyre Academies

1. Introduction and aims

This Exams Policy outlines the procedures and protocols for administering exams at Discovery Academy, providing provisions for learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities, in accordance with statutory guidelines. This policy aligns with national requirements from the Department for Education (DfE), Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), Equality Act 2010, and the SEN Code of Practice to ensure fair and equitable access to all examinations.

Discovery Academy is committed to ensuring that exams are managed and administered effectively.

The aim of this policy is to ensure:

- The planning and management of exams is conducted in the best interest of candidates

- Our system of exams administration is efficient and clear, and staff and learners understand what is required and expected of them

- We comply with requirements and guidance set out by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and other awarding bodies

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Everyone

Everyone involved in our exam processes, including staff and learners, must read, understand and implement this policy.

2.2 Head of Centre (Principal)

The Head of Centre:

- Has overall responsibility for Discovery Academy as an exams centre
- Is the individual who is accountable to the awarding bodies for ensuring that the centre is compliant with the JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements
- Is responsible for ensuring that all staff comply with the JCQ guidelines
- Is responsible for ensuring that all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice are reported, in line with the JCQ guidance on malpractice in examinations and assessments
- Ensures that JCQ guidance for centres on cyber security is followed
- Ensures that accurate candidate contact information is obtained and maintained
- Ensures appropriate controls are in place that allow accurate data to be submitted to the awarding bodies, e.g. entries and internally assessed marks
- Ensures that candidates are entered under names that can be verified against suitable identification such as a birth certificate, driver's license or passport. A candidate should only be entered under alternative names in exceptional circumstances

Where the Head of Centre is referenced, actions may be appropriately delegated to the Assistant Principal for Teaching and Learning, where there is no conflict.

2.3 Exams officer

The exams officer is responsible for the administration of exams. They:

- Manage the administration of internal and/or external exams
- Advise the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), subject and class tutors, and other relevant support staff on annual exams timetables and procedures as set by awarding bodies
- Oversee the production and distribution of an annual calendar for all exams in which candidates will be involved, and communicate regularly with staff about imminent deadlines and events. This calendar must be provided to all staff and candidates
- Ensure that candidates and their parents/carers are informed of, and understand, aspects of the exams timetable that will affect them

- Check with teaching staff that the necessary coursework and/or controlled assessments are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines
- Provide and confirm detailed data on estimated entries
- Maintain systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams
- Receive, check and securely store all exam papers and completed scripts, and ensure that scripts are dispatched as per the guidelines
- Apply for and administer access arrangements and make applications for special consideration following the regulations in the JCQ guidance on the special consideration process in consultation with the school's SENCO
- Identify and manage exam timetable clashes
- Account for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges in consultation with the School Business Manager (SBM)
- Line manage the Exam Support Assistant (IT Technician)
- Train and monitoring a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams
- Ensure candidates' coursework/controlled assessment marks are submitted correctly and on schedule, along with any other material required by the awarding bodies
- Track, dispatch and store returned coursework/controlled assessments
- Arrange for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates, and forward, in consultation with the SLT, any post-results service requests
- Report all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice, in line with the JCQ guidance on suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments
- Advise on appeals and re-marks
- Support with EQA and external SV visits, and any other external audits as necessary
- Are 1 of the key holders to the secure room with question papers and pre-release materials

2.4 Phase Leads/Subject Specialists

Phase Leads/Subject Specialists are responsible for:

- Advising the exams officer of any changes to syllabus or assessment details for their subjects
- Advising the exams officer of entries for their subjects
- Guidance and pastoral care for candidates who are unsure about exams entries or amendments to entries
- Accurately completing entry and mark sheets, and adhering to deadlines as set by the exams officer
- Accurately completing coursework/controlled assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets
- Decisions on post-results procedures

2.5 Teachers/Assessors

Teachers are responsible for:

- Supplying information about entries, coursework and controlled assessments as required by the Heads of Departments/Subject Specialists and/or the exams officer

2.6 Special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO)

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Identifying and testing candidates' requirements for access arrangements and notifying the exams officer in good time so they can put exam day arrangements in place
- 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 exam rooms

2.7 Invigilator(s)/Exam Support Assistant

The invigilator(s)/Exam Support Assistant are responsible for:

- Assisting the exams officer to run exams efficiently, according to JCQ regulations
- Collecting exam papers and other material from the exams office before the start of the exam, where they are invigilating away from the main room.
- Ensuring the security of papers at all times and ensuring they are returned to the exams officer at the end of the exam.

