

NCTJ Invigilation and chaperoning policy

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1. Purpose

This document outlines the requirements and procedures for conducting NCTJ examinations to ensure fairness, security, and compliance with regulations. It establishes guidelines for invigilation, remote exam protocols, and handling disruptions to maintain the integrity of assessments.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all NCTJ exams, whether held in-person or remotely, covering invigilation requirements, remote exam procedures, and chaperoning protocols.

3. Definitions

Learners: Encompasses students, apprentices, or distance learners, at any stage of their journalism training.

Centres: Encompasses training providers, HEIs, FE colleges and commercial centres.

Invigilator: An invigilator is a person responsible for supervising an examination to ensure it is conducted according to NCTJ policies and procedures. They must monitor learners, uphold exam security, and prevent malpractice or disruptions.

4. Policy statements

4.1 Principles

Invigilation and chaperoning must:

- Ensure fairness and equal opportunity for all learners.
- Maintain exam security before, during, and after assessments.
- Prevent malpractice and maladministration.
- Follow clear procedures for reporting and handling incidents.

4.2 Roles and responsibilities

Invigilators must supervise learners, complete invigilation certificates, report security breaches, and not perform other tasks during exams.

Centres must provide technical support, set up secure exam environments, and communicate any procedural changes to invigilators.

NCTJ oversees compliance and manages any necessary procedural adjustments.

5. Procedures

5.1 Invigilation arrangements

The invigilator is the person in the examination room (or in the Zoom room for remote exams) who is responsible for conducting a particular examination session in the presence of the learners. Invigilators have a key role in upholding the integrity of the external examination/assessment process.

External invigilators should be used to avoid conflicts of interest i.e. someone who has not taught learners taking the exam and has no personal interest in the outcome of the exam. They must be trained, familiar with NCTJ policies, and maintain proper supervision.

There must be sufficient invigilators present to adequately supervise the number of learners taking NCTJ examinations. The NCTJ recommends a **maximum of 10 learners** to one invigilator. Technical support must also be available in case of computer failure.

The role of the invigilator is to ensure that the examination is conducted according to NCTJ exam policies and procedures in order to:

- ensure all learners have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities
- ensure the security of the examination before, during and after the examination
- prevent possible candidate malpractice
- prevent possible maladministration

Invigilators must:

- give all their attention to conducting the examination properly
- be able to observe each candidate in the examination room at all times
- complete the invigilation certificate correctly and submit it to the NCTJ after the exam
- inform the head of centre if they suspect the security of the examination has been breached or possible candidate malpractice has taken place (in such cases, the head of centre must inform the NCTJ immediately and complete and return the NCTJ's suspected malpractice/maladministration form to the NCTJ head of awarding)

Invigilators **must not** carry out any other task (for example, reading a book or marking) in the examination room (or Zoom room for remote exams)

New invigilators must be trained to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities and all invigilators must familiarise themselves with the following NCTJ policies and procedures:

- Conditions of examinations
- Procedures for learners
- Security of assessments policy
- Subject specific invigilation notes
- Malpractice/maladministration policy and procedure

For exams delivered remotely, invigilators must familiarise themselves with the NCTJ policies and procedures specific to remote exams, which are available in tutor and admin contact resources via the NCTJ website.

Any change in exam and/or invigilation procedures advised by the NCTJ must be communicated to invigilators.

5.2 Remote exams

Centres must set up Zoom with security features and provide technical support.

For editing skills for journalists, videojournalism, broadcast radio/TV news and practical magazine journalism, centres are responsible for providing contact details to learners for a technical support person in advance of the exam in case of technical difficulties arising during the exam/assessment. This contact must have knowledge of the editing software in use for the exam.

For exams delivered remotely on Cirrus using Proctorio (including the shorthand transcription) each centre must have a centre contact in place during the exam with access to a Cirrus invigilation screen, so there is a point of contact available to all learners in case of any technical problems. Centres are responsible for providing the name and contact telephone number for this point of contact to the learners in advance of the exam. The centre contacts will have the ability to pause, restart and add extra time to a candidate's exam via the Cirrus invigilation screen, where required.

5.3 Chaperoning

In the event of an emergency, or unforeseen circumstances, which results in a delay or disruption to an examination delivered in-centre, it may be necessary to chaperone learners to preserve the integrity of the assessment. The NCTJ must be notified as soon as it is deemed necessary to have to chaperone. Centres are responsible for training chaperones who must be aware of the NCTJ conditions of examinations.

Learners affected by a delay:

1. Must be supervised in exam conditions from the scheduled start of the examination, throughout the delay, until the exam can be resumed and is concluded.
2. Must not communicate with other learners.
3. Must not come into contact with any candidate within the centre or elsewhere who may have already started and/or completed the examination being taken.
4. Must not have access to their mobile phones, the internet, watches (including smartwatches) or other study material.

Depending on the nature of the delay and the number of learners affected i.e. one or more individuals or the whole group due to sit the exam, it may be necessary to chaperone learners in a separate room to where the exam is being held/is due to be held.

The NCTJ must be notified immediately about any emergencies or unforeseen incidents that affect NCTJ examinations. The incident and action taken must be recorded in the comments section on the invigilation certificate by the invigilator present.

No more than one candidate may be absent from the exam room at any one time e.g. for a bathroom break. If any candidate is unaccompanied by a member of staff and is absent for a period of more than 10 minutes, this must be noted on the invigilation certificate as an alert of possible suspected malpractice. **Please refer to the NCTJ malpractice and maladministration policy for additional paperwork on reporting such incidents.**

Chaperoning is not possible if the exam is being delivered remotely. For remote exams on Cirrus, learners cannot leave their desk during the exam, unless they have a reasonable adjustment approved for 50% extra time, 100% extra time, rest breaks, and/or medical bathroom breaks. This is because it is not possible to adequately monitor their time away from the assessment.

5.4 Pre-arranged chaperoning

Only allowed in exceptional cases and must follow strict conditions.

This may occur, for example, due to a clash of examinations in two different subjects which are due to take place at the same time, where no viable alternative is available.

Centres have a responsibility to manage their internal examination schedule to avoid hosting concurrent or overlapping NCTJ exams. However, should the NCTJ grant approval in advance to chaperone students and allow examinations to take place at an alternative time, the following conditions, in addition to the above, must be adhered to:

1. Examinations will take place at the alternative time agreed with the NCTJ.
2. Any candidate due to sit an examination at an alternative time will be subject to chaperoning conditions from the start time of the scheduled exam, until the time they complete the examination.
3. Chaperoning conditions must remain in place while learners are escorted to, and ready themselves for, the next exam they are due to sit.

The above conditions are implemented to preserve the integrity of NCTJ examinations. If a centre is unable to adhere to these conditions, it must inform the NCTJ immediately.

Pre-arranged chaperoning is not possible if the exam is being delivered remotely.

5.5 Reporting

Any emergencies or incidents must be reported immediately to the NCTJ, with details logged in the invigilation certificate.

6. Review arrangements

The NCTJ will review this policy annually as part of the NCTJ's annual self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary, in response to customer, learner or regulatory feedback.

If you would like to feedback any views, please contact us via the details provided at the end of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed in September 2026.

7. Contact us

Any queries in relation to the contents of this policy, please contact our head of awarding.

Telephone: 01799 544014

Email: Exams@nctj.com