



Exams Policy

PLT

Policy Approved by the Board of Trustees



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Date: January 2022

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Authorised for Issue

Signed: 

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History of Policy Changes

Date	Version	Change	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, change in legislation	Changed by
September 2019	1	Creation of policy	JCQ	Sarah Gibbon
May 2019	2	Grammatical amendments		Sarah Gibbon
May 2020	3	Review of policy Removal of Controlled Assessment Section (refer to new NEA Policy)		Sarah Gibbon
January 2022	3	Review of policy	No changes made	Sarah Gibbon

This policy applies to The Priory Learning Trust and all its academies

Date policy adopted	January 2022
Review cycle	Annual
Review date	September 2022

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1. Exams

This policy applies to all schools within The Priory Learning Trust (TPLT).

The purpose of this section of the exams policy is:

- to ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interests of students
- to ensure the operation of an efficient exams system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the schools' exam processes to read, understand and implement this policy, and to read the following related documents:

- Exams Contingency Policy – TPLT
- Procedures for Internal and External Appeals Against Controlled Assessments specific to each school

Exam responsibilities

The Head of Centre:

- has overall responsibility for the school as an exams centre.
- is responsible for reporting all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice - refer to the JCQ document suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments.

Examinations Officer:

- manages the administration of all examinations
- advises the leadership team, subject and form tutors, and other relevant support staff on annual exams timetables and procedures as set by the various awarding bodies.
- oversees the production and distribution, to all centre staff and candidates, of an annual calendar for all exams in which students will be involved and communicates regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events.
- ensures that students and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the exams timetable that will affect them.
- checks with teaching staff that the necessary coursework and/or controlled assessments are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ regulations / guidelines.
- provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries to the exam boards.
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of students for their exams.
- receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts and ensures that scripts are dispatched as per the guidelines.
- administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration following the regulations in the JCQ publication A guide to the special consideration process.
- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes.
- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges.
- line manages the invigilators, organising the recruitment, training, and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams.

- provides teachers with all relevant details to enable them to submit candidates' coursework / controlled assessment marks online to the exam board, and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule.
- tracks, dispatches, and stores returned coursework / controlled assessments.
- arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to students and forwards, in consultation with the LG, any post results service requests.

Heads of faculty are responsible for:

- guidance and pastoral oversight of students who are unsure about exams entries or amendments to entries.
- accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the exams officer.
- accurate completion of coursework / controlled assessment mark sheets (paper based or online) and declaration sheets.
- decisions on post-results procedures.

Teachers are responsible for:

- supplying information on entries, coursework and controlled assessments as required by the head of department and/or exams officer.

The special educational needs team are responsible for:

- identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements and notifying the exams officer in good time so that they are able to put in place exam day arrangements
- process any necessary applications in order to gain approval (if required).
- working with the exams officer to provide the access arrangements required by students in exams rooms

Lead invigilator/invigilators are responsible for:

- assisting the exams officer in the efficient running of exams according to JCQ regulations, including setting up of exam venues.
- collection of exam papers and other material from the exams office before the start of the exam.
- collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and ensuring their return to the exams office.

Students are responsible for:

- 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.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the school's published prospectus.

Managing invigilators

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the school and securing the necessary Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the HR Manager. DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the school. Invigilators are recruited, timetabled, trained, and briefed by the Examinations Officer.

Exam timetables

Once confirmed, the Examinations Officer will circulate the exam timetables for internal and/or external exams at a specified date before each series begins. Heads of Faculty 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 (i.e. late) require the authorisation, in writing, of the Faculty Head and will be charged to the department.

Equality Legislation

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

The School will comply with the legislation, including making reasonable adjustments to the service that they provide to students in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies, and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

Access arrangements

Rooming, invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ Access Arrangements Regulations, will be organised by the Examinations Officer

Contingency planning

Contingency plans are in line with the guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and awarding organisations. See Exams Contingency Policy for further details.

Exam days

The Examinations Officer will book all exam rooms after liaison with other users and make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials available for the invigilators. Site management staff are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms, and will be advised of requirements in advance. All exams will start and finish in accordance with JCQ guidelines. 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 available to heads of faculty in accordance with JCQ's recommendations. After an exam, the exams officer will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed examination scripts to awarding bodies.

Students

In an exam room students 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 communication or storage devices with text or digital facilities. Any precluded items must not be taken into an exam room. Disruptive students are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Students are expected to stay for the full exam time.