2.8 Internal Quality Assurers (IQA) – Quality Nominee and Lead IV's

Key Responsibilities of an IQA:

1. **Monitoring Assessment Practices**:
   - o Ensure that assessments are conducted fairly, consistently, and according to the standards set by the awarding body.
   - o Verify that assessment decisions are valid, reliable, and sufficient.
2. **Standardisation**:
   - o Facilitate regular standardisation meetings to ensure consistency among assessors.
   - o Review and compare assessment practices to ensure uniformity in judgment.
3. **Providing Feedback**:
   - o Offer constructive feedback to assessors to help them improve their practices.
   - o Support assessors in understanding and applying the requirements of the qualification specifications.
4. **Quality Audits and Sampling**:
   - o Conduct sampling of assessment records, portfolios, and other evidence to verify compliance with standards.
   - o Maintain documentation of quality assurance processes to provide an audit trail.
5. **Ensuring Compliance with Regulations**:
   - o Keep the school up to date with changes to qualifications, criteria, and awarding body regulations.
   - o Ensure that the school's practices align with external regulatory requirements (e.g., Ofqual in the UK).
6. **Supporting Continuous Improvement**:
   - o Identify areas for improvement in assessment and quality assurance practices.
   - o Develop action plans to address weaknesses and implement improvements.
7. **Training and Supporting Assessors**:
   - o Provide training to assessors on qualification standards, assessment techniques, and quality assurance requirements.
   - o Act as a point of contact for assessors needing guidance on difficult cases.
8. **Managing External Quality Assurance Visits**:
   - o Liaise with External Quality Assurers (EQAs) from awarding organisations during external verification visits.
   - o Ensure all necessary documentation and evidence is prepared for external review.

2.9 Candidates

Candidates are responsible for:

- Checking their exam timetable
- Understanding coursework/controlled assessment regulations, and signing a declaration that confirms the coursework to be their own
- Ensuring they conduct themselves in all exams according to the JCQ regulations.

3. Qualifications offered

Course delivered within Curriculum	Awarding Body	Offered at:
English Functional Skills - Entry Level 1 – Entry Level 3	Pearson Edexcel	KS3, KS4 and Post 16
Maths Functional Skills - Entry Level 1 Entry level 3	Pearson Edexcel	KS3, KS4 and Post 16
Achieve Programme	Kings Trust	KS3, KS4 and Post 16
GCSE English Language	WJEC/Eduqas	KS4 and Post 16
GCSE English Literature	WJEC/Eduqas	KS4 and Post 16
GCSE Maths	Pearson Edexcel	KS4 and Post 16
GCSE Science Synergy	AQA	KS4 and Post 16
BTEC Home Cooking	Pearson Edexcel	KS4 and Post 16
English Functional Skills L1 and L2	Pearson Edexcel	KS4 and Post 16
Maths Functional Skills L1 and L2	Pearson Edexcel	KS4 and Post 16
Edexcel Award in Number and measure - L1 and L2	Pearson Edexcel	KS4 and Post 16
ICDL Extra (Level 2)	BCS	KS4 and Post 16
Option offers	Awarding Body	Offered at:
GCSE Art and Design - Fine Art	AQA	KS4 and Post 16
GCSE Art and Design - Graphics	AQA	KS4 and Post 16
GCSE Computer Science	Pearson Edexcel	KS4 and Post 16
GCSE History	Pearson Edexcel	KS4 and Post 16
GCSE Geography B	WJEC/Eduqas	KS4 and Post 16
BTEC Level 1 Introductory Award in Vocational Studies	Pearson Edexcel	KS4 and Post 16
BTEC First Award in Hospitality	Pearson Edexcel	KS4 and Post 16
BTEC First Award in Sport	Pearson Edexcel	KS4 and Post 16
BTEC First Award in Performing Arts	Pearson Edexcel	KS4 and Post 16
BTEC Construction - Introductory award	Pearson Edexcel	KS4 and Post 16
BTEC Construction - Introductory Certificate	Pearson Edexcel	KS4 and Post 16
Level 1 Award in Developing Enterprise skills	NCFE	Post 16
Level 1 Certificate in Travel and Tourism	NCFE	KS4 and Post 16

4. Exam series

Internal exams (mock or trial exams) and assessments are scheduled and can found on our school website, this will all be published via the school newsletter for several weeks in advance of the first exam and will separately be sent to all key stake holders.

