

POLICY – Examinations

Education Universal

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Policy Approver	Jo Dunn, Compliance, Regulation and Quality Director
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Policy Level	Education
Staff groups affected	All Education

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through the service's established governance and quality assurance systems. Responsibility for ensuring that the policy remains compliant with legislation and regulatory frameworks sits with the Proprietor Representative and Regional Lead.

A formal review of this policy will be undertaken no later than three years from the date of approval, or sooner if changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or operational requirements necessitate it.

The Head of Policy will support this process by identifying relevant changes in legislation, regulation, national standards and emerging best practice. The Head of Policy will also incorporate learning from inspections, audits and practice developments into future revisions whilst overseeing all proposed amendments to the universal content to ensure accuracy, consistency and compliance.



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Terminology

Our aim is to use consistent terminology throughout this policy and all supporting documentation as follows:

Term	Definition
'Establishment' or 'Site'	A generic term referring to the school/college owned by CareTech.
Learner	Any child or young person under the age of 18, or young adult over 18 who receives education.
Service Head	The senior person with overall responsibility for the school/college.
Tutor/Teacher	Members of staff who have teaching responsibility for learners at the school/college.
Parent/Carer	Parent or person with parental responsibility.
Regulatory Authority	The independent regulatory body responsible for inspecting and regulating services (e.g., Ofsted, Estyn, Education Scotland).
Social Worker	The worker allocated to the individual learner; if none is allocated, the Duty Social Worker or Team Manager is responsible.
Placing Authority	The local authority/agency responsible for placing the learner or commissioning the service.
Local Authority	The local authority for the establishment's location.
Staff	All staff working at the location, including employed staff, students on placement, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and proprietors.

1. Local School/College Profile

Cambian Wisbech School is an independent specialist school in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, operating across two sites: Sessions House and Anglia Way. The school provides education for pupils with special educational needs, including social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have Education, Health and Care Plans and benefit from personalised teaching, pastoral support and multi agency working. Sessions House primarily supports younger pupils and Anglia Way primarily supports secondary age pupils. Both sites operate as one school with shared safeguarding, curriculum, behaviour and quality assurance arrangements. The school values are Aspire, Achieve, Engage, Empower and Excel and the culture is rooted in high expectations, inclusion, safety, respectful relationships and preparation for adulthood. Examination and assessment arrangements are personalised so that approved access arrangements reflect each pupil's normal way of working and Education, Health and Care Plan needs.

2. Purpose

This policy sets out how Cambian Wisbech School plans, delivers and quality assures examinations and assessments so that every pupil can demonstrate what they know and can do. It applies to staff, senior leaders, pupils and any authorised visitors or contractors who support the running of assessments.

In practice, this means we organise examinations with integrity, put reasonable adjustments in place early, and communicate with clarity. For learners under 18, we involve parents and carers appropriately. For 18+ learners, we work directly with the learner and with consent parents and carers whilst offer advocacy where needed. In all cases, we protect dignity, privacy, and safety, and we run a consistent process that can be relied upon.

This policy enables Cambian Wisbech School to meet its statutory duties, uphold safeguarding responsibilities, comply with data protection requirements and maintain high quality, trauma responsive examination provision.

3. Scope

This is an organisational policy. It applies across every England based site, service, and function involved in assessment: general qualifications, vocational and technical awards, on-demand digital tests, practical, portfolios, controlled assessments and non-examined assessments. It covers assessments delivered on-site and those undertaken off-site where the site registers or supports learners.

Each site implements the universal standards set out here and aligns its local practice with the national frameworks referenced in **Appendix A**.

4. Local Adaptation Requirement (Adapt Locally)

Where the policy invites local adaptation (Adapt Locally), we are asking the site to set out operational specifics such as: named roles, secure storage locations, rooming plans, communication routes, deadlines, and local contact details. Local content

should be succinct, current, and fully consistent with national requirements and the universal standards in this policy.

- Keep additions factual and necessary.
- Ensure they are reviewed annually alongside the policy.
- Where no local equivalent is required, the universal content stands.