Note: students who leave an exam room must be accompanied by an appropriate member of staff at all times. The Examinations Officer is responsible for handling late or absent students on exam day.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special consideration

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the Learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. Reasonable adjustments must not compromise the assessment process or the assessment objectives and may involve:

- changing standard assessment arrangements, for example, allowing Learners extra time to complete the assessment activity
- adapting assessment materials
- providing access facilitators during assessment, for example a sign language interpreter or reader.

Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the Learner access to the assessment activity. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a Learner's work.

Awarding Organisations and Centres are only required by law to do what is reasonable in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

Making Reasonable Adjustments

All Awarding Organisations and Centres have a responsibility to ensure that the assessment process is robust and fair and allows the Learner to demonstrate his or her full potential. Adjustments to assessments should:

- not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification
- not give Learners an unfair advantage
- reflect the Learner's normal way of working
- be based on the individual need of the Learner.

Internal assessment

It is the duty of heads of faculty to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for dispatch at the

correct time. The exams manager 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 submitted online direct to the exam boards or provided to the exams office where this option is not available. The Examinations Officer will inform staff of the date when appeals against internal assessments must be made by.

Quality Assurance

The overall purposes of the school's quality assurance mechanisms within the examinations and assessment process are:

- to guarantee that we follow school's agreed marking policy appropriately across the range of modules they teach;
- to guarantee that departments maintain an overall consistency of standards across their various modules;
- to have robust mechanisms for marking and for the moderation of marks. The role of the external examiner is especially significant in assuring the quality of the assessment process, in respect of the standards of the awards made and the integrity of the assessment process. The following additional mechanisms may also be used.

Results

Students will receive individual results slips on results days,

- in person at the school
- sent in post addressed to the student (within 24hrs of results day) if not collected

Arrangements for the school to be open on results days and the provision of the necessary staff on results days is the responsibility of the Head of Centre.

If a result is queried, the Examinations Officer, teaching staff and Head of Centre will investigate the feasibility of asking for a review of marking (RoR).

When the centre does not uphold and RoR, a candidate may still apply to have an enquiry carried out. If the candidate does this the candidate must pay all fees in relation to the enquiry in advance of the enquiry being submitted.

Certificates

Students will receive their certificates as soon as is reasonably possible (a designated day and time will be set by the Examinations Officer) and third parties may collect, provided they have written authority from the candidate to do so, and bring suitable identification with them that confirms who they are.

2. Access to Fair Assessment

Schools within TPLT will assess in a fair and objective manner, ensuring the entry requirements, content and assessment are appropriate to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified and do not act as unnecessary barriers to achievement.

TPLT schools have in place the necessary systems and procedures to allow the provision of access arrangements, including reasonable adjustments. These reflect the needs of individual students while also ensuring that the assessment continues to enable a valid, reliable and consistent judgement to be made about the achievement of all learning outcomes against the stated assessment criteria.

Students can expect:

- To be entered at an appropriate level.
- To be aware of the time constraints and evidence required to meet the assessment criteria.
- To be assessed using the same overall set of criteria as to their peers within a particular course.
- To be aware of the appeals procedure and know how to access it.
- To have the chance to discuss expectations and provision where there are unavoidable barriers to access.
- To receive feedback about their progress towards any units or modules as well as the overall qualification.

Teachers/Assessors are expected to:

- Use language appropriate to the level and allow diverse strategies for generation of evidence.
- Record outcomes of assessment and activities.
- Provide clear and constructive feedback.
- Adhere to the assessment criteria stated in unit descriptors.

Verifiers are expected to:

- Ensure that tutor feedback to students is clear, constructive, unambiguous and related to the assessment criteria.
- Provide feedback to teachers/assessors on all aspects of the assessment process.
- Assessments will be standardised across different teachers and classes to ensure that all students have been judged against the same standards.
- Carry out internal verification and standardisation according to the school's and examining body's procedures.

A fair assessment of a student's work can only be made if that work is entirely their own. Therefore, students can expect an awarding body to be informed if:

- They are found guilty of copying or giving or sharing information or answers, unless part of a joint project.
- They use an unauthorised aid during a test or examination.
- They copy another student's answers or take part in discussion during a test or examination.
- They act against the JCQ or awarding body rules.

All allegations of cheating and plagiarism will lead to a full investigation which will follow the guidance of the relevant awarding body.

3. Word Processor

References to 'AA' relate to the JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments for the current academic year and ICE to JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations for the current academic year.

- **Principles for using a word processor**

Candidates with access to word processors are allowed to do so in order to remove barriers for disabled candidates which prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties. The use of word processors is only permitted whilst ensuring that the integrity of the assessment is maintained, at the same time as providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of our candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis.