5. Exam timetables

Once confirmed, the exams officer will circulate the exam timetables for internal and/or external exams at a specified date before each series begins.

This can be found on our school website in the Examinations section, will be added to the school calendar and will be shared via class teams separately to all key stake holders.

6. Entries (including entry details and late entries)

Candidates or parents/carers **can** request subject entry, change of level or withdrawal. However, this will be at the discretion of the **Subject Lead** in consultation with the Phase lead and Head of Centre.

We **do not accept** entries from private candidates.

We **do not act** as an exams centre for other organisations.

Entry deadlines are circulated to Heads of Department/Subject Specialists via email /briefing meetings /the school intranet.

Heads of Department/Subject Specialists 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 require authorisation, in writing, by the **Assistant Principal for Teaching and Learning/Head of Centre and actioned by the school's Exams Officer**

6.1 Re-sits

Re-sit decisions will be subject to the viability of the re-sit within the same academic year, depending on the type of qualification/ guidance within the qualification specification. The viability of this will be determined by the **Assistant Principal for Teaching and Learning/Head of Centre and actioned by the school's Exams Officer**

7. Exam fees

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.

The exams officer will publish the deadline for actions well in advance of each exam series.

Discovery Academy **will not** charge learners to enter "prescribed public examinations", we will have these prepared for them in school, the same will apply for viable re-sits

This is set out in the DfE's guidance on charging for school activities. "Prescribed public examinations" includes GCSEs, AS-levels and A-levels. A full list is in the annex to an explanatory memorandum to the Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010.

8. Conflict of Interest

Conflicts of interests are declared to ensure transparency and fairness in all examination-related activities, adhering to the standards of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), the Department for Education (DfE), and relevant awarding bodies. A conflict of interest is defined as any personal, professional, or financial interest that could compromise, or appear to compromise, an individual's impartiality in the administration, invigilation, or assessment of examinations. This applies to all staff, learners, and individuals involved in the delivery, assessment, and management of examinations, including interactions with awarding bodies.

Procedure steps outlined in *Appendix C (Identification and Declaration of Conflicts)*

9. Internal Quality Assurance and Moderation

To maintain the integrity and quality of qualifications through a structured internal quality assurance process, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements and meeting the needs of learners with special educational needs (SEN).

Procedure outlined in *Appendix B*

10. Equalities

All our staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of any equality legislation.

We will comply with the legislation, including making reasonable adjustments to the service that we provide to candidates in accordance with the requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies and JCQ. This is the responsibility of by **Assistant Principal for Teaching and Learning, Head of Centre, Exams Officer and SENCO**

11. Access arrangements

The SENCO will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs (SEN) 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 as per 2.6 above.

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

Room arrangements for candidates using access arrangements will be organised by the Exams Officer.

Invigilation and support for candidates using access arrangements, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the Exams Officer and the Exam Support Assistant. Where candidates sit their examinations in a smaller environment away from the main examination room, the suitability of which is to be assessed in conjunction with JCQ guidelines.

11.1 Use of word processors

We may allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate as part of access arrangements or as a reasonable adjustment where appropriate, including:

- When it is their normal way of working, i.e. where the curriculum is delivered electronically and word processors are provided to all candidates
- If they need support with handwriting
- If they have a:
  - Physical disability
  - Learning difficulty that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
  - Medical condition
  - Sensory impairment

The above is not an exhaustive list and may be added to by the SENCO, where appropriate, and in line with JCQ guidance.

The SENCO will use their judgement, in collaboration with relevant members of staff where necessary, to make decisions about when a word processor is appropriate outside the specific listed examples above.

We will make sure that:

- The proposed arrangement will not disadvantage or advantage a candidate.
- The use of a word processor will not compromise the assessment objectives or the integrity of the assessment and will be used under secure conditions. Where these objectives would be compromised, then a word processor will not be granted for use by a candidate

We will also make sure that the word processor:

- Has the spelling and grammar check and predictive text software disabled
- Does not have internet connectivity during the exam

- Has been cleared of any previously stored data, along with any portable storage medium used (and where any authorised memory stick is provided to or used by the candidate, the memory stick will be cleared of any previously stored data)
- Does not allow access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited), spreadsheets or emails
- Does not have graphic packages or computed-aided design software, unless permission is given
- Does not have computer reading (text to speech) software, unless the candidate has permission
- Does not have speech recognition technology, unless the candidate has permission

The word processor will not be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

All equipment will be checked to make sure it's in working order and sufficiently charged for the duration of the examination.

