

The Charter School
North Dulwich

Exams Handbook

(2026-27)

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Introduction

This document has been produced to support preparation for any exams (real or practice) taken at The Charter School North Dulwich.



We want to be sure that you are familiar with exam procedures and processes before you sit any formal exams, so this guide provides key information and rules that the school must abide by.

These rules are set by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and all exam centres must follow these rules.

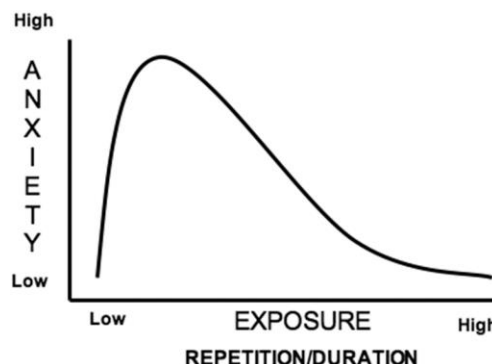
Mock Exams

The Purpose of Mock Exams

Throughout Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 we assess students both informally and formally. Particularly in Key Stages 4 and 5 we hold mock exam series, where students are assessed in a manner that, as far as possible, mimics public exams.

Exams can cause nervousness and anxiety for many students, and the best way of overcoming this is to give students as much exposure as possible to the experience of sitting formal exams, so that it is familiar when the real exams come around. The school has sought the advice of professionals and members of the REACH study (Resilience, Ethnicity, and Adolescent Mental Health), who agreed that this is one of the best ways to prepare young people for, and reduce anxiety around, exams.

Mock exams are also an important means by which to inform teachers of a candidate's gaps in skills and knowledge, so that students can improve these and have a better chance of success in the real exams.



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Exam timetables

Public exams

Most of our formal GCSE, A level and Vocational examinations take place in the summer in May, June and July. Occasionally, exams also take place in January. Timetables will be published in advance, and hard copies and electronic copies will be shared with students, parents and carers.

Internal/Mock Exams

The school runs mock exams throughout the year, for different year groups:

Year Group	Month
Year 11 GCSE Mocks (and Year 10 RS GCSE)	November
Year 13 A Level Mocks	January
Year 11 GCSE Mocks (and Year 10 RS GCSE)	February/March
Years 10 and 12 Mocks	June/July

Wherever possible the school will distribute the mock exam timetable a minimum of two weeks before the mock series starts. We will share this with students, parents and carers so that everyone can be prepared.

Support

We know that the final, public exam series can feel daunting for students. We have support networks in school and encourage all students to use these. Students can talk to teachers and school staff, parents and carers, family, counsellors or friends if they are worried about exams. There are also external organisations students can talk to (see below)

- School Counsellors: <https://www.charternorthdulwich.org.uk/parents-information/care-and-support>
- Kooth – Online Mental Wellbeing Community - <https://www.kooth.com>
- The Nest - <https://www.thenestsouthwark.org.uk> (Southwark)
- Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk

Advice from members of the REACH (Resilience, Ethnicity, and AdolesCent Mental Health) study at KCL

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When an exam series is approaching, you need to know what you can control.

What can we control?

- **Our actions**
 - We can revise
 - We can take breaks
- **Our body**
 - We can eat well
 - We can exercise
 - We can manage our bedtimes
- **Our thoughts**
 - We can put 'threat' in perspective using facts and reduce it
 - We can practice mindfulness
 - Headspace app and breathing exercises [Guided Meditation and Mindfulness - The Headspace App](#)
- **Revision**
 - Plan an ACHIEVABLE revision timetable
 - Plan in breaks
 - Stick to plan!
 - Reward yourself!!

Class teachers and year leaders will go through revision techniques in class and assemblies. We ask class teachers that resources for revision are placed on Classcharts, but please ask (or email) teachers if you need help or are unsure about anything.

Extra time, laptops and other access arrangements

The school is committed to ensuring that all students can access their exams in a fair way. The school will ensure all students are assessed in Year 9 and 10 and given the appropriate access arrangement for their exams based on their needs.

