



Create, Aspire and Excel  
to 'Live life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)

# External Examinations Handbook 2025-2026

*A Guide for Students and Parents*

**Centre Number 52229**

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## INTRODUCTION

We hope this booklet will help you prepare for your upcoming examinations. This booklet is designed to make you aware of the regulations and procedures that need to be followed from JCQ/awarding bodies instructions and to prevent any problems occurring.

### Purpose of this handbook.

- To inform candidates about the JCQ/awarding bodies examination guidelines.
- To inform candidates about malpractice in examinations/assessments.
- To inform candidates about the use of their personal data and copyright.
- To ensure candidates are provided with all relevant information about their exams and assessments in advance of any exams/assessments being taken.
- To ensure copies of relevant JCQ information for candidate's documents and exam room posters are provided in advance of any exams/assessments being taken.
- To answer questions candidates may have.

The awarding organisations (or examination boards) set down strict criteria which must be followed for the conduct of examinations, and we are required to follow them precisely. You should therefore pay particular attention to the sections, *Malpractice*, *Warning to Candidates* and *Information for Candidates, for written and on-screen tests*. These pages are taken directly from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) '*Instructions for Conducting Examinations*' booklet. JCQ is an organisation that represents the awarding bodies to ensure that examinations are conducted fairly and uniformly across the country.

Some questions you may have are answered at the back of this booklet. If there is anything you do not understand or any question that has not been addressed, please ask. If you have any queries or need help or advice at any time before, during or after the examinations please contact:

**Mrs Tole (Examinations Officer)**

[exams@chacademy.co.uk](mailto:exams@chacademy.co.uk)

## BEFORE THE EXAMINATIONS

### Examination Board

The academy uses the following examination boards:

- AQA
- Pearson (Edexcel)
- WJEC/Eduqas
- OCR

### Personal data

- The awarding bodies collect information about exam candidates
- To understand what information is collected and how it is used, you must read the JCQ Information for candidates – Privacy Notice on towards the end of this booklet.

### Copyright

- The copyright of any form of work created by a candidate that is submitted to an awarding body for assessment (referred to as Assessment Materials) belongs to the candidate
- By submitting this work, a candidate is granting the awarding body a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to use their assessment materials (referred to as Assessment Licence)
- If a candidate wishes to terminate the awarding body's rights for anything other than assessing his/her work, the awarding body must be notified by the centre, and it is at the discretion of the awarding body whether to terminate such rights

### Candidate Statement of Entry

All candidates will receive a Statement of Entry from the Academy indicating the subjects and tiers (if applicable) that you had been entered for. Candidates will need to check that the personal details and exam entries are correct. If the information on the Statement of Entry is incorrect then please contact Mrs Tole, Examinations Officer as soon as possible.

Candidates are entered for examinations under the name format: Legal Forename and Legal Surname. This is the way your name will appear on all examination certificates. Any amendments can only be made on the production of a birth certificate or Deed Poll document.

### Candidate Exam Timetable

You will receive a provisional timetable along with your statement of entry, this will tell you the dates and times of your exams. In late April / early May you will receive your full exam timetable that will detail the dates, times, seating arrangements and exam rooms.

If you identify a timetable clash e.g. you have two or more papers timetabled at the same time, please contact Mrs Tole, Examinations Officer who will organise the best way for you to manage the clash.

Example:

If you have a clash in the same session, one paper will be taken followed by a short, supervised break, staying under examination conditions, followed by the next paper.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Exam Times</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Morning exams start at <b>09:00</b> Afternoon exams start at <b>13:00</b></p>
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Your **candidate number** is on your exam timetable. Please learn it! You will need to put it on every examination paper you are entered for.

### Contingency Day

This is a date set by the exam boards at the end of the May/June series of exams and will be used if a significant, unexpected event arises nationally or locally during the exam period such that no students (or a large number of them) are able to take an exam when planned. Students should be available throughout the exam period, including on that day, in case their planned timetable is disrupted. The contingency days for 2026 is as follows:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Contingency Day 2026</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">All Day of Wednesday 24th June 2026</p>
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Please note **Wednesday 24 June 2026** as the final date when making plans for the summer.

### Contact Numbers

Please make sure we have up-to-date contact details.

### Equipment

Make sure you have the correct equipment:

- Only **black ball point pens** are allowed to be used in any examination (except for drawings and rough notes)
- Only clear pencil cases are allowed. This should contain **two black pens, pencil, rubber, ruler, protractor, a pair of compasses and, for Maths and Science, a calculator.**
- **No calculator cases or lids** are allowed in the examination room
- Only **clear water bottles with labels removed** are allowed.
- No AirPods, Earphones/Earbuds, an iPod, a mobile phone, a MP3/4 player or similar device, a watch, smart glasses or any other smart device are allowed in the examination room.

## DURING THE EXAMINATIONS

### Examination Regulations

- Copies of the examination board regulations can be found in this booklet and online at [https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/IFC-Written\\_Examinations\\_2025\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/IFC-Written_Examinations_2025_FINAL.pdf)
- Please note that to break any of these regulations as laid down by the examination boards is a Malpractice and could lead to loss of marks or even disqualification.
- The school **must** abide by the rules laid down by the boards and report any students failing comply

### Attendance at Examinations

- It is the candidate's responsibility to check his/her timetable
- Candidates must arrive at school at **least 15 minutes** prior to the start of the examination
- All candidates must have the correct uniform and equipment
- Any candidate arriving late and is permitted by the centre to sit the examination, must be allowed the full time of the examination.
- **Late Arrival** - if you were to arrive late you need to wait outside the examination room until an **invigilator or the Exams Officer allows you to enter.**

### Conduct before and during Examinations

- Wait quietly outside Exam Room
- Make sure you are wearing the correct uniform. School uniform **must** be worn for all examinations.
- No writing on hands/wrists/arms.
- No **Henna tattoos** on your hands/wrists/arms
- No notes or other pieces of paper are allowed in the exam room
- **All WATCHES MUST be removed and not be taken into the Exam room.**
- **Mobile phones should be switched off and put in your bags and not taken into the exam room.**
- **Water bottles should be see through with no labels or writing on them**
- Listen to invigilators/teachers instructions prior to entering the exam room.
- Check your seat number which will be on your exam timetable and displayed outside the exam room before you enter.
- **Do not** talk to or try to communicate with, or disturb other candidates once you have entered the exam room. This includes non-verbal communication e.g. looking at someone and smiling
- Exam conditions apply once you have entered the exam room any form of communication or disturbance **will be reported to the exam board**, which may result in you being disqualified from the examination.
- Do not open your question paper until the exam begins.

- Do not write anything on or open your exam paper until instructed to do so by an invigilator.
- Leave the examination room in silence and remember you are still under exam conditions until you leave the exam room. Be aware some students may still be continuing with exams so please show them some respect.