Candidates provided with the use of a word processor will be accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen. Where we accommodate a candidate in another room, a separate invigilator will be present.

Candidates will be provided with a Word Processer that includes ExamWritePad software which:

- Inputs the centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer,
- Will 'autosave' at regular intervals to make sure that the candidate's work is not lost because of a technical issue
- Uses a minimum font size of 12pt and double spacing as per Awarding Body guidelines
- Automatically numbers each page of the typed script

The word processor will be connected to a printer so that the script can be printed off and will be done once the examination is over. The candidate must be present to verify that the work is their own and then the script will be attached to any answer booklet that contains some of the answers. We may also be required by the awarding body to include a word processor cover sheet with the candidate's typed script.

We may retain electronic copies of a word-processed script and this may be accepted by an awarding body where the printed copy has been lost and it is demonstrated that the file has been kept securely.

12. Internal Appeals Process

Introduction and Context

This document outlines the procedures for appealing decisions related to exam results, in accordance with JCQ regulations and the Equality Act. Appeals may arise in cases where a learner or their family believes that a decision, such as the awarding of marks or handling of special arrangements, did not adhere to established procedures or legal frameworks.

Appeals are typically made by the learner or their parent(s)/guardian(s) following a review of the learner's exam results. The process is designed to ensure fairness, transparency, and compliance with relevant policies, including the SEN Code of Practice, which protects the rights of learners with special educational needs and disabilities.

1. **Grounds for Appeal**
   Appeals can be made in line with JCQ regulations and the Equality Act if there is evidence of:

   o **Procedural Irregularity**: Instances where JCQ or school policies, particularly those relating to special arrangements, were not properly followed.

   o **Administrative Error**: Mistakes in recording or processing the learner's exam result.

   o **Exceptional Circumstances**: Situations significantly impacting the learner's performance that were not fully considered, such as an unmet need in line with the SEN Code of Practice.

Stage 1: Initial Review

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- o **Timeframe**: Appeals should be submitted within 5-10 working days of the learner receiving their results or any relevant feedback.
- o **Submission**: Written requests for appeal are submitted to the school's Examinations Officer or the designated member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), outlining the grounds and evidence for the appeal.
- o **Review Process**: The Examinations Officer conducts an initial review to determine if the request meets appeal criteria in line with JCQ standards and the Equality Act. If so, the appeal proceeds to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Formal Appeal

- o **Appeals Panel**: A Formal Appeals Panel, including SLT members and a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) who is familiar with the learner's specific needs, is convened to assess the case.
- o **Evidence Gathering**: The panel may request further documentation from teachers, assessors, or external professionals who provided access arrangements or other accommodations.
- o **Decision**: The panel reviews all evidence and reaches a decision within 10-15 working days. Written notification is provided to the learner and/or their family, including any changes to the exam outcome, if applicable.

Stage 3: Independent Review (if applicable)

- o If the learner or family is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may seek an independent review through an external body (such as the local authority or an independent assessor recommended by JCQ).
- o **Final Decision**: The independent review body's decision is considered final, and a written confirmation of the outcome is provided to the school and family.

Final Outcome and Recommendations

- o The school documents the outcome of the appeal, including any necessary changes to the learner's results or recommendations for future examination practices.
- o A summary report is provided to the SLT to ensure ongoing compliance with the SEN Code of Practice and the Equality Act.

Key Considerations

- **Accessible Communication and Support**: Throughout the process, the school should maintain clear, accessible communication with the learner and family, providing appropriate support in line with the SEN Code of Practice.

- **Confidentiality and Data Protection**: All discussions and records related to the appeal must remain confidential and comply with data protection laws.

13. Contingency planning

Contingency planning for exam administration is the responsibility of the **Head of Centre (Principal) and actioned by the Exam Officer in consultation with the SENCO.** All centres must have a written examination contingency plan that covers all aspects of examination administration, in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

All relevant centre staff must be familiar with the contingency plans, which are available via email/ noticeboards / briefing meetings / school intranet and are in line with the guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and awarding organisations.

14. Estimated grades

Head of Departments/Subject Specialists are responsible for submitting estimated grades to the Exams Officer when requested.

15. Managing invigilators

If necessary, external staff **may** be used to invigilate examinations. The Head of Centre (Principal), a member of SLT staff, or the Exams Officer must ensure that a Teacher, Teaching Assistant and/or tutor who teaches the subject being examined, or a Learning Support Assistant who has supported one or more candidates, is not an invigilator during the examination.