The use of a word processor is agreed/processed at the start of the course. Candidates are subsequently aware that they will have the use of a word processor for examinations and controlled assessments/coursework.

The use of a word processor for candidates is only granted if it reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as support:

- in the classroom
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing
- literacy support lessons
- literacy intervention strategies
- in internal school tests and mock examinations

- **The use of a word processor**

Schools will provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off).

The use of a word processor is only granted to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre.

The use of a word processor is only granted to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs. (For

example, the quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand).

Candidates are given access to word processors in controlled assessments or coursework components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.

Schools will allow candidates to use a word processor in an examination to answer certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers. The school is also aware that examinations which have a significant amount of writing, as well as those that place a greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers, are those where candidates will frequently need to type. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet. The candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen.

In all cases, schools are to ensure that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and attached to each candidate's typed script. This will also indicate if the answer booklet has been partly used or not.

The school does not simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

- **Word Processor and their Programmes**

Within TPLT word processors are used as a type-writer, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable.

All word processors have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used. An unauthorised memory stick is not permitted for use by a candidate. Where required, candidates are provided with a memory stick, which has been cleared of any previously stored data, by the Exams Officer.

Word processors are to be in good working order at the time of the examination. The Exams Office has a bank of laptops which are only used for Exam purposes and are not linked to the school network

Candidates who use word processors are accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen. They usually sit along the back row of the room. All candidates are given a memory stick at the start of the exam and also have on their desk a laminated copy of instructions reminding them to save their work and the information that they need to include in the header of the document or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium.

Documents are to be printed after the examination is over. Candidates are present to verify that the work printed is their own. Then word processed scripts are attached to any answer booklet which may or may not contain some of the answers.

Word processors are used to produce scripts under secure conditions, and if they are not then the

Exams Officer is aware that they may be refused by the awarding body.

Word processors are not used to perform skills which are being assessed and they are not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication. Candidates are not given access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc when using a word processor. Graphic packages or computer aided design software is not included on a word processor. Predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check is disabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using voice recognition technology (the script must then have a scribe cover sheet attached), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking.

Voice recognition technology is not to be included on word processors that are used. They are not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe. If a candidate using a word processor was to be accommodated separately, a separate invigilator would be used, however the school does not accommodate students separately when using a word processor. The laptops used by the school do not generate a lot of noise and therefore other students do not suffer too much disruption.

- **Laptops, Tablets and Word Processors**

A reminder notice is placed on the candidate's desk as a reminder that the centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code must appear on each page as a header and the page number as a footer. Candidates are also instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing.

Invigilators also remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals.

Candidates granted the use of a word processor are present at the end of the examination when their script is printed off so they can verify that the work printed off is their own.

Centre specific processes.

Only laptops with a power supply are to be used as a sole battery pack should not be relied upon. Battery capacity is not checked as they are always plugged into a power point. Candidates using the Word Processors are not given the option of going into the main examination hall as there is less disruption to fewer students if they sit in the smaller room. The laptops do not use Notepad or Wordpad at all. Students use Microsoft Word and a Header can be inserted.

Invigilation arrangements relating to the use of word processors to be in accordance with the following:

Invigilators make sure that the laptops are running before the students arrive in the exam room. Each student has a laminated card on their desk with the instructions on and a reminder to keep saving their work at regular intervals.

Other arrangements relating to the use of word processors includes:

Students have access to the use of a laptop in exams when they have had an accident which prevents them from being able to write, eg a broken wrist. Some students prefer this rather than having to dictate to a scribe.

● 4. Malpractice and Maladministration

Malpractice Aim

- To identify and minimise the risk of malpractice by staff or students.
- To respond to any incident of alleged malpractice promptly and objectively.
- To standardise and record any investigation of malpractice to ensure openness and fairness.
- To impose appropriate penalties and/or sanctions on students or staff where incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice are proven.
- To protect the integrity of this centre and awarding body qualifications.

In order to do this, the school will:

- Follow the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) rules and awarding bodies guidelines in relation to any suspected malpractice.
- Seek to avoid potential malpractice by informing students of the Centre's policy on malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice.
- Show students the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources.
- Ask students to declare that their work is their own.
- Ask students to provide evidence that they have interpreted and synthesised appropriate information and acknowledged any sources used.
- Conduct an investigation in a form commensurate with the nature of the malpractice allegation. Such an investigation will be supported by the Head of School and all personnel linked to the allegation.

