

EXAMINATIONS & ASSESSMENTS POLICY - Procedures

1) Qualifications Offered and Qualification Approval

- Qualifications offered at STCG are agreed through annual (Spring time) or in-year curriculum planning processes and authorised by college Principals. As part of this process, all course titles must include the relevant awarding body name (or abbreviation) and qualification aim reference numbers must be correct. Naming conventions should be consistent.
- Qualifications offered in any academic year may be found in the published prospectus for that year and on the College websites
- If new qualifications are to be introduced, the Exams Office is to be notified as part of the curriculum planning process. Heads of School are responsible for co-ordinating and submitting applications to awarding bodies for centre or qualification approval. In the majority of cases approval must be obtained before teaching of the qualification begins. The Exams Office must be informed of new approvals.
- If there are changes in qualifications from year to year such as the syllabus content, assessment method or awarding body, the Exams Office must be informed by the end of the previous academic year

2) Registrations, Exam Entries, Late Entries and Resits

All registrations and exam entries are made with awarding bodies by the Exams Office. It is the responsibility of teaching staff to make sure students are registered/entered either by (i) responding promptly to requests from the Exams Office or (ii) informing the Exams Office in writing.

The Exams team is responsible for the organisation of all external/public exams, both paper-based and on-line, supported by Heads and Deputy Heads of Schools/Curriculum Managers who are responsible for the provision of suitable exam rooms and invigilators when required.

Registrations

- Student details, for BTEC, Access to HE courses, for example, must be submitted in accordance with Exams Office processes and by internal deadlines set by the Exams Office. Only current, correctly enrolled students will be registered with awarding bodies
- Teaching staff must make every effort to avoid late registrations or entries, but should contact the Exams Office to give notification of delays as soon as any issues are identified
- Information should be submitted to the Exams Office within a reasonable timescale after each course start date, and in all cases no less than 2 weeks prior to external awarding body registration deadlines.

Exam Entries

- Students are identified for exam entry by teaching staff. Only current, correctly enrolled students will be entered for exams
- Details must be submitted in accordance with Exams Office processes and by internal deadlines when set by the Exams Office

- In all cases exam entry details must be submitted to the Exams Office no less than 2 weeks prior to external awarding body entry deadlines
- Changes of level/tier or withdrawals must be authorised by a relevant member of the teaching staff. For A Levels and GCSEs such changes can be made no later than two weeks before the start of the November or summer series of exams
- The Exams Office notifies students of exam details and regulations in writing

Candidate Details

It is the responsibility of the member of teaching staff making the registration/exam entry request to check details before submitting the request to Exams. Exams will not make exam entries if enrolment with the college is not correct in order to be sure accurate candidate details are submitted to awarding bodies.

On-line Exams

- On-line exams must be booked at least 10 working days in advance of the exam date. Functional Skills exams must be booked in line with annual FS exam schedules
- For on-line scheduled exams that have to be booked by an awarding body deadline, the Exams Office must receive the request in accordance with internal deadlines set by them and in all cases no less than 10 working days prior to external awarding body exam entry deadlines. For evening and weekend exams advance notification of more than two weeks is preferable to be sure the request can be fulfilled and resourced appropriately - for example, invigilation and IT Support
- To ensure IT support is available for all on-line exams, Exams provide a weekly timetable of exams to IT Support
- It is the responsibility of teaching staff to make sure candidates are aware of their on-line test dates and times.

Paper Based Exams

- Entries (e.g. for A Level, GCSE, BTEC exams) must be made in advance of awarding body deadlines. Details of associated internal deadlines will be provided by Exams
- Exams will accept withdrawals, amendments and changes of level prior to the entry deadline date set by the awarding body. Every effort should be made to keep such changes to a minimum and acceptance of them after internal deadlines will be at the discretion of the Heads of Exams
- Exam entries for paper-based vocational on-demand exams must be notified no less than 10 working days in advance of the chosen exam date. Exams will accommodate all dates requested whenever possible and otherwise will suggest alternative dates
- Exam entries for vocational paper-based timetabled exams must be booked in accordance with internal deadlines when set by Exams and in all cases no less than 2 weeks in advance of the awarding body deadline
- Individual timetables for A Level and GCSE exams will be posted to students at their home addresses.

Private Candidates

The Colleges do not accept private candidates. Exam entries are made for students who are enrolled with the colleges in the current academic year for exams relevant to the course they are enrolled on. A private candidate is defined as a person who does not fit these criteria.