Access Arrangements are agreed well in advance of public exams and are assigned on the basis of robust assessments which demonstrate need. **They cannot be assigned on the day of the exam as a preference.** If you believe you are eligible for exam access arrangements it is your responsibility to contact the SEN department to discuss this with them and to provide the necessary evidence well ahead of any exams you are due to sit.

When you arrive in the exam room, your access arrangements will be displayed on the candidate card on your desk. If there is anything wrong with the access arrangements you have been provided with, it is your responsibility to raise your hand and alert an invigilator.

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Access Arrangements — Place card Symbols explained

Symbol	Meaning	Notes
	25% Extra Time	Needs 25% extra time to complete the exam.
	10% Extra Time	Needs 10% extra time to complete the exam.
	50% Extra Time	Needs 50% extra time to complete the exam.
	OR	Needs one or the other, but not both.
	Laptop	Needs the use of a Laptop to complete the exam.
	Withdrawn	Needs to be withdrawn from the normal Exam Hall and to another, different venue.
	Rest Breaks	Needs rest breaks during the exam.
	Reader	Needs a reader; someone to read aloud the exam paper.
	Scribe	Needs a scribe; someone to write the exam questions
	Prompter	Needs a prompter; someone to help prompt them during the exam.
	Bilingual Dictionary	Needs a Bilingual Dictionary during the exam.
	Unknown	We do not have any specific details. Please ask the Exams Officer.
	Seat at back of hall	To be seated at the back of the hall
	Live speaker	Live speaker for listening exams

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	Earplugs	Allowed to wear noise-cancelling earplugs
	Headphones	Allowed to wear noise-cancelling headphones
	Colour Paper	Needs their exam papers printed on colour paper, typically Yellow paper, but can be other colours.

Frequently asked Questions

When will I get my actual exam timetable?

This will be printed once all exam entries are confirmed and distributed in the Spring term.

What happens if I have a clash (exams are timetabled at the same time)?

Occasionally a student is scheduled to sit two exams taking place in the same exam session. If this happens the Exams Officer will arrange for you to take one exam first, followed by the second, with a short break in between. You must not leave the room unsupervised during the short break, and exam conditions will remain in place.

Depending on the length of the exams you are sitting during the clash sitting, you may have the option of sitting one of the exams earlier or later than the published time. You will need to be supervised at all times with no access to electronic equipment between these exam sessions. Very rarely you might have a clash that requires overnight supervision. The Exams Officer will make the necessary arrangements for clash supervision and communicate these to you.

Where will I take my exams?

All our exams take place in the Sports Hall or a similar large space. Some students may be withdrawn from the main exam hall and take their exam elsewhere if that is an agreed access arrangement. Rooming for language exams (speaking and listening) will be communicated in a timely manner.

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What time will my exams start and finish?

The morning exams normally start at **8:45am** and the afternoon sessions start at **1:45pm** (this is subject to change). Please make sure you arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the exam. You will not be allowed to leave the exam before the end. If the exam finishes before 10:00 in the morning or 14:30 in the afternoon, you will have to stay in the exam room, under supervision, until that time. This is to make sure we maintain the security of the exam and comply with JCQ regulations.

Can I use the bathroom during an exam?

JCQ rules state that we must maintain a minimum ratio of invigilators to candidates in any exam room, and that any candidate leaving the exam room must be accompanied at all times. This means that frequent requests for toilet breaks puts serious stress on the invigilation team and cannot, in most situations, be supported other than for students with a medical toilet pass.

For this reason it is essential that you go to the toilet before the exam. You will not be allowed to go to the toilet for the first 30 minutes or the last 30 minutes of any exam taking place in the room you are in, unless you have a medical/toilet pass, and for those who do not have a pass the invigilators will only allow toilet breaks for those they genuinely believe to be in serious jeopardy of a toileting accident. Toilet breaks to alleviate mild discomfort, boredom or a desire to stretch your legs will not be allowed.

If you need to go to the toilet, please raise your hand for an invigilator to escort you. If another student is going to the toilet during this time, or is on a movement break outside of the exam room (for those who have this as an agreed access arrangement), then you will need to wait until that student has returned. Only one candidate can be allowed outside of the exam room at one time.

Who monitors the exams and what is their role?