5. Legal and Regulatory Context

Cambian Wisbech School operates within the statutory duties, safeguarding expectations and inspection arrangements applicable to independent schools in England. Examination practice is aligned with JCQ requirements, relevant awarding body regulations, equality duties and the school's safeguarding and SEND arrangements.

6. Policy Statement & Principles

Our position is straightforward: assessment must be valid, reliable, and fair—and the learner experience must be safe, respectful and trauma-responsive. We plan carefully, communicate clearly, and act consistently.

- **Integrity & compliance:** We protect exam security, follow instructions precisely, and prevent malpractice or maladministration.
- **Fairness & inclusion:** We identify access needs early, evidence them appropriately, and implement approved adjustments faithfully, without undermining assessment validity.
- **Trauma-responsive practice:** We reduce uncertainty, offer familiarisation and choice where feasible, keep environments calm, and ensure all adults involved can recognise and respond to heightened stress.
- **Learner voice:** We involve learners in decisions about how support is delivered. For **under-18s**, parents/carers are engaged appropriately; for **18+ learners**, the learner leads, with advocacy if needed.
- **Privacy & dignity:** We handle personal information with care and keep sensitive processes discreet.
- **Transparency:** We publish what communities reasonably need to know and invite feedback to improve.

7. Roles & Responsibilities

Strong exams delivery relies on clear roles and dependable handovers.

- The Headteacher owns this policy, sets expectations, ensures resources and training are in place and retains overall accountability for compliant examinations practice.
- The Examinations Officer, working through the Pastoral Manager function, plans and manages the operational cycle including entries, timetables, secure materials, rooming, staffing, results, certificates and liaison with awarding bodies.

- The Access Arrangements Lead works with the Deputy Headteacher and SENDCo to coordinate identification, evidence, applications and delivery of agreed access arrangements and assistive technology.

Teachers/tutors ensure learners are taught the assessment objectives, authenticate learner work and meet deadlines. Invigilators create and maintain the right conditions in the room and follow scripts exactly, applying adjustments as approved. The DSL is available for advice and action where safeguarding issues arise around assessment. The wider multi-agency team—therapists, clinicians, social workers or advocates—contribute insight and evidence, and help us plan trauma-responsive approaches that genuinely work.

Learners commit to exam conduct, use agreed supports appropriately, and tell us promptly if they are unwell or worried. Parents/carers (for under-18s) and with consent over 18s, help ensure readiness and share information early.

Local responsibilities: Headteacher as policy owner and strategic lead; Examinations Officer for operational delivery; Deputy Headteacher and SENDCo for access arrangements and SEND evidence; subject teachers for entries, preparation and authentication; trained invigilators for examination room compliance; Designated Safeguarding Lead for safeguarding concerns. Named deputies and current post holders are recorded in the annual examinations file.

8. Qualifications & Assessments Covered

We run a range of general and vocational/technical qualifications. Some are exam-heavy; others rely on portfolios, practical's or synoptic tasks. We also deliver on-demand or adaptive digital tests where appropriate. This policy covers both externally assessed examinations and internal assessment components that contribute to external awards.

The school enters pupils for qualifications appropriate to individual pathways, including GCSEs and other approved general, functional, entry level or vocational qualifications where offered. Awarding bodies and assessment windows vary by pupil programme and are recorded in the annual examinations calendar.

9. Planning Cycle & Entries

Good assessment is the result of steady, year-round planning. Each year we map the curriculum to assessment objectives and windows, and we hold termly readiness reviews that bring together mock data, professional judgement and learner wellbeing. We make entries by published deadlines and communicate them in writing. For under-18 learners, parents/carers are informed; for 18+ learners, communication is direct with the learner and with the learners consent the parents/carers.

Fees and re-sit arrangements are set out clearly so there are no surprises. Timetabling and rooming prioritise calm, accessibility and security, with contingency built in should things change at short notice.

The Examinations Officer maintains awarding body entry deadlines and confirms entries with subject staff and the Headteacher. Pupils and parents or carers are

informed of entries and key dates in advance. Entry fees are met through agreed school arrangements; late entries, withdrawals or re sits are considered individually and approved by the Headteacher.

10. Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments

Our aim is simple: no unnecessary barriers. We identify needs early, build a balanced evidence picture (including normal way of working), and apply for approval where required. Once approved, we implement adjustments consistently—extra time, a reader or scribe, supervised rest breaks, assistive technology, specialist furniture, small rooms or sensory supports—always in ways that protect the validity of the assessment.

Because stress can affect performance, we embed trauma-responsive practice: pre-examination familiarisation, visual schedules, predictable routines, and the option to sit in a preferred location when feasible. Invigilators are briefed on individual considerations and how to de-escalate while maintaining exam conditions. For under-18 learners, parents/carers are engaged. For 18+ learners, we plan in partnership with the learner and their chosen advocate if one is used.

The SENDCo and Access Arrangements Lead gather evidence of need and normal way of working. Applications and supporting evidence are completed within awarding body deadlines and stored securely with restricted access. Assistive technology is drawn from approved school devices and software. Separate or quieter rooms are designated for each series according to approved arrangements.

11. Learner Preparation & Communication

We make the process clear and confidence-building. Learners receive plain-language information about formats, timings, conduct, permitted materials and where to go. Mocks mirror live conditions and incorporate agreed adjustments so nothing is new on the day. We teach simple regulation strategies—breathing, grounding, movement breaks—and we publish clear contact points for questions or worries. For under-18 learners, we provide parent/carer briefings so adults at home can support preparation. We provide the same with over 18s who have given consent.

Pupils receive individual timetables and plain language briefings. Parents and carers are updated through letters, email, telephone contact and meetings as appropriate. Questions are directed to the Examinations Officer through the school office. Additional familiarisation is provided for pupils whose SEND or anxiety requires it.

12. Timetabling, Rooming & Resources

We choose rooms that are quiet and predictable, with good signage, visible clocks and minimal visual clutter. Seating plans are designed discreetly so learners who need particular positions can have them without drawing attention. Where justified, we provide small group or individual sittings. Invigilation ratios are appropriate to the assessment, and supervision arrangements are respectful and safe.

For digital exams, we test the network and power, confirm device readiness, and plan failovers. We hold spares and have agreed steps for switching to contingency modes if systems fail.

Examination rooms are designated for each series based on candidate numbers, security, accessibility and approved access arrangements. Separate and smaller rooms are used where authorised. The Examinations Officer confirms rooming, seating plans, equipment, clocks, signage and evacuation arrangements. Designated school ICT support is available for digital assessments.

13. Secure Materials & Confidentiality

Security is non-negotiable. Confidential materials are stored in approved secure conditions with a clear chain of custody. We log receipt, opening, distribution and return; materials are never left unattended. Digital permissions are controlled, and audit logs are retained. Coursework and portfolios travel by secure methods, and we record every hand-off.

Confidential examination materials are kept in approved locked, access controlled examination storage. The precise location and key holder arrangements are recorded in the confidential centre file rather than this public policy. Receipt, movement, opening and return of secure materials are logged by the Examinations Officer.

14. Invigilation & Conduct of Assessments

Invigilators set the tone—calm, consistent and reassuring. They are trained and refreshed annually, and they follow scripts word-for-word. We check learner identity using approved documentation or a verified list. We display permitted materials and manage prohibited items discreetly. Any incident is recorded in real time and escalated promptly so decisions can be made with full information.

Invigilators receive induction and annual or series specific refreshers in current JCQ requirements, access arrangements, safeguarding and emergency procedures. Staffing ratios follow current awarding body and JCQ rules. Pupil identity is confirmed through verified school records and staff knowledge. Incidents are recorded on the school's examination incident documentation and escalated immediately to the Examinations Officer.

15. Coursework, NEA, Controlled Assessment & Portfolios

Internal assessment is handled with the same rigour as external exams. Learners and teachers and tutors sign authentication statements, and we use both professional judgement and appropriate tools to guard against plagiarism or collusion. Supervision levels match task requirements, and we schedule checkpoints so problems surface early. Internal standardisation ensures marking is consistent before anything is submitted. Storage is secure, and digital backups are maintained. We meet moderation deadlines and respond to queries quickly.