Late Entries

- A Level, GCSE and Functional Skills late entries must be requested through the Heads of Exams and authorised by the Head of School/Curriculum Manager for both entry and incurred cost. Late entries are accepted in exceptional circumstances only, and where the awarding body allows it
- Exams are entitled to query the reasons for late or special entry requests, such as very small numbers of candidates, and reserve the right to refuse them on reasonable grounds (e.g. inefficient use of resources and invigilator costs). All effort will be made to accommodate small numbers with other bigger groups taking exams
- Late entries for timetabled vocational qualifications will, in exceptional circumstances, be accepted after the deadline set by the awarding bodies if authorised by the relevant Head of School/Curriculum Manager, and where the awarding body allows it.

Resits

- Students may take multiple resits in vocational subjects and Functional Skills as long as approval, including payment of fees, is obtained from a member of the teaching staff. Entries for resits must be made within awarding body deadlines

3) Exam Fees and Invoicing

- Registration and exam fees for each year are published by awarding bodies. Each curriculum area has responsibility for checking fee levels for inclusion in costings as part of their financial planning processes
- In the majority of cases the colleges are responsible for the payment of registration or exam entry costs. Ineligible students are aware of the requirement to pay their own fees before they enrol
- Reimbursement of fees to students who fail to sit an exam or meet the necessary coursework requirements will only be considered if medical evidence or evidence of other mitigating circumstances is provided by the student
- The Exams teams are responsible for checking and coding invoices so that Finance can allocate them to relevant School/Curriculum area exam fee budgets, after which they are approved by Exams
- When requests are made to accept the transfer in of papers because of exam clashes where entries are made through another centre, a reasonable administration fee payable by the candidate concerned can be charged to cover costs incurred such as extra invigilation hours
- Where a candidate requests a transfer out of a paper to another centre, a cost is incurred with the awarding body which is payable by the student

4) Invigilators and Exam Days

Managing Invigilators

- Invigilators are sourced mainly from externally appointed sessional invigilators, but also teachers, learning support, technicians and administrative support staff, should the need arise. Heads of School/Curriculum Managers are responsible for identifying invigilators from within their areas
- The recruitment and/or training of invigilators is the responsibility of the Heads of Exams. Anyone undertaking invigilation must be fully trained

- Securing the necessary Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of Human Resources
- Teachers may not be the sole invigilator for candidates they have taught. In the case of exams run under JCQ regulations, neither teachers of the subject being examined may invigilate, nor senior staff responsible for the preparation of candidates for their exams
- All invigilators must be trained on examination regulations and procedures and on-line testing software as appropriate and undergo refresher training at least annually
- Invigilators must be aware of the Equality Act 2010 and must fully understand their role in relation to the supervision of access arrangements and be aware of what is permissible within the regulations
- Invigilators are responsible for upholding the regulations for *People Present in the Exam Room*. Only those who have authorisation from the Heads of Exams may be present in the exam room. Teaching staff are required to respect exam room conditions and the invigilator's authority

Exam Days

- Exams teams are responsible for upholding exam regulations especially in respect to the security of exam materials. Exam papers will be opened in line with times specified in the regulations and made ready for invigilators to take to exam rooms. Checking procedures must be carried out in accordance with the regulations.
- Exams teams are responsible for dealing with JCQ and other awarding body inspections. In the absence of any of the Heads of Exams, responsibility for dealing with inspections is passed to a more senior level.
- The Exams teams will ensure all exam accommodation is booked, relying on the support of Heads of School/Curriculum Managers to supply rooms
- The Exams teams will request room setup from Site Services and, in the interests of Health & Safety, support from Security with 'crowd control' when large numbers of candidates are involved
- IT Support will be notified weekly of on-line exam dates, times and locations and will give priority to calls for assistance during on-line tests
- Requests for out of hours IT support for evenings and weekend examinations will require a 2 week lead time
- Curriculum teams will have access to GCSE and A Level question papers 24 hours after the published exam end time. For other exams, teachers may have sight of question papers as specified in awarding body regulations. When permitted by the awarding body, excess question papers will be distributed to curriculum teams at the end of each exam series
- JCQ guidelines for people present in the exam room must be followed
- In practical exams, in addition to invigilators organised by the Exams teams, subject teachers must be present to help with any technical difficulties
- Exams teams are able to provide candidates with exam materials supplied by the awarding bodies i.e. exam papers, answer books/continuation sheets, formulae books and anthologies as applicable. Any additional equipment, such as calculators, pens, dictionaries and so on, must be provided by the student. It is the responsibility of the curriculum teams to advise the students of the materials they will need

Emergency Evacuation of Exams

Evacuation of exam rooms is in line with STCG evacuation policies and practicalities dictated by each college's environment. Invigilators must make themselves familiar with fire exits and assembly points, as well as internal and awarding body regulations and procedures, and respond according to these should the need arise

Disruption Caused by Unforeseen Events (e.g. severe weather conditions)

- Measures to be taken in the event of severe weather conditions or other events that could potentially affect exams running to plan are outlined in the exam contingency plan contained within the STCG Exams Policy
- Information, for example regarding college closure, will be communicated through text messaging and/or on colleges' websites

Emergency Exam Contingency Day

An exam contingency date is set by awarding bodies (24 June in 2020) to be used in the event of significant national or local disruption which has prevented exams taking place at the scheduled time. Exams publish this date to students who are required to make themselves available on and up to the date should the need arise

5) Exam Protocol, Lateness, Exam Clashes and Special Consideration

Exam Protocol

- Students are expected to allow enough time for travel and to arrive at the exam room at least 10 minutes before the scheduled exam start time
- Silence must be maintained in exam rooms
- Awarding body rules on the use of mobile phones and electronic devices apply at all times during an exam or assessment. All watches must be removed by exam candidates
- Normal rules on dress, head wear and behaviour apply
- Except for still water in small bottles with the label removed, food and drink is not allowed in any exam room unless for medical reasons and as an approved access arrangement
- Students' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage. Students who bring personal belongings to the exam room must place them as instructed by exam invigilators. If provided, students must leave their belongings in rooms designated for this purpose
- Disruptive students are dealt with in accordance with awarding body guidelines and colleges' procedures and will be removed from the exam room if necessary.

Late and Absent Students

For GCSE and A Level Exams Only

- Candidates who arrive within an hour of the national timetabled exam start times (9.00am and 1.30pm) will be allowed to sit the exam and be given the full time. Students who arrive after 10.00am and 2.30pm are categorised as 'very late' in JCQ terms will not be allowed into the exam room. In these circumstances awarding bodies would not accept their papers and no marks would be awarded. In exceptional circumstances, if a student has been supervised beyond the cut-off time and there is evidence to support this, the candidate may be allowed to sit the exam and have the full time. A decision in such cases is at the discretion of Heads of Exams.

- For exams of less than one hour candidates are considered very late if they arrive after the awarding body's published finishing time or 30 minutes after the awarding body's published start time, whichever is later
- Candidates who are unavoidably delayed should notify the Exams Office of their delay. Wherever possible students will be asked to remain under supervision (e.g. by a parent/carer) until they can be passed for supervision to a member of staff. The parent/carer and student should sign a statement to confirm the supervision arrangements. In such circumstances, the student must be advised the paper may not be marked but must be given the full exam time. A very late report together with supporting statements will be submitted to the awarding body to decide whether the paper can be accepted or not

Other Examinations

- Teaching staff are responsible for making sure candidates are familiar with the lateness rules for any exam they are taking
- Candidates who arrive within the time allowed for lateness by the awarding body will be allowed to enter the exam room and sit the exam. A student who arrives late may be given the full time for the exam, but this depends on organisational arrangements for the exam
- In cases where the candidate arrives after the time allowed for lateness, invigilators will contact the Exams team for a decision, which will be taken according to the relevant awarding body regulations and organisational practicalities

Exam Clashes

- Notifying students of exam clashes and timetable changes, supervision of the students, arranging a suitable venue and overnight supervision if necessary is the responsibility of the Heads of Exams.