Exams are invigilated by a team who are employed by school. They are trained to make sure the exams are carried out in accordance with the JCQ regulations. To support with familiarity we try to use the same team of invigilators for mock exams.

The invigilators monitor and support students during the exam. They will not approach you unless you raise your hand for assistance, or they suspect malpractice. The invigilator cannot give you any help with your exam.

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As a reminder, it is the candidates' responsibility to ensure they have the right equipment for the exam. Invigilators can provide additional stationary, and may be able to provide replacement equipment, but this cannot be guaranteed.

The Exams Officer and the invigilators are responsible for making sure your exams go as smoothly as possible and that the process is fair for everyone. All invigilators will have been appropriately briefed on safeguarding and exam policies.

What happens before an exam?

Candidates should wait outside the sports hall in alphabetical lines, class groups, or subject lines for Sixth Form students. A senior member of staff will go through brief you on exam protocol and you will be called in depending on the seating arrangements. Use this time to:

- remove your **watch** and put it in your bag – even analogue watches are forbidden
- **power down your phone and put it in your bag** along with any other unauthorised items – keeping any form of device on you during the exam is malpractice
- check that you have nothing in your **pockets**
- take out the necessary exam **equipment**.

Nothing should be written on your hands and all revision notes should be in your bag.

All water bottles, pencil cases and rulers must be transparent. If permitted, calculators must have their covers removed and should be in 'exam mode'.

You must bring a transparent pencil case or bag to put your exam equipment in. **Carrying these items in your pockets is not allowed** – invigilators who suspect that you have items in your pockets might remove you from the exam hall to search you. This will cause unnecessary disturbance to you and other students.

You will be under formal exam conditions from the moment you enter the exam room until you are given permission to leave by the invigilator. This means that you must not **talk to**, attempt to **communicate with** or **disturb** other candidates once you have entered the room. *Even an exchange of looks and a smile is considered to be communication and will be reported to the exam board, with possible sanctions up to and including disqualification from the exam.*

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Key Exam Room Rules

- Bags and coats must be placed in the designated area as instructed
- Find your seat quickly and silently. Invigilators will help you if you can't find your seat. **Do not ask another candidate.**
- Listen to and follow the instructions of the invigilator at all times.
- The exam paper will be placed on your desk before you enter the room. **Do not attempt to look inside it or read anything.** This is malpractice and could result in disqualification.
- Do not write anything on the front of the paper until you are instructed to do so by the invigilator.
- Use your legal name and not your preferred name on the front of the paper.
- **It is your responsibility to check that the paper on your desk is the correct paper** that you should be sitting that day. If there is anything wrong with the exam paper it is **your responsibility to raise your hand and inform an invigilator** so that the problem can be resolved.
- If you need to leave the room because you are feeling unwell, raise your hand and an invigilator will assist you. You must not leave the room on your own.
- Your name, candidate exam number and question number must be written on any additional sheets of paper you may use.
- Do not **write on the exam desk** – this will be regarded as vandalism and you will have to pay for any damage and will be issued with a Serious Breach.
- Do not **deface your exam paper** as the awarding body may refuse to mark it.

Where will I sit in the exam room?

- Your seat will be identified with a card displaying your name. The seats are generally ordered alphabetically.
- It is important that you make sure you sit at the correct desk so that you sit the correct exam paper, so check the place card on the desk before you sit down.
- If you are unsure of where to sit, please raise your hand and an invigilator will assist you.
- Seat identifiers have key information including your candidate number and any access arrangements (please see symbols above).

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How is my identity confirmed in the exam room?

A senior member of Centre staff (approved by the Head of Centre, who has not taught the subject being examined) will be present at the start of the exam to assist with the identification of students.

What equipment do I need to bring to the exams?