The Examinations Officer maintains an internal deadlines calendar for coursework, non examined assessment, moderation and submission. Subject staff use approved plagiarism and authenticity checks appropriate to the qualification. Work and records

are stored securely in restricted physical or digital locations. Internal standardisation is scheduled by the relevant subject lead.

16. Plagiarism, Malpractice & Maladministration (including digital/AI misuse)

We teach learners what good academic practice looks like and we are explicit about risks—plagiarism, unauthorised collaboration, improper use of calculators or devices, and misuse of digital/AI tools. If concerns arise, we investigate promptly, fairly and confidentially. Learners can be supported by a trusted adult or advocate. We keep clear records, notify awarding bodies where required, and communicate outcomes in writing with an explanation that learners can understand.

Suspected malpractice or maladministration is reported immediately to the Examinations Officer and Headteacher. The Headteacher determines the local investigation arrangements and may appoint an appropriate senior leader or subject specialist. Awarding bodies are notified where required. Pupils and parents or carers are informed of outcomes and any right of appeal through the school's internal appeals procedure.

17. Conflicts of Interest

People matter, and relationships can be close in specialist settings. Staff declare any actual or potential conflict—such as assessing or invigilating a close relative. We record declarations and put mitigation in place, for example assigning a different assessor or adding an additional invigilator. The register is reviewed regularly.

Staff declare actual or potential conflicts of interest to the Headteacher and Examinations Officer as soon as they arise. The Examinations Officer maintains the register and reviews it before each examination series and when staffing arrangements change.

18. Special Consideration (illness, bereavement, significant distress)

Life does not pause for exams. If a learner is unwell or experiences significant distress at or near the time of an assessment, we consider whether a special consideration application is appropriate. We gather evidence sensitively, involve the learner (and parents/carers where applicable), and explain the options clearly, including any limitations. Decisions are recorded and communicated promptly.

Illness, bereavement or significant distress affecting an assessment is reported to the Examinations Officer immediately. Evidence is gathered sensitively from the pupil, family and relevant professionals. The Examinations Officer, with the Headteacher where required, submits special consideration requests within awarding body timescales.

19. Emergencies & Contingency (including digital delivery)

We plan for the unexpected: severe weather, transport disruption, power or network failure, staff absence, room issues, public health concerns, or cyber incidents. Our contingencies aim to keep assessments safe and fair—continuing where possible, postponing where necessary, and always protecting security.

At minimum, we identify alternative rooms and invigilators in advance, hold spare devices and charging, keep an offline plan for digital exams where permitted, and set out how scripts are secured in evacuations. Communication with learners, staff and families is prompt and clear.

The Headteacher and Examinations Officer lead examination contingency planning. Alternative rooms across the school may be used where secure and permitted. Communication is cascaded through staff briefings, telephone, email and parent communication. Digital examinations follow agreed ICT failover procedures and the school's Business Continuity arrangements.

20. Results, Post-Results and Appeals

Results days are planned to be supportive and well-organised. We publish how results will be issued and where to get advice. Post-results services—clerical checks, reviews, access to scripts—are explained in plain language with deadlines and costs made clear.

21. Appeals and Review

Learners have the right to request a review or appeal relating to internal assessment decisions or the outcomes of externally assessed examinations. The universal expectation is that each site maintains clear, accessible procedures for internal assessment appeals and post-results services in line with awarding body requirements. These procedures must be published locally, explained to learners in advance, and be applied consistently, transparently and within published deadlines.

Results are released securely in accordance with awarding body dates. The Examinations Officer coordinates results communication, advice and post results services. Pupils are supported to understand outcomes and next steps. Fees, consent forms and deadlines for reviews, checks, access to scripts and appeals are communicated before requests are submitted.

22. Certificates

When certificates arrive, we check and log them, store them securely, and issue them promptly. Uncollected certificates are retained for a defined period, and we signpost learners to replacement routes if needed.

Certificates are checked, logged and stored securely. They are issued directly to pupils or an authorised collector following identity verification. Uncollected certificates are retained for the period required by the awarding body or organisational retention schedule and replacement routes are explained where needed.

23. Complaints

If something has not gone as it should, we want to know. Concerns about examination administration can be raised through the site complaints process. We handle complaints respectfully, quickly and with a focus on learning and improvement.