Special Consideration

- Should a student be too ill to sit an exam, suffer bereavement or other trauma or be taken ill during the exam itself, it is the student's responsibility to alert Exams staff or the invigilator
- Students must supply appropriate evidence, e.g. a doctor's letter, within 5 days of the exam to support special consideration applications
- Applications for special consideration will be made after an exam has taken place and within certain conditions and timescales. The application will be made by Exams to the appropriate awarding body, usually no later than a week after the last exam paper in the relevant subject in the exam series

6) Assessment (non-Exam)

Coursework and Internal Assessments including GCSE Non-Examination Assessments

- Students and teaching staff are responsible for the production of course/assessment work by relevant deadlines. Malpractice such as plagiarism will be dealt with according to college internal procedures and awarding body requirements
- Teaching staff have responsibility to ensure that appropriate quality assurance procedures are followed to include internal verification of assessed work
- Teaching staff must inform students of the marks they have achieved in good time before awarding body submission deadlines so that students can appeal them internally if they wish

- Teaching staff are responsible for supplying Exams (i) with completed GCSE assessment mark sheets by internal deadlines and (ii) samples of work upon request for onward despatch to awarding bodies
- Keeping a record of what has been sent, when and to whom is the responsibility of Exams.

Monitoring

The Heads of Examinations will maintain an annual overview of assessment claiming with the objective of all claiming having been completed no later than the end of the summer term.

Appeals against Internal Assessments including Non-Examination Assessments

- The internal appeals procedure is published on college websites.

7) Results Release, Enquiries about Results (EARS) and Access to Scripts (ATS)

Results Release

- A Level and GCSE - results' slips are produced by Exams on official results' days in January and August and are handed out or posted and/or made available to candidates on ProPortal
- Functional Skills - teachers pass results to candidates
- For other exams it is the responsibility of the teacher to pass on exam results to students. Decisions about subsequent resits are made by the teacher and entry requests made to Exams.

EARS (Enquiries about Results)

- EARS (Reviews of Marking or Clerical Checks) for A Levels and GCSEs may be requested by centre staff or students via the Exams Office. Written consent must be obtained from the student in all cases prior to an EAR application. If the EAR is initiated by the student, fees are paid by the student who must also be told marks can go up or down. Fees are refunded if there is an overall grade change.
- In the unlikely event that the centre does not uphold an EAR, a student may apply to have an enquiry carried out. In this case students will be charged the appropriate fee by the awarding body.

ATS (Access to Scripts)

- After A Level and GCSE results' release, students may request a copy of or the original exam script via the Exams Office. A priority copy of the script can be obtained to decide whether a review of marking or clerical check is worthwhile. Fees are paid by the student
- Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or teaching purposes but consent of the students must be obtained
- The Exams Office will provide details of fees and deadlines as well as information regarding appeals

Result Processing

- Exams receive results and enter all learner outcomes and grades promptly to meet both internal and external deadlines. Any results received other than by Exams must be forwarded to them immediately.
- Exams ensure the colleges have complete, accurate and timely records of achievement which enable management teams to access, report and analyse achievement data in order to inform and implement interventions for outcome improvement and report externally as appropriate

- MIS are responsible for entering component results and framework outcomes for apprentices.

End of year results completion deadline

Exams work closely with Heads of School/Curriculum Managers to complete missing results in September. The target is for 99% of results to be entered on college systems by the start of the autumn term. MIS are responsible for regular updates to ProAchieve in this period.

8) Certificates and Certificate Claims

- Teachers must ensure that, depending on each qualification process, achievement/ certificate claims are either completed or submitted to the Exams teams for completion before the end of the academic year
- Certificates are posted to students no later than one month after receipt. Certificates are not withheld for any reason whatsoever
- Certificates/results can only be collected on behalf of a student by a third party if they have been authorised to do so in writing by the student and photographic ID of the person collecting is provided
- In general, certificates will be posted 2nd Class to the student's address as recorded on EBS. If a student reports the non-receipt of a certificate within 6 months of the date of posting and the College held a correct current address at that time the colleges will pay for the cost of a replacement. If a current address is not held or if non-receipt of a certificate is reported later than 6 months after the date of posting the student will apply and pay for a replacement from the awarding body. Any exceptions are at the discretion of the Heads of Exams whose decision is final. No-one other than exams staff may apply for replacement certificates.
- Colleges are obliged to retain returned certificates for a period of 12 months from the date of issue after which they can be destroyed. If certificates are destroyed, a record of all certificates destroyed by the colleges will be kept for a further period of at least four years from the date of their destruction.

9) Other Relevant Policies and Documents

Appendix I – Exam Contingency Plan

Appendix II – Access Arrangements/Reasonable Adjustments and Exams

Appendix III – Word Processors in Exams

Appendix IV – Conflict of Interest Policy (Draft)

Assessment and Internal Verification Policy Part B Internal Assessment Appeals Procedure can be found on STCG colleges' websites

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