- A black ball-point pen (must be **black**) and spares
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Eraser
- Highlighter (you can highlight the question paper but not your answers)
- Clear pencil case
- Scientific calculator (only if the exam allows a calculator) without a lid/cover
- Maths exams may also require a protractor, set square and compass. Your Maths teacher will give you more information regarding the equipment needed.
- Some exams may need coloured pencils. Your subject teacher will advise you.
- **You are not allowed to borrow equipment from another student during the exam**

Using calculators

For exams where a calculator is allowed, you must be aware of the [JCQ instructions](#):

10. USING CALCULATORS

- | | |
|------|---|
| 10.1 | In this chapter a calculator is defined as an electronic device whose primary purpose is to carry out mathematical calculations. |
| 10.2 | This is the published guidance on calculators, unless specifically varied by an awarding body within their relevant qualification specification. |
| 10.3 | The instructions on the question paper may say whether calculators are allowed or not but if the instructions do not include such a statement, calculators should be treated as standard equipment and may be used by candidates. |
| 10.4 | Where the use of a calculator is allowed, candidates are responsible for making sure that their calculators meet the awarding bodies' regulations. |

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etc

- 10.5 Candidates must be told these regulations beforehand and be familiar with the *Information for candidates* documents.
- 10.6 During an examination, a calculator must not be able to offer any of these facilities:
- language translation;
 - symbolic algebra manipulation;
 - symbolic differentiation or integration;
 - communication with other machines or the internet.
- 10.7 During an examination, a calculator must not give access to any information stored prior to that examination. This includes:
- databanks, such as the periodic table (with the exception of scientific constants);
 - dictionaries;
 - mathematical formulae;
 - text.
- 10.8 A calculator must not be borrowed from another candidate during an examination.
- 10.9 Some calculators have an 'exam mode'. This is acceptable in examinations where the exam mode is activated and the exam mode results in the calculator becoming compliant with the above requirements.
- 10.10 An invigilator may give a candidate a replacement calculator.
- 10.11 **Where access is permitted to a calculator for part of an examination, it is acceptable for candidates to place their calculators on the floor under their desks in sight of the invigilator(s) for the non-calculator portion of the examination.**
- 10.12 A series of FAQs on the use of calculators in examinations may be found at:
<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/instructions-for-conducting-examinations-ice/>

We cannot guarantee that spare calculators will be available. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure they have the correct equipment for an examination.

What should I **not** bring into the exam room?

It is very important that you do not sit down at your exam desk with any **unauthorised items** in your possession. Electronic equipment must be switched off and placed in your bag. **The JCQ specifically notes that it is the candidate's responsibility to hand in any unauthorised items before the exam begins.** Notify the invigilator as soon as possible if you realise you have any of the following prohibited items on your person:

- Mobile phones
- Any digital/internet enabled devices
- Unauthorised exam items (e.g. unauthorised calculator, non-transparent water bottle)
- Written notes
- Wrist watches of any type, including analogue/mechanical

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- iPods/MP3/MP4 players or similar devices
- Smart glasses
- Tablets/iPads
- Any other smart devices
- Any other electronic devices
- Earphones/earbuds/headphones
- Revision notes and study guides
- Your own blank paper
- Calculators, unless allowed for the exam
- Calculator lid/cover
- Dictionaries, unless allowed for the exam
- Miscellaneous items such as make-up, lip salve, bus passes, money and keys, student reports and exam timetables, notes etc.
- Food items (unless authorised as an access arrangement)
- Correction fluid or tape
- Lanyard

Please make sure you check all your pockets before sitting down at your desk.

Can I take food and drink into the exam rooms?

You are allowed to take a clear bottle of water into the exam. The label must be removed before you enter the room. Other drinks, such as juice or fizzy drinks, are not permitted and food is not permitted.

What should I wear for the exams?

You must wear full school uniform for all exams. If you are in the Sixth Form, you must adhere to the dress code for all exams and should not wear coats, jackets or hoodies during the exam.

Where will my personal belongings be stored during the exam?

You must leave your coats and bags, and any other possessions, in the designated areas in the exam rooms, or as specified by the invigilators, exam officers or a member of the school leadership team.

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What should I do if I arrive late for the exam?

You must arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of your exam and line up outside the sports hall.

If you are late for any reason, please report to reception and tell the member of staff that you have an exam. **Do not make your own way to the exam room.** You will be collected from reception and escorted to the room. You will be given the full time allowed for your exam.

If you arrive **very late** for an exam (after 10:00am for a morning exam and after 14:30 for an afternoon exam), you may not be able to sit the exam - this is at the exam officer and leadership team's discretion. If you are allowed to sit the exam, you will be given the full time you are entitled to, but the school must inform the exam board that you have arrived very late. The awarding body will most likely disqualify your paper.

What should I do if I am unwell on the day of the exam?

Mild Illnesses

It is important that you attend school for all exams, whether external or practice, unless you are seriously ill. Mild illnesses such as **colds, flu, temperature, and headaches** are **not** valid reasons for absence from an exam; however if you are unwell with a mild illness like this please inform the exams officer who can apply to the exam board for special consideration on your behalf. If accepted this will mean a small percentage of available marks will be added to your total for the paper in which you were unwell.

If you have a slightly more serious illness on the day of the exam, such as a stomach bug or more serious flu symptoms, you should still attend your exam but inform the exams officer as soon as possible. The school can accommodate you by allowing you to sit the exam in a separate room and, depending on your symptoms, can allow you to have supervised rest breaks and somewhere to lie down during breaks, to enable you to finish your exam.

If you are **extremely unwell** with much more serious symptoms, such that you cannot attend your exam, please ask your parent or carer to contact the Attendance Officer immediately on 0207 3466603 or for 6th form students, 02073466617. Your parent or carer must tell the Attendance Officer that you are missing an exam because you are ill. You will need to provide medical evidence to confirm your illness.

EVIDENCE OF ILLNESS WILL BE REQUIRED. The exams officer will not submit a request for special consideration – whether for candidates who are present for an exam but disadvantaged by illness, or for candidates who are absent from an exam due to illness –

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without evidence. This might be from a medical professional, or the exams officer might ask to see or speak to the candidate in person, to satisfy themselves that the illness is genuine.

If you feel unwell during an exam, please put your hand up and an invigilator will assist you. If you feel unwell before the exam starts, please tell a member of staff.

What happens if I have an unauthorised absence from the exam?

Your exams are extremely important and it is vital that you attend all external and mock exams. If you do not turn up to an exam you will not receive a mark/grade, and your parents/carers will be invoiced for the wasted exam entry fee.

What happens in the event of an emergency in the exam room?

In the event of an emergency evacuation alarm, the invigilator will stop the exam and give instructions to you.

The exam evacuation procedure is as follows:

- Stop writing and close your exam paper.
- Stay seated until the invigilator advises you to leave the room.
- Follow the invigilator in silence to the designated exam assembly points (back ball court for exams in the sports hall).
- Leave all exam papers and answer sheets in the exam room.

You must not:

- Communicate with anyone inside or outside the room, other than the Exams Officer and invigilators.
- Collect any personal belongings, unless advised to do so by the invigilators.
- Return to your usual tutor group assembly point – remain with the Invigilator at all times.

If you do not follow these rules, you may not be allowed back into the room to complete your exam.

Once it is safe to re-enter the building, the invigilator will re-start the exam and you will be given your full remaining time to complete it.

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Candidates with access arrangements/reasonable adjustments

If you are entitled to an access arrangement such as a reader and/or a scribe, you will take your exams away from the main exam room. Trained invigilators will be present in the room to give assistance. They have to comply with the JCQ regulations, so there are certain things they are not allowed to do. If you are unsure of how your access arrangement will work, please speak to the SEND Department well in advance of the public exams.

Results Days 2026

Results Days take place in August each year. This year, A Level results will be released on Thursday 12th August 2027, and GCSE results will be released on Thursday 19th August 2027. Further details and timings will be shared with you in the summer term.

On Results Days, senior members of school staff will be available immediately after the publication of results to offer support, and to advise you should you wish to use the post-results services. Please remember that results are provisional until the awarding bodies issue your certificates.

Your results will also be emailed to you on the day. Results are emailed to students' school email accounts and cannot be emailed to another account.

Post-results services

Exam boards offer post-results services after you have received your results. These services are administered by the Exams Officer. Your signed consent must be obtained before processing any requests to use the service to review marking as your grades may go up, go down or stay the same.

The post-results services available are a clerical check (service 1), a review of marking (service 2), a review of moderation (service 3) and access to scripts.

Full details will be given to you in the summer term, but in the meantime, see the information from the JCQ here: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/post-results-services/> or visit the awarding body website. The school's policy on Post-Results Services includes important additional information.

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Certificates

Your exam certificates are produced by the awarding bodies and are sent to school in the autumn term, following the release of your results in August. You will be sent details of how and when to collect your certificates before the Christmas following your exams. It is important that you collect your certificates because we can only keep them for 12 months, after which they are destroyed and you will need to contact the exam body directly to obtain copies.

Complaints procedure

If you have a concern with the way exams are conducted, please contact your year group leader or an Assistant Headteacher. If there are still further issues, you may use the complaint form on the website: <https://www.charternorthdulwich.org.uk/key-information/complaints>

Malpractice

‘Candidate malpractice’ means malpractice by a candidate in connection with any examination or assessment, including the preparation and authentication of any controlled assessments, coursework or non-examination assessments, the presentation of any practical work, the compilation of portfolios of assessment evidence, and the writing of any examination paper. The JCQ website holds the latest information and regulations on malpractice, along with the school malpractice policy.

Examples of candidate malpractice, are not limited to, but include:

- a breach of the instructions or advice of an invigilator, supervisor, or the awarding body in relation to the examination or assessment rules and regulations;
- the unauthorised use of alternative electronic devices or technology during remote assessment and remote invigilation;
- failing to abide by the conditions of supervision designed to maintain the security of the examinations or assessments;
- collusion: working collaboratively with other candidates, beyond what is permitted;
- copying from another candidate (including the use of technology to aid the copying);
- allowing work to be copied, e.g. posting work on social networking sites prior to an examination/assessment;

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- the deliberate destruction of another candidate's work;
- disruptive behaviour in the examination room or during an assessment session (including the use of offensive language);
- failing to report to the centre or awarding body the candidate having unauthorised access to assessment related information or sharing unauthorised assessment related information online;
- exchanging, obtaining, receiving, passing on information (or the attempt to) which could be assessment related by means of talking, electronic, written or non-verbal communication;
- making a false declaration of authenticity in relation to the authorship of controlled assessment, coursework, non-examination assessment or the contents of a portfolio;
- allowing others to assist in the production of controlled assessment, coursework, nonexamination assessment or assisting others in the production of controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment;
- the misuse, or the attempted misuse, of examination and assessment materials and resources (e.g. exemplar materials);
- being in possession of unauthorised confidential information about an examination or assessment;
- the inclusion of inappropriate, offensive, obscene, homophobic, transphobic, racist or sexist material in scripts, controlled assessments, coursework, non-examination assessments or portfolios;
- impersonation: pretending to be someone else, arranging for another person to take one's place in an examination or an assessment;
- plagiarism: unacknowledged copying from, or reproduction of, published sources or incomplete referencing;
- theft of another candidate's work;
- bringing into the examination room or assessment situation unauthorised material, for example: notes, study guides and personal organisers, own blank paper, calculators (when prohibited), dictionaries (when prohibited), watches, instruments which can capture a digital image, electronic dictionaries (when prohibited), translators, wordlists, glossaries, iPods, mobile phones, MP3/4 players, pagers, or other similar electronic devices;
- the unauthorised use of a memory stick or similar device where a candidate uses a word processor;
- facilitating malpractice on the part of other candidates;
- behaving in a manner so as to undermine the integrity of the examination.

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- Using AI without the correct reference and acknowledgements.

Sanctions for malpractice can be anything from loss of marks to full disqualification. Indicative sanctions against candidates are outlined here ([Malpractice-September-2026.pdf.pdf](#))

JCQ – Candidate information

The JCQ have provided key information to candidates on a variety of topics, please see links below.

- Written examinations
- JCQ Information on Social Media
- JCQ Privacy information – How the exam boards treat your data
- Information for candidates – non examination assessments
- Information for candidates – coursework
- JCQ information for candidates - AI

These are available through visiting the web link below:

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

Appendices:

[JCQ Warning to Candidates](#)

[JCQ Unauthorised Items](#)

[JCQ Information to Candidates](#)

[JCQ Information to Candidates – Written Exams](#)

[JCQ AI Guide for Students](#)

[JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations](#)