Concerns about examination administration should be raised with the Examinations Officer or Headteacher and are managed through the Cambian Wisbech School Complaints Policy, without displacing any awarding body appeal route.

24. Data Protection & Confidentiality

We collect only what we need, keep it secure, and retain it for defined periods. We publish privacy information that explains how assessment data is used and shared with awarding bodies and regulators. Learners can request accessible versions of information and can ask questions about how their data is handled.

Examination data is stored in restricted school systems and shared only where lawful and necessary with awarding bodies, regulators and authorised staff. The school follows CareTech privacy notices and records retention arrangements. Access is limited to staff whose roles require it.

25. Quality Assurance, Training & Audit

Quality is built in, not inspected in. Each year we train invigilators, teachers and tutors and the examinations/administration team, with refreshers ahead of every series. We carry out spot checks and observations of live exams and internal assessment processes, and we hold a post-series review to capture what worked and what needs to improve. Actions are tracked to completion and reported to leadership and governance.

The Examinations Officer maintains the annual training plan and examination readiness checklist. The Headteacher or delegated senior leader undertakes spot checks during examination series and reviews incidents, access arrangements, security and post series learning. Actions are reported through senior leadership and regional quality assurance routes.

26. Multi-site, Off-site & Third-Party Centres

Where learners sit assessments away from the home site, we check suitability, accessibility and security in advance, and we document who is responsible for what. For workplace assessments, we brief employers or placement providers and quality-assure evidence and assessor decisions so standards are consistent.

Assessments are normally delivered at the school site or another formally approved centre. Where a pupil sits an assessment off site, the Examinations Officer confirms the centre's suitability, security, accessibility and responsibility arrangements in advance and retains any required agreement or confirmation.

27. Publishing, Ownership & Review

We publish this policy through the Cambian Wisbech School policy arrangements and make it available in accessible formats on request. Pupil friendly information is provided on examination conduct, prohibited items, access arrangements, key dates, results and appeals.

Ownership sits with the Headteacher with operational responsibility delegated to the Examinations Officer and Access Arrangements Lead. The school reviews examination practice annually and after each main series using quality assurance evidence, incident logs, pupil voice and post results analysis.

Accessibility requests can be made through the school office. This localised policy is reviewed annually each autumn and sooner where examination regulations change. Formal approval sits with the Headteacher and the relevant regional or proprietor oversight arrangements.

Equality Impact Statement

This policy has been developed to promote equality, safeguard individual's rights, and ensure fair and inclusive practice across all services. The potential impact of the policy on children, young people, young adults, families, and staff with protected characteristics has been considered in line with the Equality Act 2010.

No negative impacts have been identified. Staff must apply this policy with sensitivity to individual need and make reasonable adjustments to ensure equitable access, safety, wellbeing, and participation for every individual. Any emerging risks of differential impact should be reported and addressed through ongoing review and quality assurance.

Appendices

Appendix A – Legal and Regulatory Framework in England

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Legislation, guidance and regulatory frameworks underpinning Examinations in England.

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

- **Means:** Prescribes the Independent School Standards proprietors must meet (including assessment, welfare/health/safety, premises, information /complaints, leadership) for independent schools.
- **Requires:** Sites evidence compliant assessment and information practices, safe conditions for examinations, and leadership oversight that meets the standards inspectors test.
- **Our stance:** We map examinations policy and evidence directly to relevant ISS parts (assessment, welfare/health/safety, information/complaints, leadership).

- **Implementation example:** ISS evidence map (exams) showing where timetables, seating plans, access-arrangements files, secure-storage logs and complaints/appeals information meet the ISS parts.
- **Links:** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283>

Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) + remit toolkits — for use from 10 Nov 2025

- **Means:** Sets how Ofsted inspects independent schools and FE & skills providers; inspections consider assessment integrity, inclusion and safeguarding with remit-specific toolkits/operating guides.
- **Requires:** Sites demonstrate well-led, secure, inclusive examinations (reasonable adjustments delivered), with clear impact; evidence aligns to the toolkit evaluation areas used in inspection.
- **Our stance:** We organise an inspection-ready exams bundle aligned to EIF and the relevant toolkit (independent schools or FE).
- **Implementation example: Bundle index** cross-referencing exam processes (security, invigilation, access arrangements, incidents, post-results) to EIF/toolkit headings.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework/education-inspection-framework-for-use-from-november-2025>

