Mercia School

MERCIA COLLEGIATE SIXTH FORM PROGRESSION SUPPORT POLICY

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, this policy will be reviewed every year. Should no substantive changes be required at that point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.

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Mercia Collegiate Sixth Progression Support Policy

The school reserves the right to amend this policy at any time in the academic year and to direct formal disciplinary procedures at any level, as appropriate. The contents of this policy will be disseminated and shared with all scholars during their induction period and is available online.

Changes to Programme of Study

Scholars may request changes to their A Level subjects during the first three full teaching weeks of Year 12. Any changes must be approved and implemented by the Friday of the third full teaching week. All requests are subject to approval by the relevant Curriculum Leader and the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for MCSF. Approval will depend on the scholar meeting the relevant subject entry requirements, the availability of places, the amount of learning already missed, and their academic progress and commitment in their other subjects. Where a change is approved, scholars will be required to complete a compulsory programme of supervised after-school catch-up study, calculated at one hour for every hour of taught learning missed in the new subject. This programme must be completed in full within a timeframe agreed by the school, alongside all outstanding independent study. Requests made after this deadline will not normally be considered, except in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for MCSF.

Y12 Assessments and Internal Examinations

- Internal assessments are carried out throughout the year and are used to provide data to inform teaching, the allocation of support, and to identify scholars who are underperforming so that they and their families are also aware of likely underperformance. Internal assessments take place in November, January, and May.
- Internal assessment results are shared with parents after every examination. These reports provide parents with information of their child's current and historic progress in a subject as well as indicating their behaviour for learning habits.
- In the absence of extenuating circumstances, if a scholar routinely achieves D-U grades in examinations they are at very high risk of not securing strong UCAS predicted grades and progressing to their chosen University.
- Internal Year 12 examinations will be set and marked by Mercia Collegiate Sixth Form (MCSF) in May of Year 12. These examinations will be taken in a formal examination setting with invigilation replicating an external examination experience. All subjects will be setting Advanced Level equivalent papers for the proportion of the A level course content that has been covered by the examination date.
- Where the above is not possible, MCSF will make such changes to its assessment methods that it deems both necessary and appropriate in light of the circumstances. Doing so will not preclude MCSF from using the test results achieved by the scholars to determine who continues onto an A level course in Year 13 in accordance with the progression criteria stated below.

A Level Progression

- Scholars will automatically progress through their A Levels providing they meet the following criteria:
    - they have demonstrated attendance, punctuality, effort and behaviour in line with sixth form expectations (95%+) including completing set tasks and assessments in each subject to a high standard; and
    - they gained a minimum of an A*-C grade in their end of Year 12 internal examinations or the re-sit examination; and
    - they have the support of the relevant subject department.
- Where a scholar does not meet the above progression criteria in respect of one or more of their A Level courses then MCSF will consider carefully, together with the scholar and their parents, whether it is in that scholar's best interests, given their predicted grade and university ambitions to continue with that A Level course into Year 13.
- Where the assistant headteacher with responsibility for MCSF, taking account of all the circumstances of the case, consider it is not, then the scholar will be offered the option of enrolling on a different one. Unless there are extenuating circumstances scholars will not normally be permitted to retake the same course studied in Year 12.
- In exceptional circumstances, individuals may be allowed to continue a particular A level subject without having obtained a C grade in the internal examination, for example, where significant illness has led to a poor mark (or to examination units not being taken) but where the subject department supports continuation due to a strong set of in-year recorded assessments or other significant evidence base.
- In some circumstances, it may also be possible, where available, for a scholar to complete a one year fast-track A Level course to complete their study programme if they have otherwise successfully met the progression criteria as set out but not achieved a C grade in one of their subjects. Such decisions will be at the absolute discretion of the assistant headteacher with responsibility for MCSF after consideration of each individual case. Likewise, the assistant headteacher with responsibility for MCSF may authorise a scholar to follow a study programme below the normal minimum requirement if there are extenuating circumstances.

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- Scholars who are advised not to continue with either one or more A Level courses and have rejected the offer of (a) new course/s may ask the executive director of secondary standards to intervene. A letter explaining their position, ambitions and any mitigating circumstances must be sent to the executive director of secondary standards and assistant headteacher with responsibility for MCSF at the start of term and no later than 21 days from the start of term.
- The executive director of secondary standards will review the scholar's individual circumstances and respond to the scholar within 20 Sixth Form days from the date the letter is received setting out whether or not they support the assistant headteacher with responsibility for MCSF's decision. The letter will be deemed to have been received no earlier than the published start of term date on the Sixth Form's website. Where a letter is received during a sixth form holiday, the letter will be deemed to have been received on the first day of the start of the new term.

UCAS Predicted Grades

- MCSF's UCAS predicted grades are not the same as scholars' Year 12 mock exam results. They are aspirational predictions and provide scholars with the opportunity to apply to the most competitive universities.
    - The highest grade a scholar will be predicted after passing a resit exam will be a B-grade unless there are evidenced extenuating circumstances.
    - A* predicted grades will be awarded to scholars who achieve strong A-grades in their Year 12 mock exams. We define this as the top achieving proportion of scholars in each subject, in line with the upper limits of those scholars who went onto achieve an A* - or close to an A* - in previous years. This is then adjusted in line with the current cohort's previous achievement in Key Stage 4.
    - In the exceptional circumstances that a scholar continues into Year 13 without meeting the progression criteria, they will only be awarded a predicted grade of one grade higher than their Year 12 mock exam result.
    - Changes to predicted grades will only be made in evidenced extenuating circumstances* and must be agreed by the assistant headteacher with responsibility for MCSF.

* Extenuating circumstances

MCSF appreciates there are times when a scholar may not achieve a Year 12 mock exam grade that is truly reflective of their potential due to circumstances beyond their control. The below procedure aims to allow for this situation, while ensuring that the process remains fair to all scholars. With that in mind, the JCQ's 'Special Consideration' process is taken as the starting point, where:

'Centres must only submit applications for special consideration where an adverse issue or event has had or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate their normal level of attainment in an assessment. For example, a candidate who has temporarily experienced illness, injury or some other event outside of their control at the time of the assessment.' (JCQ A guide to the special consideration process; General and Vocational qualifications; Effective from 1 September 2024). JCQ - A Guide to the Special Considerations Process

- Scholars, or their parents/carers must raise potential reasons for extenuating circumstances within five working days of the exam and must be raised via email to the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for MCSF. This timeframe will be communicated to scholars and parents/carers prior to the Year 12 mock exams taking place.
- Evidence must be provided from a medical or relevant other professional, pertaining to the specific circumstances at the time of the exam and must be submitted within 5 working days of the exam.
- All concerns will be considered by a panel of three members of staff, at least 2 of whom will be members of SLT, guided by the JCQ Special Consideration process.
- If a concern is decided to meet the threshold for extenuating circumstances, then the scholar's Year 12 mock exam score will be uplifted by a maximum of 5% points, in line with the JCQ Special Consideration process, and adjustments made to predicted grades based on the uplifted exam score and grade. If the extenuating circumstance is raised during a resit exam in which the grade is capped, then the maximum prediction of a B-grade will still apply.
- If a scholar is unable to take the exam due to serious illness, then their UCAS prediction will be based on the resit exam and will be uncapped.

Oxbridge and Medical applications

MCSF recognises that many scholars are ambitious and may wish to apply for highly competitive courses at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, or for medical courses including medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine.

Applications for such courses represent a significant commitment and typically involve interview preparation, the submission of written work, and/or the completion of admissions tests, including (but not limited to) the UCAT, TMUA, and ESAT.

MCSF will endorse applications for Oxbridge and medical courses only where predicted grades from the May mock examinations are deemed sufficiently high. For Oxbridge or medical applications, scholars must be predicted at least A grades in a minimum of three subjects.

MCSF runs dedicated Oxbridge and medical preparation programmes, which include interview practice and admissions test preparation. Scholars are expected to register and apply for university through UCAS during Year 12 and must do so in order to be eligible for entry onto these preparation programmes. MCSF will support scholars applying for deferred entry; however, the sixth form does not endorse scholars leaving MCSF without having submitted a UCAS application.

A Level Private Resits

- Former MCSF scholars who complete Year 13 may apply to enter as a private candidate at MCSF to resit one A Level subject in the summer examination series immediately following the summer in which they completed their original A Level examinations.
- Applications are limited to one A Level subject only. MCSF will not accept an application to resit two or more A Level subjects or to repeat a scholar's full suite of A Levels.
- Applications must be made in writing to the Headteacher and must identify the subject to be resat and explain the reason for requesting a resit. Approval is not automatic and will be determined by the Headteacher.
- Where an application is approved, the former scholar will be entered as a private candidate and will be responsible for paying all applicable examination entry fees for the examinations sat.
- MCSF does not provide tuition, teaching, supervised study or course delivery to former scholars once they have completed Year 13. Private resit candidates are responsible for preparing independently or arranging their own tuition.
- Applications under this arrangement will only be considered for the summer examination series immediately following completion of Year 13; MCSF will not accept private resit entries in a later examination series.

Alumni retake predicted grades

If MCSF alumni retake exams that they took as MCSF scholars and apply for university through UCAS then we will provide a reference and predicted grades for subjects that they took an exam for while studying at MCSF. The predicted grade will be one grade higher than they achieved when they took the exam in the summer of Year 13 as an MCSF scholar.