### Equipment in the Examination Room

- All items of equipment must be visible to invigilators at all times
- Only clear transparent pencil cases and black ink pens are allowed (not gel pens)
- Make sure that your calculator conforms to the regulations. If in doubt check with your teacher. No cases/lids from calculators are allowed in the examination room.
- **Make sure all Mobile Phones, AirPods, Earphones/Earbuds, iPods, MP3/4 players or similar devices, watches, smart glasses or any other smart device's have been handed in. If found in your possession (even if turned off) you will be reported to the examination board and this may result in disqualification from that examination**
- No food is allowed in the examination room
- Only water in a **clear plastic bottle**, with the label removed and no writing on, is allowed.

### Using Calculators in the Examination Room

#### Calculators must be:

- of a size suitable for use on the desk;
- either battery or solar powered;
- free of lids, cases and covers which have printed instructions or formulae.

#### Calculators must not:

be designed or adapted to offer any of these facilities:

- language translators;
- symbolic algebra manipulation;
- symbolic differentiation or integration;
- communication with other machines or the internet;
- be borrowed from another candidate during an examination for any reason;
- have retrievable information stored in them. This includes:
- databanks; dictionaries; mathematical formulae; text.

#### The candidate is responsible for the following:

- the calculator's power supply;
- the calculator's working condition;
- clearing anything stored in the calculator.

## Malpractice

To maintain the integrity of qualifications, strict Regulations are in place set out by JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) and awarding bodies.

- Malpractice means any act or practice which is in breach of the Regulations.
- Any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice will be investigated and reported to the relevant awarding body/bodies

What constitutes malpractice:

- Introduction of unauthorised material into the examination room
- Breaches of examination conditions
- Exchanging, obtaining, receiving, or passing on information which could be examination related (or the attempt to)
- Offences relating to the content of candidates' work
- Undermining the integrity of examinations/assessments

## Please note the Information for candidates – Social Media

You need to know that the following would be malpractice:

- copying or allowing work to be copied – e.g. posting written work on social networking sites prior to an examination/assessment.
- collusion: allowing others to help produce your work or helping others with theirs.
- asking others about what questions your exam will include (even if no one tells you).
- having or sharing details about exam questions before the exam - whether you think these are real or fake.
- not telling exam boards or your school/college about exam information being shared.

## Invigilators

The Academy employs trained external invigilators to conduct the examinations. Students are expected to always behave in a respectful manner towards all invigilators and follow their instructions.

The invigilators are the people in charge whilst in the examination room and must follow strict rules and regulations when conducting exams as directed by JCQ awarding bodies. Invigilators give all instructions along with handing out and collection of examination papers and equipment (where applicable).

During an exam if you require an invigilator, please raise your hand and they will come over to you.

**During an exam you must not leave the examination room without an invigilator.**

### Absence from Examinations

If students are absent from an examination there is **no** opportunity to re-sit that examination until the next exam season.

If any student is absent through illness, you **MUST** ring the Attendance Officer Ms Gage on (ext 226 or option 1) at the earliest opportunity. You must not miss any examinations without **VERY** good cause. If you **DO** miss an examination, a doctor's certificate is essential, or you will be charged the entry fee.

It may be possible for an examination grade to be awarded for a student who has missed an examination through illness. This is the decision of the examination board, but the Academy must be notified as soon as possible.

If you feel unwell during an examination, please put your hand up and tell the invigilator who will be able to take you to the medical room.

If you are unwell and manage to take the exam on the day, please notify Mrs Tole, Examinations Officer as you may have a case to apply to the examination board for special consideration, but evidence would have to be provided such as a doctor's certificate.

**If a student is absent from an examination without a good reason, they will be liable for the full examination fee.**

**Exams missed due to absence will not be available to retake until the next exam season.**

## POINTS TO REMEMBER:

**Do not bring into the exam your Mobile Phones, Airpods, Earphones/earbuds, iPods, MP3/4 players (or similar devices) watches, smart glasses or technological web enabled sources of information and electronic equipment.**

**Do not bring calculator cases/lids into the examination.**

**Do not write anything on your exam paper or open your question paper until instructed to do so by an invigilator.**

**Water bottles should be CLEAR with no labels or writing on.**

**Do not attempt to communicate** with any other students in the room for example; turning around, smiling, nodding etc. it may be seen as communication and you could be disqualified.

**Do listen carefully** to what the invigilator is saying as there may be amendments to the examination paper you are about to sit.

**Do read the question paper carefully**, checking that the subject, paper and tier of entry are correct.

**Do remember to write your legal name and candidate number** clearly on your examination paper and on any additional paper you may use. Remember to number the pages.

**Do remember to sign your exam paper.**

**Do write in black pen.**

When you are finished sit quietly **and do not cause any disturbance** to the other students who may still be working. Any disturbances will have to be reported to the exam board, which may lead to disqualification from the examinations.

**Do remember** to leave the examination room in silence and remember you are still under exam conditions until you leave the exam room. Be aware some students may still be continuing with exams so please show them some respect.



## Information for candidates - coursework assessments

This document tells you about some things that you must and must not do when you are completing coursework.

When you submit your work for marking, you will be asked to sign an authentication statement confirming that you have read and followed these regulations.

If there is anything that you do not understand, you must ask your teacher.

In some subjects you will have an opportunity to do some independent research into a topic. The research you do may involve looking for information in published sources, such as textbooks, encyclopedias, journals, TV, radio and on the internet.

You can demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of a subject by using information from sources, or generated from sources, which may include the internet and AI. Remember, though, information from these sources may be incorrect or biased. You must take care how you use this material - you cannot copy it and claim it as your own work.

*The regulations state that:*

*'the work which you submit for assessment must be your own';*

*'you must not copy from someone else or allow another candidate to copy from you'.*

If you use the same wording as a published source, you must place quotation marks around the passage and state where it came from. This is called 'referencing'. You must make sure that you give detailed references for everything in your work which is not in your own words. A reference from a printed book or journal should show the name of the author, the year of publication and the page number. For example: (Morrison, 2000, p29).

For material taken from the internet, your reference should show the date when the material was downloaded and must show the precise web page, not the search engine used to locate it. This can be copied from the address line. For example: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthistday/hi/dates/stories/october/28/newsid\\_2621000/2621915.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthistday/hi/dates/stories/october/28/newsid_2621000/2621915.stm), downloaded 5 February 2026.

Where computer-generated content has been used (such as an AI chatbot), your reference must show the name of the AI tool used and should show the date the content was generated. For example: ChatGPT 3.5 (<https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>), 25/01/2026.

You should also reference the sources used by the AI tool in generating the content.

You must retain a copy of the question(s) and computer-generated content for reference and authentication purposes in a non-editable format (such as a screenshot) and provide a brief

explanation of how you used it. This must be submitted with your work for final assessment so that your teacher can review the work, the AI-generated content and how it has been used.

You may be required to produce a bibliography at the end of your work. This must list the full details of publications you have used in your research, even where these are not directly referred to. For example: Curran, J. *Mass Media and Society* (Hodder Arnold, 2005).

**If you copy the words, ideas or outputs of others and do not show your sources in references and a bibliography, this will be considered as cheating.**

## Preparing your coursework – good practise

If you receive help and guidance from someone other than your teacher, you must tell your teacher. They will then record the nature of the assistance given to you.

Your parent/carer may provide you with access to resource materials and discuss your coursework with you. However, they must not give you direct advice on what should or should not be included.

If you worked as part of a group on an assignment, you **must each** write up your **own account** of the assignment. Even if the information you have is the same, the description of how that information was obtained and the conclusions you draw from it should be in your own words.

You **must** meet the deadlines that your teacher gives you. Remember – your teachers are there to guide you. Although they cannot give you direct assistance, they can help you to sort out any problems before it is too late.

Take care of your work and keep it safe. **Don't** leave it lying around where your classmates can find it. **Don't** share it with anyone, including posting it on social media. You **must always** keep your work secure and confidential. If it is stored on the computer network, keep your password secure. Collect all copies from the printer and destroy those you do not need.

**Don't be tempted to use any prepared or generated online solutions and try to pass them off as your own work – this is cheating.** Electronic tools used by awarding bodies can detect this sort of copying.

You **must not** write inappropriate, offensive or obscene material. Preparing your coursework – good practice

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves taking someone else's words, thoughts, ideas or outputs and trying to pass them off as your own. It could also include AI-produced material. **Plagiarism is a form of cheating which is taken very seriously.**

**Don't** think you won't be caught; there are many ways to detect plagiarism.

- Markers can spot changes in the style of writing and use of language.
- Markers are highly experienced subject specialists who will be familiar with work on the topic concerned. They may have read the source you are using or even marked the work you have copied from.
- Internet search engines and specialised computer software can be used to match phrases or pieces of text with original sources. They can detect changes in the grammar and style of writing or punctuation.

## Sanctions for breaking the rules

If it is discovered that you have broken the rules, one of the following sanctions will be applied:

- you will be awarded zero marks for your work;
- you will be disqualified from that unit for that examination series;
- you will be disqualified from the whole subject for that examination series;
- you will be disqualified from all subjects and barred from entering again for a period of time. The awarding body will decide which sanction is appropriate.

**REMEMBER – IT'S YOUR QUALIFICATION SO IT NEEDS TO BE YOUR OWN WORK**

*Effective from September 2025*



## Information for Candidates

### Information About You and How We Use It

You have entered general or vocational qualifications such as GCSE, A-level, functional skills qualifications etc with one or more of the awarding bodies listed above. In order to be able to provide examinations and assessments, the awarding body needs to collect and use information about you. This notice provides you with a high level summary of the information the awarding body is required by law to give you about of what happens to that information. For more detail see each awarding body's full Privacy Notice:

AQA <https://www.aqa.org.uk/about-us/privacy-notice>

CCEA <https://ceea.org.uk/legal/privacy-notice>

City & Guilds <https://www.cityandguilds.com/help/help-for-learners/learner-policy>

NCFE <https://www.ncfe.org.uk/legal-information>

OCR <https://www.ocr.org.uk/about/our-policies/website-policies/privacy-policy/>

Pearson <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/about-us/qualification-brands/gdpr.html>

WJEC <https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/privacy-policy/>

#### Who we are and how to contact us

Each awarding body is a separate organisation. Your school or examination centre will be able to confirm to you which awarding body is delivering each qualification you are undertaking and you will receive a statement confirming what qualifications you have been entered for and which awarding body. You will find links to each awarding body's website and information on how to contact them here:

**Information about you and from where it is obtained** <https://www.jcq.org.uk/contact-our-members/>

Each awarding body whose qualifications you enter will need to use a variety of information about you. This includes obvious identification details such as your name, address, date of birth and your school or examination centre. It also includes information about your gender, race and health, where appropriate. This information is provided by you or your parents/guardians and/or by your school or examination centre.

Each awarding body will create certain information about you such as a candidate number, examination results and certificates.

You will find further information about this in the awarding bodies' full Privacy Notice (see links above) or by contacting the awarding body (see above).

### **What happens to the information about you?**

The awarding bodies use the information about you to deliver the examinations and assessments which you have entered. This includes making a variety of arrangements for you to sit the examinations or assessments, marking, providing you and your school or centre with results and certificates. The awarding bodies also use some of the information about you for equality monitoring and other statistical analysis.

The awarding bodies may share information about your results with official bodies such as the Department for Education and the examinations regulators (eg Ofqual in England) and also relevant local authorities and the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). An awarding body may also use information about you to investigate cheating and other examination malpractice and will share information about malpractice with other awarding bodies.

The awarding bodies take the security of the information about you that they hold seriously.

You will find further, technical information about what the awarding bodies do with information about you, why and the legal basis in the awarding bodies' full Privacy Notice, which can be accessed here (see links on page one) or by contacting the awarding body (see above).

### **Your rights**

The law gives you a number of rights in relation to the information about you that the awarding bodies holds. Those rights are:

- Access – you are entitled to ask each awarding body about the information it holds about you.
- Rectification – you are entitled to ask each awarding body to correct any errors in the information that it holds about you.
- Erasure – in certain circumstances you are entitled to ask each awarding body to erase the information about you that it holds.
- Object to or restrict processing – in certain circumstances you are entitled to ask each awarding body to stop using information about you in certain ways.
- Complain – you are entitled to complain to the Information Commissioner (the body regulating the use of personal information) about what each awarding body does with information about you.

You will find further information about your rights in relation to information about you in the awarding bodies' full Privacy Notice, which can be accessed here (see links on page one) or by contacting the awarding body (see above).

**How long the information about you is held**

Each awarding body retains information about you only for as long as it is needed. Some of the information is needed only during the period in which you are undertaking the examination or assessment and is securely destroyed a short while afterwards. Other information about you, such as your name, gender, address, qualification and subjects entered and the results, are held indefinitely and for at least 40 years. Each awarding body has its own retention policy that sets out what information it retains, how it is retained and for how long. You can find out more about retention policies by contacting each awarding body (see above).

**How to find out more about the information about you that the awarding bodies use**

To find out more about the information about you that the awarding bodies collect and use, including what happens to that information why, you can review the awarding bodies' full Privacy Notice, which can be accessed here (see links on page one) or contact the awarding body. You will find links to each awarding body's website and information on how to contact them here:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/contact-our-members/>.

**Please note**

It is important to note that this notice concerns only how the awarding bodies use information about you (called your "personal data"). Complaints about how an awarding body handles your personal data can be made to the Information Commissioner ([www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)). Information about the examinations and assessment themselves, including the rules about assessments, can be found on the JCQ Exams Office pages ([www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office)). The awarding bodies are regulated by Ofqual (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual>) in England; Qualifications Wales ([www.qualificationswales.org](http://www.qualificationswales.org)) in Wales, and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (<http://ccea.org.uk/regulation>) in Northern Ireland.



AQA

City & Guilds

CCEA

OCR

Pearson

WJEC

## Information for candidates - Written examinations

### With effect from 1 September 2025

This document has been written to help you.

Read it carefully and follow the instructions.

If there is anything you do not understand, especially which calculator you may use, ask your teacher.

### A Regulations – Make sure you understand the rules

1. Be on time for all your exams. If you are late, your work might not be accepted.
2. **Do not** become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice during the exam.
3. If you try to cheat or break the rules in any way, you could be disqualified from all your exams.
4. You must not take into the exam room any unauthorised material, including:
  - a. notes;
  - b. earphones or earbuds (e.g. AirPods), mobile phones, MP3/4 players or similar devices, smart glasses, tablets (e.g. iPads or iPods);
  - c. watches.