JCQ — Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE), General Regulations for Approved Centres, and Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments (AARA) — 2025–26

- **Means:** Establishes the definitive operational rulebook for exam delivery (**ICE**), the centre-level governance and compliance framework (**General Regulations**), and the national rules for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments/special consideration (**AARA**) for JCQ member awarding organisations' qualifications delivered in England.
- **Requires:** Centres follow ICE for secure storage, room set-up, invigilation, start/finish and incident handling; maintain annual policy reviews, cyber-security training certificates and CPD per General Regulations; and implement AARA with evidence of need and normal way of working (incl. 2025–26 update: trial and exhaust supervised rest breaks before 25% extra time where the impairment is not a learning difficulty; candidates must be informed AAO will process their data).
- **Our stance:** We deliver to **ICE on the day, prove centre-level compliance to General Regulations, and run AARA** exactly as specified (evidence → approval → delivery → impact).
- **Implementation example:** Exam Delivery Pack (ICE quick-ref, JCQ posters/notices, room checklist, seating plan, two-person security log, late/very-late protocol, incident form) + Exams Governance folder (policy review log, cyber-training certs, CPD, contingency, inspection checklist) + AARA bundle (teacher evidence, mock trials incl. rest-breaks where applicable, AAO submissions log, delivery plan, post-series review).
- **Links:** <https://www.jcq.org.uk/knowledge-hub/instructions-for-conducting-examinations/>

Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition — updated 4 Dec 2025

- **Means:** The regulatory conditions for awarding organisations (AOs) that drive centre requirements on setting/delivering assessments, confidentiality, reasonable adjustments, special consideration, malpractice, marking/results and appeals.
- **Requires:** Sites comply with AO rules derived from the Conditions (e.g., security, incident reporting, access arrangements delivery, post-results/appeals) and keep auditable records.
- **Our stance:** We maintain an annual exams compliance log showing how AO/centre agreements, training, security, incidents and post-results actions meet the Conditions.
- **Implementation example:** Signed centre-agreement register plus termly checks against Conditions G (assessments), H (marking/results), I (appeals/certificates).
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook>

Equality Act 2010 (Reasonable Adjustments Duty) — in force from 1 Oct 2010

- **Means:** Imposes a duty to make reasonable adjustments so disabled learners are not substantially disadvantaged, including in examinations and assessment.
- **Requires:** Sites ensure adjustments are appropriate, evidence-based and do not compromise assessment validity; decisions are individual and proportionate.
- **Our stance:** We plan early, match adjustments to normal way of working, and test delivery (rooms, tech, staffing) before live exams.
- **Implementation example: Access-arrangements file:** needs/evidence, AO approvals, tech test logs, invigilator briefings and learner feedback notes.
- **Links:** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/20>

SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 years (statutory guidance) — last updated 12 Sep 2024

- **Means:** Statutory guidance for schools and FE on identifying and meeting needs; integrates planning for access arrangements via normal way of working and multi-agency input.
- **Requires:** Sites evidence early identification, graduated response and the link from support in learning to support in assessment.
- **Our stance:** Exam access planning is embedded within SEND processes and reviewed after mocks before AO submissions.
- **Implementation example: Timeline** from SEND plan → mock adjustments → AO application → live delivery → impact review.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR — Royal Assent 23 May 2018; up to date



- **Means:** Sets lawful, fair and secure processing of examinations data (including special-category data and exam-related rights/exemptions).
- **Requires:** Sites publish privacy information, define lawful bases for sharing with AOs/Ofqual/Ofsted, secure transfers, operate retention schedules and handle SARs correctly.
- **Our stance:** We maintain a clear exams privacy notice, least-privilege access, secure transfer chains and a SARs/rights workflow.
- **Implementation example:** Exams data asset register covering datasets, lawful bases, sharing, retention, SAR timelines and breach response.
- **Links:** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents>