



NCS Progression Support Policy 2023-2025

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Context & Aims

1. The NCS is an academic 16-19 Free School Academy set up to support progression to some of the most competitive universities in the UK and abroad. The curriculum has been devised to cater for students who are academically able and can access material which is challenging and rigorous. The minimum study programme in years 12 and 13 is three full Advanced Level (A Level) courses. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Home-School Agreement, the Student Handbook, the Behaviour Policy, Attendance & Punctuality Policy, Internal Assessments Policy and the Curriculum Policy.
2. Our aim is that all students enrolled at the NCS should complete their Study Programme successfully. The purpose of this policy is to outline what the NCS will do to alert a student and their parents/carers to the fact that they are performing below expectation and could therefore be at risk of not achieving their academic expectations and progression ambitions. Our aim is to support progression by offering guidance to all students before and after the publication of internal examination results in June of Year 12. This is to enable students and parents/carers to review their Year 13 Study Programme in the light of their results, UCAS Predictions and progression plans for entry to competitive universities and/or high-status school leaver programmes.

Y12 Assessments and Internal Examinations

3. Internal assessments are carried out throughout the year and are used to provide data to inform teaching, the allocation of support and to identify students who are underperforming so that they and their families are also aware of likely underperformance.
4. 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.
5. In the absence of extenuating circumstances, if a student 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.
6. Internal Y12 examinations will be set and marked by the NCS at the end of Y12. 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.
7. Where the above is not possible, the NCS 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 the NCS from using the test results achieved by the students to determine who continues onto an A level course in Y13 in accordance with the progression criteria stated below.

A level Progression

8. Students will automatically progress through their A levels providing they meet the following criteria:
 - a. 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
 - b. they gained a minimum of an A*-C grade in their end of Y12 internal examinations or the re-sit examination; and
 - c. they have the support of the relevant subject department.
9. Where a student does not meet the above progression criteria in respect of one or more of their A level courses then the NCS will consider carefully, together with the student and their parents, whether it is in that student's best interests, given their predicted grade and university ambitions to continue with that A level course into Y13.
10. Where the Principal, taking account of all the circumstances of the case, considers it is not then the student will be offered the option of enrolling on a different one. Unless there are extenuating circumstances students will not normally be permitted to retake the same course studied in Y12.
11. 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.
12. In some circumstances, it may also be possible, where available, for a student 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 Principal after consideration of each individual case. Likewise, the Principal may authorise a student to follow a Study Programme below the normal minimum requirement if there are extenuating circumstances.
13. Students 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 Chair of Governors to intervene. A letter explaining their position, ambitions and any mitigating circumstances must be sent to the Chair of Governors and Principal at the start of term and no later than 21 days from the start of term.
14. The Chair of Governors will review the student's individual circumstances and respond to the student within 20 Sixth Form days from the date the letter is received setting out whether or not they support the Principal'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.
15. If the student wishes to challenge the decision of the Chair of Governors, they may write to the CEO of the City of London Academies Trust who will respond to the student within 20 Sixth Form days from the date the letter is received by the Sixth Form. Where the 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

NCS' UCAS predicted grades are not the same as students' End of Y12 exam results, they are aspirational predictions and provide students with the opportunity to apply to the most competitive universities.

- Students who achieve a grade A-C in their first attempt at the EoY12 exam will be predicted no lower than a grade A.
- The highest grade a student 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 students who achieve strong A-grades in their EoY12 exam. We define this as the top achieving proportion of students in each subject, in line with the upper limits of those students who went on to 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 KS4.
- In the exceptional circumstances that a student continues into year 13 without meeting the progression criteria, they will only be awarded a predicted grade of one grade higher than their EoY12 exam result.

Changes to predicted grades will only be made in evidenced extenuating circumstances * and must be agreed by the Principal.

***Appendix: Extenuating circumstances**

The NCS appreciates there are times when a student may not achieve a EoY12 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 students. With that in mind, the JCQ's 'Special Consideration' process is taken as the starting point where,

'Special consideration is given to a candidate who has temporarily experienced illness, injury, or some other event outside of their control at the time of the assessment. It is applied when the 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 his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment.' (JCQ A guide to the special consideration process; General and Vocational qualifications; Effective from 1 September 2023).

[Guide to spec con process 2023 24 FINAL.pdf \(jcq.org.uk\)](#)

- Students, or their parents/carers must raise potential reasons for extenuating circumstances within 5 working days of the exam and must be raised via email to the Principal. This timeframe will be communicated to students and parents/carers prior to the EoY12 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 3 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 student will be given the opportunity to resit the examination with their predicted grade uncapped.

- If a student decides not to resit, or the extenuating circumstance takes place during a resit then the students EoY12 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..