Examples of Malpractice

Attempted or actual malpractice activity will not be tolerated. The following are examples of malpractice by students. This list is not exhaustive.

- Plagiarism: the copying and passing of as the candidate's own work, the whole or part of another person's work
- Collusion: working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as the candidate's only.
- Deliberate destruction of another's work.
- False declaration, fabrication of evidence or the alteration of any results document.
- Impersonating a candidate to produce work or sit examinations.
- Failing to abide by the instructions of an assessor – This may refer to the use of resources which the candidate has been specifically told not to use.
- Failure to follow the invigilator's directions, for example leaving the examination room without permission or bringing equipment not permitted into the exam (e.g. mobile phones, books or notes).

The following are examples of malpractice by staff. This list is not exhaustive.

- Tampering with candidates work prior to external moderation/verification or external marking taking place.
- Assisting candidates with the production of work outside of the awarding body guidance
- Fabricating assessment and/or internal verification records or authentication statements
- Assisting candidates with exam questions outside of the awarding body guidance
- Allowing candidates to talk, use a mobile phone or go to the toilet unsupervised
- Failure to keep candidate's portfolio's or evidence secure.

Allegations of Malpractice

Investigations into allegations will be coordinated by the Head of Centre and/or the Awarding Body. The investigation will involve establishing the full facts and circumstances of any alleged malpractice. It should not be assumed that because an allegation has been made, it is true. Where appropriate, the staff member concerned and any potential witnesses will be interviewed and their version of events recorded on paper.

If a teacher suspects a candidate of malpractice,

- The candidate will be informed and the allegations will be explained.
- The candidate will have the opportunity to give their side of the story before any final decision is made.
- If the candidate is found guilty of malpractice, the Awarding Body will be informed and the candidate's examination paper will be withdrawn. It is unlikely that the candidate will have the opportunity to repeat the examination. Where the candidate is providing a portfolio of evidence he/she may be given the opportunity to repeat the assignment. The teacher may decide to re-mark previous assignments and these could also be rejected if similar concerns are identified. If work is submitted for moderation/verification or for marking which is not the candidate's own work, the awarding body may not be able to give that candidate a result.

Where an allegation of malpractice is made against a member of staff, the member of staff will be:

- Informed of the allegation and supporting evidence
- Informed that should malpractice be proven, the possible consequences and applicable appeals procedure as well as the possibility that information relating to a serious case of malpractice will be shared with other awarding bodies, the regulators Ofqual, the police and/or professional bodies including the GTC.
- given the opportunity to consider their response to the allegations, submit a written statement, seek advice (as necessary) and to provide a supplementary statement (if required).

Sanctions

Where a candidate is found guilty of malpractice, the school may impose the following sanctions:

- a) Warning
- b) Loss of marks or disqualification from units/qualifications.
- c) Candidate Debarred - The candidate is barred from entering for one or more examinations for a set period of time. This penalty is applied in conjunction with any of the other penalties above, if the circumstances warrant it.

Where a member of staff is found guilty of malpractice, the school may impose the following sanctions:

- a) Written warning: Issue the member of staff with a written warning stating that if the offence is repeated within a set period of time, further specified sanctions will be applied.
- b) Training: Require the member of staff, as a condition of future involvement in both internal and external assessments to undertake specific training or mentoring, within a particular period of time, including a review process at the end of the training.
- c) Special conditions: Impose special conditions on the future involvement in assessments by the member of staff.
- d) Suspension: Bar the member of staff in all involvement in the administration of assessments for a set period of time.
- e) Dismissal: Should the degree of malpractice be deemed gross professional misconduct, the member of staff could face dismissal from his/her post.

Appeals

In the event that a malpractice decision is made, which the candidate or staff member feels is unfair, they have the right to appeal in line the Appeals Policy.

Maladministration

Maladministration is essentially any activity or practice which results in non-compliance with administrative regulations and requirements and includes the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration.

Examples of maladministration

- Persistent failure to adhere to our learner registration and certification procedures.
- Persistent failure to adhere to our centre recognition and/or qualification requirements and/or associated actions assigned to the centre
- Late learner registrations (both infrequent and persistent)
- Unreasonable delays in responding to requests and/or communications from PCSA/Worle Community Schools
- Inaccurate claim for certificates
- Failure to maintain appropriate auditable records, e.g. certification claims and/or forgery of evidence
- Withholding of information, by deliberate act or omission

Staff and students are made aware of the content and purpose of this policy and it will be kept electronically in a easily accessible location. This policy is reviewed annually and may be revised in response to feedback from students, tutors and external organisations.