These invigilators will be used for internal exams.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams Officer and Exam Support Assistant and any new invigilators and/or those facilitating an access arrangement for a candidate under examination conditions must receive thorough training on JCQ guidelines.

If invigilators require Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, the exams officer is responsible for obtaining these.

DBS fees **are not** paid by the centre.

Invigilators rates of pay are set by Head of Centre, SLT or school business manager (SBM).

Invigilators are recruited, timetabled, trained and briefed by the Exam Support Assistant/ Exams Officer/SENCO.

16. Malpractice

The Head of Centre, in consultation with Exams Officer, is responsible for ensuring that suspected malpractice is thoroughly investigated. Malpractice doesn't necessarily involve an intention to cheat or gain an unfair advantage. Examples of malpractice include, but are not limited to:

- Unauthorised use of a mobile phone or internet-enabled device in examinations
- Copying or allowing work to be copied
- Posting work on social media prior to an exam
- Collusion or working collaboratively
- Failure to comply with JCQ regulations during an exam

Malpractice Prevention and Escalation Policy

16.1 Information and Guidance on Malpractice Prevention

To ensure candidates understand the importance of avoiding malpractice in examinations and assessments, the following measures are in place:

- **Written Guidance**: All candidates receive clear, accessible written guidance on what constitutes malpractice (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, unauthorised use of materials) before examinations. This guidance is designed to be comprehensible for learners with diverse needs, following the SEN Code of Practice.

- **Verbal Reminders**: At the start of each examination, invigilators provide verbal reminders tailored to reinforce key points from the written guidance, ensuring candidates understand the rules and expectations.

- **Support from Invigilators**: Invigilators trained in SEN best practices are available to provide additional clarification if candidates have questions, thus minimising the risk of unintentional malpractice.

16.2 Suspected Malpractice: Investigation and Escalation Procedure

If malpractice is suspected or reported, the following process is followed in line with JCQ guidelines:

- **Initial Investigation**: The Examinations Officer or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) conducts an initial review to gather relevant information. This process is conducted sensitively and confidentially to support the candidate's needs and protect their privacy.

- **Escalation to Head of Centre**: If the initial investigation suggests that malpractice may have occurred, the case is escalated to the Head of Centre. The Head of Centre will conduct a thorough investigation in accordance with JCQ and school policies, ensuring all evidence is reviewed.

- **Reporting to Awarding Body**: If the Head of Centre determines that malpractice likely occurred, they will report the findings to the relevant awarding body. Documentation of the investigation and any supporting evidence will be submitted, and the awarding body's procedures will be followed.

16.3 Supportive Approach for SEN Candidates

In cases where suspected malpractice involves a candidate with special educational needs, the investigation process considers whether the alleged behaviour was related to a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of exam regulations due to their specific needs. Any findings will be documented with due regard to the Equality Act, and reasonable adjustments may be made to ensure fairness and understanding in line with the SEN Code of Practice.

17. Exam days

The Exams Officer will:

- Book all exam rooms (after liaising with other relevant users)
- Make question papers, exam stationery and materials available for the invigilator
- Act as roving invigilator and point of contact for issues during an exam

Site staff are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms, and will be advised of requirements at the **earliest possible opportunity** prior to the exam season commencing.

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

Subject staff **may** be present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates. 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.

Exam papers must not be read by subject teachers or removed from the exam room before the end of a session. Papers will be distributed to heads of department/ subject specialists in accordance with JCQ's recommendations.

After an exam, the Exams Officer will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed exam scripts to awarding bodies.

Emergency evacuation of the examination room will be outlined within the centre's exam contingency policy, which will be subject to inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.

In the event of an emergency, a full report of the incident must be produced and retained on file and any breach of question paper security or malpractice must be reported to the awarding body immediately.

18. Candidates

The Exams Officer will provide written information to candidates in advance of each exam series, normally during the first half term of the academic year. A formal briefing session for candidates may be given by the Phase Leads or Subject Specialists.

Our published rules on acceptable dress and behaviour apply at all times. Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and we accept 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 devices with text or digital facilities.

Any precluded items must not be taken into the exam room.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates are expected to stay for the minimal time stated for each exam concession.