Any pencil cases taken into the exam room **must** be see-through.

**Remember: possession of unauthorised material is breaking the rules, even if you do not intend to use it, and you will be subject to sanctions and possible disqualification.**

5. Do not use correcting pens, fluid or tape, erasable pens, highlighters or gel pens in your answers.
6. Do not talk to or try to communicate with or disturb other candidates once you have entered the exam room.
7. You must not write inappropriate, obscene or offensive material.
8. If you leave the exam room unaccompanied by an invigilator before the exam has finished, you will not be allowed to return.
9. Do not borrow anything from another candidate during the exam.

## B. Information – Make sure you attend your exams and bring what you need

1. Know the dates and times of all your exams. Arrive at least ten minutes before the start of each exam.
2. If you arrive late for an exam, report to the invigilator running the exam.
3. If you arrive more than one hour after the published starting time for the exam, you may not be allowed to take it.
4. Only take into the exam room the pens, pencils, erasers and any other permitted equipment needed for the exam.
5. You must write clearly and in black ink. Coloured pencils or inks may be used only for diagrams, maps, charts, etc, unless the instructions printed on the front of the question paper state otherwise.

## C. Calculators, dictionaries and computer spellcheckers

1. You may use a calculator unless you are told otherwise.
2. If you use a calculator:
  - a. make sure it works properly; check that the batteries are working properly;
  - b. clear anything stored in its memory;
  - c. remove any parts such as cases, lids or covers which have printed instructions or formulae;
  - d. **do not** bring into the exam room any operating instructions or prepared programs.
3. Do not use a dictionary or computer spellchecker unless you are told otherwise. 5 D. Instructions during the exam

## D. Instructions during the exam

1. Always listen to the invigilator. Always follow their instructions.
2. Tell the invigilator at once if:
  - a. you think you have not been given the right question paper or all of the materials listed on the front of the paper;
  - b. the question paper is incomplete or badly printed;
  - c. you think you have not been given the expected access arrangement(s).
3. Read carefully and follow the instructions printed on the question paper and/or on the answer booklet.

4. **Do not** start writing anything until the invigilator tells you to fill in all the details required on the front of the question paper and/or the answer booklet. **Do not** open the question paper until you are told that the exam has begun.
5. Remember to write your answers within the designated sections of the answer booklet.
6. Do your rough work on the proper exam stationery. Cross it through and hand it in with your answers. Make sure you add your candidate details to any additional answer sheets that you use, including those used for rough work.

## E. Advice and assistance

1. If, on the day of the exam, you feel that your work may be affected by ill health or any other reason, tell the invigilator.
2. Put up your hand during the exam if:
  - a. *you have a problem and are not sure what you should do;*
  - b. *you do not feel well;*
  - c. *you need more paper.*
3. **You must** not ask for, and will not be given, any explanation of the questions.

## F. At the end of the exam

1. If you have used more than one answer booklet and/or any supplementary answer sheets, place them in the correct order.

Place any loose additional answer sheets inside your answer booklet. Make sure you add your candidate details to any additional answer sheets that you use. For CCEA examinations, any loose additional answer sheets should be placed **behind** your script.

2. **Do not** leave the exam room until told to do so by the invigilator.
3. **Do not** take any stationery from the exam room. This includes the question paper, answer booklets (used or unused), rough work or any other materials provided for the exam.



AQA

City & Guilds

CCEA

OCR

Pearson

WJEC

## Information for candidates - On-screen tests

### With effect from 1 September 2025

This document has been written to help you. Read it carefully and follow the instructions.

If there is anything you do not understand ask your teacher.

#### A. Regulations – Make sure you understand the rules

1. Be on time for your on-screen test(s). If you are late, your work might not be accepted.
2. **Do not** become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice during the on-screen test.
3. If you try to cheat or break the rules in any way, you could be disqualified from all your exams.
4. Only take into the exam room the materials and equipment which are allowed for that exam.
5. You **must not** take into the exam room any unauthorised material including:
  - a. notes;
  - b. earphones or earbuds (e.g. AirPods), mobile phones, MP3/4 players or similar devices, smart glasses, tablets (e.g. iPads or iPods);
  - c. a watch.

Unless you are told otherwise, you **must not** have access to:

- d. AI tools, email, graphics packages or computer aided design software, portable storage media, e.g. floppy disks, CDs, memory sticks, social media sites, spreadsheets or the internet;
- e. prepared templates.

**Bringing unauthorised material into the exam room is breaking the rules, whether you intend to use it or not. You will be subject to sanctions and possible disqualification.**

6. Do not talk to, try to communicate with or disturb other candidates once you have entered the exam room.
7. If you leave the exam room unaccompanied by an invigilator before the on-screen test has finished, **you will** not be allowed to return.
8. **Do not** borrow anything from another candidate during the on-screen test.

## B. Information – Make sure you attend your on-screen test and bring what you need

1. Know the date and time of your on-screen test(s). Arrive at least ten minutes before the start of your on-screen test.
2. If you arrive late for an on-screen test, report to the invigilator running the test.
3. If you arrive more than one hour after the published starting time for the on-screen test, you may not be allowed to take it.
4. Your centre will inform you of any equipment which you may need for the on-screen test.

## c. Calculators, dictionaries and computer spellcheckers

1. You may use a calculator unless you are told otherwise.
2. If you use a calculator:
  - a. make sure it works properly; check that the batteries are working properly;
  - b. clear anything stored in its memory;
  - c. remove any parts such as cases, lids or covers which have printed instructions or formulae;
  - d. **do not** bring into the examination room any operating instructions or prepared programs.
3. Do not use a dictionary or computer spellchecker unless you are told otherwise.

## d. Instructions during the on-screen test

1. Always listen to the invigilator. Always follow their instructions.
2. Tell the invigilator at once if:

- a. you have been entered for the wrong on-screen test;
  - b. the on-screen test is in another candidate's name;
  - c. you experience system delays or any other IT issues;
  - d. your access to the on-screen test has not been set up correctly;
  - e. adjustments to the on-screen test have not been made for you, e.g. additional time has not been added, computer reading software or speech recognition software has not been uploaded.
3. You may be given a question paper or the instructions may be on screen. In either case, read carefully and follow the instructions. **Do not** open the question paper until you are told that the exam has begun.

## E. Advice and assistance


1. If, on the day of the on-screen test, you feel that your work may be affected by ill health or any other reason, tell the invigilator.
2. Put up your hand during the on-screen test if:
  - a. you have a problem with your computer and are not sure what you should do;
  - b. you do not feel well.
3. **You must** not ask for, and will not be given, any explanation of the questions.

## F. At the end of the on-screen test

1. Ensure that the software closes at the end of the on-screen test.
2. If you are required to print off work outside the time allowed for the on-screen test, ensure that you collect your own work. You must not share your work with other candidates. Make sure that another candidate does not collect your printout(s). 3 Do not leave the exam room until told to do so by the invigilator. 4 Do not take any stationery from the exam room. This includes rough work, printouts or any other materials provided for the on-screen test.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### Information for Candidates Using Social Media and Examinations/Assessments



**Information for candidates  
Using social media and examinations/assessments**




Image by Patrice Jones

**This document has been written to help you stay  
within examination regulations.  
Please read it carefully.**

We all like to share our experiences when taking exams and sharing ideas with others online can be helpful when you're studying or revising.

However, it is important to consider what you say and to think about what information is being shared as there are limits to what you can share and you need to be careful not to break the rules. The rules are in place to ensure that exams are fair to everyone, students don't become worried about false rumours and any real issues can be sorted out quickly by the right people. We'd like to ask you to act responsibly when discussing online. If you're in doubt about what you can and can't discuss online regarding your exams, it's always best to check with your teacher.

If you receive what is or what looks to be assessment related information through social media, or any other means, you must tell your teacher or another member of staff. You must show them what you have received (if available). They will then report the matter to the awarding body and it will be investigated.

Where candidates breach the rules for examinations, controlled assessments, coursework or non-examination assessments, awarding bodies have an obligation to investigate and may apply penalties.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### Information for Candidates Using Social Media and Examinations/Assessments



#### You need to know that the following would be malpractice:

- copying or allowing work to be copied – e.g. posting written work on social networking sites prior to an examination/assessment;
- collusion: allowing others to help produce your work or helping others with theirs;
- asking others about what questions your exam will include (even if no one tells you);
- having or sharing details about exam questions before the exam - whether you think these are real or fake; or
- not telling exam boards or your school/college about exam information being shared.

#### Penalties that awarding bodies apply include:

- a written warning;
- the loss of marks for a section, component or unit;
- disqualification from a unit, all units or qualifications; or
- a ban from taking assessments or exams for a set period of time.

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the JCQ rules:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents>

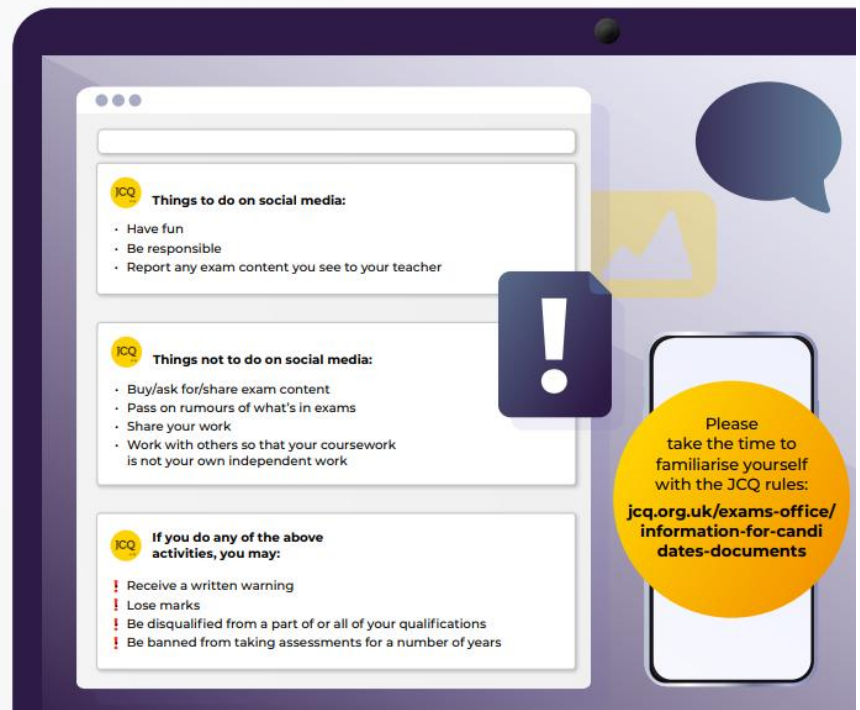




## Information for candidates Using social media and examinations/assessments

**While we like to share our experiences online, when it comes to exams, we have to be careful.**

- Sharing ideas online can be helpful when you're studying or revising
- However, sharing certain information (see information on the right) can break the rules and could affect your results
- If you're not sure what you can and can't discuss online, check with your teacher
- If you receive exam content on social media, you must tell your teacher
- Don't be caught out by scammers selling fake exam papers

**JCQ Things to do on social media:**

- Have fun
- Be responsible
- Report any exam content you see to your teacher

**JCQ Things not to do on social media:**

- Buy/ask for/share exam content
- Pass on rumours of what's in exams
- Share your work
- Work with others so that your coursework is not your own independent work

**JCQ If you do any of the above activities, you may:**

- ! Receive a written warning
- ! Lose marks
- ! Be disqualified from a part of or all of your qualifications
- ! Be banned from taking assessments for a number of years

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the JCQ rules:  
[jqc.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents](http://jqc.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents)



## AI and Assessments

### A quick guide for students



#### What is AI?

- AI stands for artificial intelligence and using it is like having a computer that thinks
- AI tools like ChatGPT or Snapchat My AI can write text, make art and create music by learning from data from the internet, but watch out – they can also make things up and be biased



#### How can AI be misused in assessments?

AI misuse is when you take something made using AI and say it's your own work.

**THIS IS CHEATING!**



#### How do I make sure I don't misuse AI?



##### 1 Know the rules

- You're **not allowed** to use AI tools when you're in an exam
- Your teachers will tell you if you're allowed to use AI tools when doing your coursework – the rules will depend on your qualification
- Even if you're allowed to use AI tools, you can't get marks for content just produced by AI – your marks come from showing your own understanding and producing your own work

##### 2 Reference reference reference!

- If you're allowed to use AI tools, you must reference them clearly
- Name the AI tool you used
- Add the date you generated the content
- Explain how you used it
- Save a screenshot of the questions you asked and the answers you got

##### 3 Declare it's all your own work

– When you hand in your assessment, you have to sign a declaration. Anything without a reference must be all your own work. If you've used an AI tool, don't sign the declaration until you're sure you've added all the references



#### What happens if I misuse AI?

If you've misused AI, you could lose your marks for the assessment – you could even be disqualified from the subject.

**DON'T RISK IT!**



**REMEMBER**  
Misusing AI is cheating!

Know the rules  
Talk to your teachers  
Reference clearly

## Warning to candidates



 AQA	 City & Guilds	 CCEA	 NCFE	 OCR	 Pearson	 WJEC
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**1**

You **must** be on time for all your examinations.

**2**

**Possession of a mobile phone** or other unauthorised material **is not allowed** even if you do not intend to use it. You will be subject to penalty and possible disqualification from the examination or qualification.

**3**

You **must not** talk to, attempt to communicate with or disturb other candidates once you have entered the examination room.

**4**

You **must** follow the instructions of the invigilator.

**5**

You **must not** sit an examination in the name of another candidate.

**6**

You **must not** become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice in any part of the examination.

**7**

If you are confused about anything, only speak to an invigilator.

**The Warning to candidates must be displayed in a prominent place outside each examination room. This may be a hard copy A3 paper version or an image of the poster projected onto a wall or screen for all candidates to see.**



AQA

City & Guilds

CCEA

NCFE

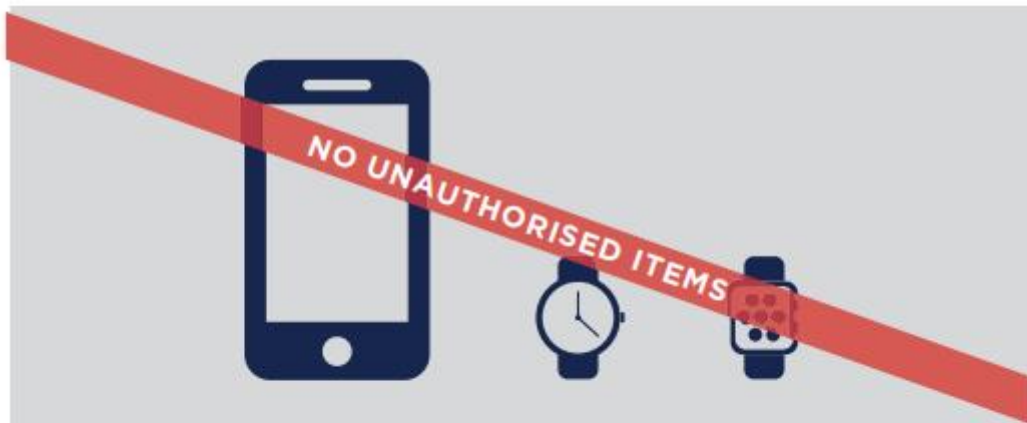
OCR

Pearson

WJEC

## **NO MOBILE PHONES NO WATCHES**

**NO TECHNOLOGICAL OR WEB-ENABLED  
POTENTIAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION**



**Possession of unauthorised items, such as a mobile phone  
or any watch, is a serious offence and could result in**

# **DISQUALIFICATION**

**from your examination and your overall qualification.**

This poster must be displayed in a prominent place outside each examination room.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Q. Why do I need to check the details on the Candidate Statement of Entry?**

A. The details on your Statement of Entry will be used when certificates are printed. If the name or date of birth on your certificates does not match your birth certificate it could cause you problems if you are asked to show your certificates to a potential employer or for admission to college/university at some time in the future. You should also check that the subjects and tiers of entry you are entered for are correct and no subjects are missing.

### **Q. What do I do if I think I have the wrong paper?**

A. Invigilators will ask you to check before the examination starts. If you think something is wrong, put your hand up and tell the invigilator immediately.

### **Q. What do I do if I forget my candidate number?**

A. Candidate numbers are printed on all examination information that you will receive from the Examinations Officer and on the seating plans that are displayed outside the examination room.

### **Q. What do I do if I forget the school centre number?**

A. The centre number is **52229**. It will be clearly displayed in the examination rooms.

### **Q. What do I do if I have an accident or am unwell before the examination?**

A. Inform the school at the earliest possible opportunity so that we can help or advise you. In the case of an accident that means you are unable to write, it may be possible to provide you with a scribe or WP to write your answers, but we will need as much notice as possible.

### **Q. What do I do if I feel unwell during the examination?**

A. Put your hand up and an invigilator will assist you. You should inform an invigilator if you feel unwell before or during. It may be possible to apply to the examination board for special consideration so you must tell us of anything that may have affected your performance.

**Q. If I am late, can I still sit the examination?**

A. Provided you are not more than one hour late; it may still be possible for you to sit the examination. You should get to school as quickly as possible and report to reception. A member of staff will escort you to the examination room where you should wait outside for the invigilator to allow you to enter. The invigilator will then get you started, and you are allowed the full time of the examination.

You should also be aware that if you start the examination more than one hour after the published start time, the school must inform the examination board and it is possible that the board may decide not to accept your work. Please ensure that you allow enough time to get to school so that if you are delayed (e.g. through transport problems) you will still arrive on time.

**Q. If I miss the examination can I take it another day?**

A. No. Timetables are regulated by the examination boards and you must attend on the given date and time.

**Q. Do I have to wear school uniform?**

A. Yes, normal school regulations apply to uniform, hair, jewellery, make-up etc.

**Q. What equipment should I bring for my examinations?**

A. You should bring at least two pens. Remember you must write only in **black ink**.

For some examinations you will need a calculator, a 30cm ruler, pencil sharpener, eraser, compasses and protractor. **You are responsible for providing your own equipment for examinations.** You must not attempt to borrow equipment from another candidate during the examination.

**Q. What items are not allowed into the examination room?**

A. Only materials that are listed on question papers are permitted in the examination room and any student who is found to have any material with them that is not allowed will be reported to the appropriate examination board. In such circumstances, a student would normally be disqualified from the paper or the subject concerned.

Calculator lids and instruction leaflets **are not allowed** in the examinations room.

No food is allowed in the examination room. Water is allowed in a clear bottle but please ensure the label is removed.

Mobile phones, watches or any technological/web enabled sources of information and any other electronic equipment must not be brought into the examination room, even if they are turned off.

**Q. Why can't I bring my mobile phone into the examination room?**

A. Being in possession of a mobile phone (or any other technological/web enabled source of information or device e.g. watch, iPod, MP3 player, airbuds/airpods, smart glasses, smart watch) is regarded as cheating and is subject to severe penalty from the awarding organisation, from disqualification from a specific paper to disqualification from the entire subject award. You may not be intending to cheat but failure to follow instructions will be regarded as such.

**Q. How do I know how long the examination is?**

A. The length of the examination is shown in minutes on your individual examination timetable under the heading 'duration'. It is also shown on the front of your examination paper. Invigilators will tell you when to start and finish the examination and this will be clearly displayed during the examination.

**Q. Can I leave the examination early?**

A. It is a requirement of the examination boards that you must stay in the examination room for at least one hour after the published start time of the examination (or the duration of the examination if it is less than 1 hour). It is not the Academy's policy to allow candidates to leave the examination room early as this is disruptive for other candidates.

**Q. What do I do if the fire alarm goes off?**

A. The invigilators will tell you what to do.

**Q. Can I go to the toilet during the examination?**

A. Only if it is an emergency. You will be escorted by an invigilator and will not be allowed any extra time.

## Exam Anxiety/Stress

It is natural to feel anxious prior to an exam. In fact, a little anxiety can actually help performance. Anxiety and stress cause the body to release adrenaline which can be helpful when responding to challenging situations. Whilst being laid back has its advantages, being so laid back that you are horizontal can mean you may lack the motivation needed to do well!

Equally, too much adrenalin can lead you to feel distressed and hinder performance. You need to be able to strike a balance between too little and too much anxiety. The purpose of this information is to help you manage your anxiety and achieve an optimal level to promote alertness and performance.

### *Understanding test anxiety*

**Authors: Dr Rob Buck and Professor Kevin Woods**

Tests and exams in school inform teachers, parents, and students themselves about their academic progress and potential future pathways. But like any situation in which a person's performance is being evaluated, the outcomes may feel very significant. So exams have the potential to be stressful.

As with anything that may be personally important, it is perfectly normal to experience anxiety and, research shows, this is not necessarily a bad thing. It can help some students to focus beforehand, and then apply themselves during the exam itself. However, for some students, these worries go beyond helpful focus, becoming a more pervasive anxiety that poses a threat to both their academic achievement and general wellbeing.

### **Experiencing test anxiety**

'Test anxiety' was first recognised by psychologists in the 1950s, leading to a field of research attempting to define, explain and reduce it.

Psychologists describe test anxiety as having 2 aspects – cognitive and emotional. The cognitive part refers to negative thoughts. Some negative thoughts are about the test, such as 'I can't do math's, and I will fail.' Other thoughts, called test-irrelevant thoughts, are about what might happen before or after the test, such as 'when I fail, everyone will laugh at me.' The emotional part includes tension, and a sense of distress or unease, and physical symptoms, such as nausea and sweating. Of these, negative thoughts and test irrelevant thinking have been shown to have the greatest impact on academic performance.

Test anxiety can vary between students, depending on differences in their general levels of anxiety, how they perceive their ability and previous exam experiences. For some students, test anxiety is simply fear of the consequences of failure. However, many others are more anxious about how others will judge them. Some are unable to define their concerns, simply associating exams with a general sense of threat or dread. Whatever a student's concern, worries can occur far in advance of an exam, or may not present themselves until the day of the test itself.

Our research suggests that for some students worrying thoughts interfere with their attention, making them less able to efficiently 'process' the task in hand. This can lead to poor revision, 'going blank' during the exam or being less able to recall, handle and organise content in their responses. Some of our current research aims to better understand students' 'attentional bias's within examinations and assessment situations.

### **How prevalent is test anxiety?**

A recent large-scale study of 14-16-year-olds in England found that 16.4% of students reported themselves to be highly 'test anxious', with female students (22.5%) reporting a significantly higher proportion than male students (10.3%). This is similar to levels found in earlier studies for young people in England, and from studies from different countries around world (for example von der Embse, Barterian, & Segool, 2014). If we consider that over 600,000 students sit their GCSE examinations each year, this would suggest that approximately 100,000 students may be experiencing high levels of test anxiety each year. So, a better understanding of test anxiety, and finding ways to reduce its effects, has the potential to benefit a significant number of students.

What is it like to experience exam stress? A student perspective

**Authors: Tamsin McCaldin, Kerry-ann Brown and Dr Jo Greenwood**

With recent changes to exams in England, there has been increased media interest into exam stress and what that might mean for students working towards exams. Although it is likely that anyone preparing for and taking exams will experience some stress and anxiety, research has suggested that around 15% of GCSE students may fall into the category of being 'highly test anxious' (Putwain & Daly, 2014). For these students, their levels of stress and anxiety are high enough that their well being and exam performance can be negatively affected.

In response to a growing awareness, many articles have been published giving tips and advice on how to manage and cope with exam stress, but little focus has been directed towards what it's like for the students who are actually experiencing exam stress. Here, Jemma and Sami, two GCSE students in Year 11, give an insight into what it's like for them to experience stress around their exams.

These are real accounts from students. Although only two are presented here, these examples illustrate common experiences of many students. They show the importance of listening to students, to gain the insight needed to provide the right support.

### What is exam stress like?

For Sami, feeling stressed is what he associates most with the topic of exams. "The whole time is just a stressful thing," he says. "All everyone's talking about is how your exams are really soon and they're the most important things... it's like the whole world - it's just *stress*."

Jemma shares the experience that stress around exams is not confined to the exam itself, or to revision. She explains that she sees the stress as starting early and being everywhere. "You start to feel it as soon as you're in Year 10 kind of- maybe before actually... And then in Year 11 it's everywhere. Everyone's stressing."

Sami explains that in certain situations, such as when he's feeling unmotivated to complete a piece of work he knows he's able to do, a small amount of stress can be helpful. "If I'm stressing over it," he says, "I'll be able to get it and do it really quick. Whereas, if I'm not really bothered, like, not really stressed about it, I won't." Sami's exam stress, however, is different and more extreme. It is unpleasant to experience and something he perceives as having a negative impact on his work. "Too much stress is just getting you panicked," he explains. "And you can't do anything because it's too much." His only solution to remove the feeling is to "move away from revision to calm down because you can't do anything like that."

Jemma's experience of stress is similar. "The amount of pressure on that high level," she says, "is sometimes so overwhelming that you don't want to do it." Like Sami, she finds herself moving away from exam preparation and revision because of how stressed it makes her feel. She also describes feeling that stress will affect her during the exam, saying "who wants to sit there in an exam hall and be, like, doing this test when you can't remember anything because you're that stressed out?"

Both students explain that feeling stressed can make them feel negatively about all aspects of their school and exam work. Jemma explains that, "feeling *that bad* makes you feel like nothing's right. Everything's going to go bad." When she gets extremely stressed she can begin to feel like she won't get the grades she hopes for and describes feeling like she's "just going to fail, and then there's nowhere else to go." Being extremely stressed can make the situation seem hopeless and success in their exams seem impossible.

### What causes exam stress?

Both Jemma and Sami talk about not knowing what various aspects of the exam will be like, and this element of the unknown being a source of stress.

For Jemma, it is uncertainty around the exam itself which is a source of stress. "You don't know what it's actually like," she says, when trying to imagine being in the exam. Even though she has taken mock exams there are still parts of the 'real exams' which remain unknown. "You don't know the

people who give out the papers,” she says, talking about the school's use of independent invigilators, “or where you’re going to be and stuff and that’s ominous with stress. It’s horrible.”

Sami describes feeling unsure about the questions which will come up in the exams. His teachers, he says, are more focused on teaching the content of the course than the structure of the exam. He describes asking his teacher about sample exam questions, because he feels, “we need to know what we’re going to come up against in the exam.” Sami explains that his teachers, “say we don’t. Like, we don’t have to worry about that right now, that’s something we do later. I think they will tell us later and that but it’s scary not knowing.”

For both students, as well as the unknown aspects of the exam itself, their lack of confidence in revision technique and confusion around what revision should look like was another source of stress.

Sami and Jemma give similar descriptions of their teachers highlighting the importance of revision, and encouraging them to do it. Sami views his teachers as saying, “you know what, just go home, go revise everything. You’ve got a test coming up,” but explains that he is left feeling that “you don’t know what that means.” He feels unclear on exactly what he should revise, and how he should go about doing it, stating that he wants his teachers to “just tell us what we’re meant to do.”

Jemma explains how feeling unsure of how to revise causes her stress. “Me as a person revising is just not good,” she says, “because, I will stress over it, and I will freak out about it and I just won’t remember anything and I’ll do crap in the exam.” And why does she see revision as a source of stress? “Because,” she explains, “the whole time you’re thinking ‘is this going to be something I remember? Am I doing it right? Should I be reading stuff or making flash cards or something?’”.

**Here’s some advice on what you can do to help yourself with...**

### ***Anxiety during the run up to exams***

- Set out plenty of revision time well in advance of your exams – around six weeks is usually enough, but leave yourself more time if you feel like you might need it. It’s better to be safe than sorry!
  - Make sure you’re revising effectively. Focus on essential materials and be active rather than sitting and reading for hours at a time.
  - Ask your tutor or lecturer for help if you get stuck during your revision.
  - Try not to focus your whole life on revision.
  - Make sure to take regular breaks, have days off and get enough sleep.
  - Eat well – your brain needs energy and fuel to make the most of your revision time
- 
- Talk to your friends and family about your worries rather than bottling things up!
  - Exercise and relaxation techniques (such as meditation or yoga) are fantastic ways to take your mind off your work if worry is starting to have an effect on you.

***Panic the night before***

- Learn a relaxation technique in advance so that you can utilise it if you need to.
- Try to avoid working too close to the exam – don't stay up late the night before or get up early on the morning of. A good night's sleep is more valuable than an extra few hours of revision.
- Watch a funny movie or read a funny book – humour is a great way to take your mind off of your worries.
- Make sure you're thoroughly prepared for the exam to minimise your worries. Check that you've got the right time and location, pack your pencil case with everything you might need and lay out your clothes for the next day.
- Remember to eat – your brain will need the fuel in the exam! Dry bread, crackers and cereal all help settle a churning stomach.

***Panic during the exam***

- Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Repeat this whenever you begin to feel anxious.
- Read through the instructions and questions slowly and carefully, highlighting key points.
- Plan your answers. This is important as it helps your writing flow and means you don't end up panicking and going off on tangents.
- Answer the easiest question first if you feel like this will relax you.
- If you start to feel unwell, have a drink and close your eyes for a few seconds. Shake your arms and move your head from side to side to release the tension.
- If you need to, let an invigilator know how you're feeling and ask to step outside for a minute. Fresh air may be just what you need to calm down.

***Negative thoughts exercise***

Too often, negative thoughts pop up on us when we are not paying attention, getting in the way of our ability to focus on what is actually important. When you experience a negative thought, quickly replace it with a positive one. For example, replace, "I failed the last test because I panicked, I'll fail it again this time," with, "I have control over my emotions and will focus on the knowledge I have gained from studying."

Focus on what you have done to ensure a positive exam result, and have confidence in your ability to demonstrate the knowledge you have gained through exam preparation. Do not wait until test day or until test anxiety actually strikes to start your positive thinking regime. Begin right away, using positive thinking to redirect your thoughts during study sessions and during class. So, on the day of your exam, you will be familiar with the process of positive thinking, which can help reduce test anxiety when you are sitting your exam.

It may be helpful to develop coping statements which remind you of how you can cope with a situation, such as:

- "If I get anxious, I will try some calm breathing."
- "I just need to do my best."
- "People cannot tell when I'm feeling anxious."
- "This has happened before and I know how to handle it."

- “My anxiety won’t last forever.”
- Additionally, practise being ‘kind’ to yourself, using positive self-statements, rather than being overly self-critical. For example, instead of thinking, “I will fail” say something like:
- “I know I can do this.”
- “Everyone experiences anxiety. I can handle this.”
- “I’m not a loser if I have trouble with a test. Lots of students struggle with tests anyway.”
- “I’m strong enough to do this test. I will do my best.”

### **Managing physical symptoms using relaxation techniques**

Research suggests that relaxation techniques can help alleviate the physiological aspects of test anxiety, such as increased heart rate or feelings of nausea, resulting in a reduction in test anxiety in general. Techniques which have an evidence base include:

#### ***Diaphragmatic breathing***

Diaphragmatic breathing (also called "abdominal breathing" or "belly breathing") is deep breathing which engages the diaphragm. During times of stress we often breathe from our upper chests which can create feelings of anxiety. By engaging the diaphragm we can reduce these feelings. To check, have students place a hand on the abdomen just below the ribcage and a hand on their upper chest. During diaphragmatic breathing the hand on the abdomen should move out as they breathe in and move in as they breathe out. There should be very little movement in the chest.

#### ***Guided progressive muscle relaxation***

Guided progressive muscle relaxation involves progressively tensing and then relaxing muscles or muscle groups and can be undertaken by asking students to:

1. Focus their mind on the muscles of their right hand and be aware of any tension.
2. Inhale and squeeze the muscles of their right hand fairly tightly for 3-6 seconds.
3. Release the tension in their hand and imagine any tightness or pain flowing out of their hand as they exhale.
4. Relax their hand for 10-15 seconds and notice the difference between the pleasant feelings of relaxation and any tension they felt before.

## Mindfulness

Mindfulness can be a way to live life more in the present, thinking less about the past and worrying less about the future, and can help relieve exam stress.

Sportsmen and sportswomen, students and a whole range of other people practice mindfulness to help them stay calmly focused on what they are doing while they are doing it.

Mindfulness can help you to focus and stay calm by encouraging you to return your attention again and again to what you are doing right now instead of getting lost in the stories your imagination tells you or in stressful emotions. To practice mindfulness, try these tips:

### **Label**

When stressful thoughts come into your head, silently label them with the word “thinking” and return to what you are doing. Returning frequently from your imagination to what you are doing is the key to mindfulness.

### **Take an outbreath**

Every now and then, notice one complete out-breath and notice also how the breath seems to go through your feet into the floor. This focus on the out-breath has been used successfully by Olympic athletes.

### **7/11 breathing**

Every time you notice an hour has passed, breathe in to a count of seven and out to a count of eleven. Giving more time to breathing out has a calming effect on the nervous system. If your mind drifts away when you are doing this, simply label it silently with the word “thinking” and return your attention to the breath.

### **Posture awareness**

Now and then become aware of your posture. This works better for some people than mindfulness of breathing.

### **From mind to body**

Whenever you feel anxious, move your attention away from what your mind is telling you and instead notice the physical sensation of anxiety in your body. Your mind can keep its stories going forever but physical sensations die down, sometimes quite quickly.

### **Mindful walking**

If you are feeling agitated and you go for a walk, put your attention on the feeling of your feet on the ground and keep bringing your attention back to this until you are calm. Mindful walking is a very old mindfulness practice and is especially good if you are too agitated to use other mindfulness practices.

### **Planning vs fantasy**

Remember that planning and fantasy are two different things. So when you are making a study plan or planning how to answer a question, keep bringing your attention back to your planning whenever you notice your mind has pulled you into a fantasy or into worries.

### Do a body scan

If you lie awake worrying at night, try doing the body scan and you will increase your chances of getting back to sleep. This means becoming aware of your body from your toes to the top of your head in stages. For instance: Toes, feet, calves, thighs, lower back, upper back, chest, stomach, arms, hands, shoulders, neck, head, face, throat. You can pace yourself by counting two or three breaths between each stage. You'll find a brief body scan in the audio section (see below) but you can make it last for as long as you like.

## Coping with Exam Pressure

Here is a link to the governments booklet on coping with exam pressure, we have also printed this and included it at the end of the exam booklet. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coping-with-exam-pressure-a-guide-for-students/coping-with-exam-pressure-a-guide-for-students>

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If you do need any help or support during your exams, please contact your form tutor and year head and they can help or refer you to the school counsellor or another member of staff listed below.