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

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

18.1 Clash candidates

The Exams Officer will be responsible for making arrangements for clash candidates, including:

- Supervising escorts
- Identifying a secure venue

19. Special consideration

If a candidate is unable to attend an exam because of illness, bereavement, or other trauma, or if a candidate becomes ill or otherwise disadvantaged during an exam, they are responsible for alerting the Exams Officer, who will make the SENCO, Deputy Principal and Head of Centre aware.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within the specified days – Exams Officer to be contacted for this information.

The Exams Officer will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body within the specified days - Exams Officer to be contacted for this information.

20. GCSE and Vocational non-examination assessments

Teaching staff who deliver non-examination assessments will follow the correct specifications and the specification and instructions provided by the awarding body, or JCQ instructions for conducting non-examination assessments if appropriate.

Coordination and Standardisation of Centre-Assessed Marking

To ensure consistency, fairness, and accuracy in the marking of all centre-assessed assessments, the school has implemented the following procedures, in line with JCQ and DfE guidelines:

1. **Marking Coordination Meetings**
   Regular coordination meetings are held for all staff involved in centre-assessed marking. During these sessions, teachers and assessors review marking criteria, discuss best practices, and ensure alignment with the standards set by awarding bodies.

2. **Training and Guidance**
   All teachers involved in marking receive thorough training on the specific assessment criteria, including any adjustments required to meet the needs of SEN learners in line with the SEN Code of Practice and the Equality Act. This training is updated annually and whenever criteria from awarding bodies are revised.

3. **Standardisation Sessions**
   At the beginning of each assessment period, standardisation sessions are conducted where sample assessments are reviewed collectively. These sessions are led by a senior teacher or subject lead to ensure that all markers interpret the criteria consistently.

4. **Cross-Moderation Process**
   To maintain objectivity, marked assessments undergo a cross-moderation process. This involves a secondary review by another qualified teacher to verify consistency and fairness, especially for learners with special educational needs who may require adapted assessment methods.

5. **Review by Lead Assessor**
   Once all assessments are marked and moderated, a Lead Assessor reviews a sample from

each class to verify accuracy and alignment across all marking. Any discrepancies are addressed before final grades are submitted to the awarding body.

It is the duty of Subject/Course leads to ensure that all non-examination 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 internally assessed work are provided to the Exams Office by Heads of Department/Subject Specialists. The Exams Officer will inform staff of the deadline date for appeals against internal assessments.

Any appeals will be dealt with in accordance with our internal appeals procedure document **(9.1).**

20.1 Artificial intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, learners and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard. Discovery Academy recognises that AI has many uses to help learners learn, but may also lend itself to cheating and plagiarism.

Learners **may not** use AI tools:

- During assessments, including internal and external assessments, and coursework
- To write their homework or class assignments, where AI-generated text is presented as their own work

Learners **may** use AI tools:

- As a research tool to help them find out about new topics and ideas
- When specifically studying and discussing AI in schoolwork, for example in IT lessons or art homework about AI-generated images., all AI-generated content must be properly attributed

Where a learner uses an AI tool, the learner should retain a copy of the question(s) asked and the AI-generated responses. Learners must submit this along with the assessment.

Staff should:

- Be aware that AI tools are still being developed and should use such tools with caution as they may provide inaccurate, inappropriate or biased content
- Make learners aware of the risks of using AI tools and that they need to appropriately reference AI as a source of information to maintain the integrity of assessments

For more information on AI misuse, see guidance from JCQ on AI use in assessments. Any misuse of AI tools may be treated as malpractice.

21. Results and certificates
Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days either in school/by recorded delivery/by email, if requested in writing to the Exams Officer.

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 Exams Officer in consultation with the Head of Centre.

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

Dates of results days each year will be publicised for all candidates through the school website/ email/letters home.

21.1 Enquiries about results (EARs)

Enquiries about results (EARs) may be requested by centre staff or the candidate following the release of results.

A request for a re-mark 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 a group of candidates.

The cost of EARs will be paid by the **centre** at the discretion of the Head of Centre/ Deputy Principal

All decisions about whether to make an application for an EAR will be made by Head of Departments/Subject Specialists.

If a candidate's request for an EAR is not supported, the candidate may appeal and we will respond by following the process in our internal appeals procedure document.

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

21.2 Access to scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of written exam papers within the specified days (contact the Exams Officer for this information) of the receipt of results.

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

Applications for EARs cannot be submitted once an original script has been returned.

The Exam Officer is responsible for processing requests for ATS.

The cost of ATS will be paid by the **centre**.

22. Storage and Data Protection

In compliance with JCQ regulations, DfE guidelines, and data protection laws, our centre ensures the secure storage of all examination-related materials, including exam papers, completed assessments, and certificates. These items are stored in a locked, access-controlled environment with limited authorised personnel having entry (Examinations Safe). Electronic data is encrypted and protected by secure passwords, in line with GDPR requirements. All materials are handled confidentially and retained for the required period before secure disposal, following awarding body guidelines. Regular audits are conducted to maintain compliance and uphold the integrity of all stored data.

23. Monitoring and review

The Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed every 3 years, unless there is a change to:

- The exams system
- JCQ guidance
- Your curriculum offer

24. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- MAT Whistle-blowing Policy and Procedure

- MAT Conflict of Interests Policy (local)

- Discovery Complaints Policy

- MAT Data protection policy

Appendix A: Exams Contingency Procedure

Responsibilities

- Head of Centre: Overall responsibility for policy adherence and decision-making in emergencies.

- Exams Officer: Responsible for planning, implementing, and communicating contingency arrangements.

- SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator): Ensures that students with SEN or disabilities are accommodated and supported in line with legal obligations.

- Invigilators and Staff: Responsible for maintaining examination conditions and reporting disruptions.

- Students and Parents: Expected to follow contingency instructions and communicate any issues promptly.

1. Contingency Scenarios and Procedures

This policy covers possible contingencies including but not limited to:

1.1 Severe Weather and School Closures

- If severe weather prevents access to the centre, the Head of Centre will communicate with staff, parents, and students via pre-arranged communication channels.

- In collaboration with JCQ and the awarding bodies, alternative arrangements (e.g., alternative locations or dates) will be explored.

- The Exams Officer will liaise with JCQ to consider re-scheduling options or alternative sittings.

1.2 Widespread Illness or Pandemic

- Following DfE and Public Health England guidance, the Head of Centre will assess risks and arrange for increased hygiene measures, alternative seating arrangements, or remote examination options where possible.

- In the event of a school closure due to illness, remote examination options will be explored, ensuring SEN and disabled candidates' needs are accommodated.

- Where exams are rescheduled, the centre will communicate all details with students and parents.

1.3 Absence of Invigilators

- In case of invigilator shortages, senior staff who have completed JCQ invigilation training will fill in.

- If required, the Exams Officer will contact external supply agencies to provide qualified invigilation.

- Contingency for last-minute invigilator replacement will be reviewed annually by the Exams Officer.

1.4 Building Disruption (e.g., Fire, Flood)

- If the building is unusable, the Head of Centre and Exams Officer will arrange the relocation of exams to Venture Academy. Where this is not a suitable alternative the Head of Centre and Exams Officer will work with local authorities and awarding bodies to identify an alternative examination site.

- Safety procedures will be prioritised, including full evacuation drills and headcounts.

- Arrangements will ensure SEN candidates' adjustments are maintained (e.g., wheelchair accessibility, quiet rooms).

1.5 Examination Paper Disruption or Security Breach

- If there is a security breach affecting examination materials, the Exams Officer will contact the relevant awarding bodies immediately, adhering to JCQ guidelines.

- Replacement papers will be arranged where possible.

- An investigation will be conducted, and necessary preventative actions taken in line with JCQ's protocols.

1.6 Disruption of Transport

- Candidates affected by transport disruptions should inform the Exams Officer as soon as possible.

- Where practical, candidates should use alternative transport options or make arrangements to stay close to the centre.

- The centre will liaise with awarding bodies regarding candidates unable to attend and consider special consideration applications as per JCQ guidance.

2. Special Consideration Applications

For eligible candidates who have been disadvantaged during an examination due to unforeseen circumstances, the Exams Officer will follow JCQ procedures for special consideration applications. This process ensures that students' circumstances are fairly reflected, where possible, in their results.

3. Equality and Accessibility

The centre is committed to equitable examination access as per the Equality Act (2010). Reasonable adjustments will be provided for all eligible candidates, including:

- Providing alternative formats, accessible venues, and specialised equipment for students with disabilities.

- Ensuring that SEN candidates' agreed adjustments, such as extra time, scribes, or assistive technology, are in place for contingency arrangements.

4. Communication of Contingency Plans

Contingency procedures will be communicated to all staff, students, and parents through accessible formats and via multiple channels (e.g., email, school website, text messages). Clear instructions will be provided in advance wherever possible, particularly for SEN and disabled students requiring additional support.

5. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Centre and the Exams Officer to ensure it remains compliant with JCQ, DfE, and Equality Act standards. Feedback from students, staff, and parents will be gathered post-examinations to identify areas for improvement.

Appendix B: Internal Quality Assurance and Moderation Procedure

IQA Procedure Steps

1. Planning

    1. Annual IQA Plan:
- Establish an annual IQA schedule aligned with the academic calendar.
- Include all qualifications, assessors, and internal verifiers in the plan.

    2. Standardisation Meetings:
- Schedule regular meetings to ensure consistency in assessment and understanding of criteria.
- Focus on SEN-specific considerations for access arrangements and differentiated learning outcomes.

2. Assessment

    1. Assessor Training:
- Provide mandatory training on SEN-specific assessment strategies and awarding body requirements.

    2. Assessment Records:
- Ensure all assessments are documented clearly and securely stored.
- Record any reasonable adjustments made for SEN learners.

3. Internal Verification

    1. Sampling Strategy:
- Verify a representative sample of assessed work, ensuring coverage of all assessors and units/modules.
- Prioritise new assessors and complex cases involving SEN adjustments.

    2. Feedback to Assessors:
- Provide constructive, written feedback on assessment practices.
- Address any issues in line with awarding body guidelines.

    3. Follow-Up Actions:
- Monitor the implementation of recommendations from feedback.
- Re-sample assessments where necessary.

4. Review and Monitoring

    1. Internal Audit:
- Conduct periodic internal audits of assessment and IQA records.
- Check compliance with JCQ and awarding body regulations.

    2. Learner Feedback:
- Collect feedback from SEN learners on their assessment experience to inform quality improvements.

    3. Data Analysis:
- Analyse assessment outcomes to identify trends and areas for improvement.

5. External Verification

    1. Preparation for External Visits:

- o Ensure all requested documentation and evidence are readily available for external verifiers.
- o Address feedback and action plans issued by external verifiers promptly.

2. Integration of Feedback:
- o Incorporate external verifier feedback into internal practices.

6. SEN Considerations

- Ensure all assessors and internal verifiers are trained in JCQ Access Arrangements for SEN learners.
- Liaise with the SENCO to identify and implement reasonable adjustments, such as modified papers, extra time, or use of assistive technology.
- Maintain records of all adjustments made and the rationale for these decisions.

7. Quality Assurance Review

- The IQA procedure will be reviewed annually by the Head of Centre and the Quality Nominee.
- Updates will be informed by JCQ, DfE, and awarding body guidance and shared with all relevant staff.

8. Reporting and Documentation

- **Maintain comprehensive records of all IQA activities, including:**
  - o Assessment and verification logs.
  - o Standardisation meeting minutes.
  - o Action plans and reviews.
  - o External verifier reports and responses.

9. Non-Compliance Management

- Any non-compliance with IQA standards will be investigated by the Head of Centre.
- Appropriate actions will be taken, including staff retraining, re-assessment, or referral to awarding bodies, if required.

By adhering to this IQA procedure, Discovery Academy commits to delivering high-quality, fair, and accessible qualifications, ensuring the best outcomes for all learners.

Appendix C: Identification and Declaration of Conflicts

Identification and Declaration of Conflicts:

1. **Staff Involvement in Exams:**
   - Staff must declare if they have close family, friends, or financial ties to candidates sitting examinations at the school.
   - Staff involved in teaching and assessing candidates must not have undue influence over examination outcomes.

2. **Awarding Bodies:**
   - Any relationships or affiliations with awarding bodies that could compromise integrity (e.g., employment or consultancy roles) must be declared.

Mitigation Measures:

1. **Exam Administration:**
   - Identified conflicts will be managed to ensure no undue advantage is provided to any candidate. This may include reallocation of duties (e.g., invigilation, marking, or moderation).
   - Where necessary, alternative personnel may be assigned to critical examination roles.

2. **Awarding Body Liaison:**
   - The school will adhere to all requirements for reporting conflicts to awarding bodies, ensuring compliance with JCQ and DfE guidance.
   - All necessary adjustments will be implemented as directed by the awarding bodies.

Monitoring and Reporting:

- All declarations will be reviewed by the Exams Officer and Head of Centre.
- Any conflicts of interest must be documented and reported to the relevant awarding bodies as required by their regulations.
- Failure to declare a conflict of interest may result in disciplinary action.

This procedure will be reviewed annually and updated to reflect changes in line with regulations or circumstances.