

CANDIDATE EXAM HANDBOOK

2025/26

This handbook is reviewed and updated annually

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Introduction

Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service (HPRS) is committed to ensuring that candidates are fully briefed on the examination and assessment process in place in the centre and are made aware of the required JCQ/awarding body instructions and information for candidates.

Purpose of this handbook

- To support/complement candidate briefings within tutor groups
- 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 candidates' documents and exam room posters are provided in advance of any exams/assessments being taken
- To answer questions candidates may have etc.
- To inform candidates of/signpost candidates (and where relevant parents/carers) to any exams-related policies/procedures they need to be made aware of

Malpractice

- Malpractice is any practice which is in breach of the JCQ regulations, or which compromises the integrity of any qualification/examination or the validity of an examination result or certificate.
- Malpractice can occur at any point during an assessment or examination, including the during the preparation and authentication of any non-examination assessment, the presentation of any practical work/portfolios and the writing of any paper.
- Examples of malpractice are possession of an unauthorised item (mobile phone, watch, headphones, notes), talking whilst under exam conditions, plagiarism, not referencing correctly, graffitiing exam papers, posts on social media.
- Possible consequences are a warning, receiving 0 marks for a particular exam/assessment/section/unit, disqualification from an exam/unit/whole qualification/all qualifications in the exam series.
- JCQ provides information regarding 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

Refer to [ICE 25](#) and the *Indicative sanctions against candidates* (Appendix 6, [Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures](#))

Refer to relevant [Information for candidates documents](#), such as social media, as example:

Things not to do on social media:

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

and/or non-examination assessments and coursework, as example:

Research and using references

...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...

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.

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...**

Further information can be found in the centre's **Exams Managing Behaviour** and **Malpractice Policies**.

Personal data

- Any person involved in completing examinations/assessments where malpractice is suspected, or alleged, personal data about them will be provided to the awarding body (or bodies) whose examinations/assessments are involved. Personal data about them may also be shared with other awarding bodies, the qualifications regulator or professional bodies.
- The centre will provide relevant personal data including name, date of birth, gender to the awarding bodies for the purpose of examining and awarding qualifications.
- Materials which are submitted by candidates for assessment may include any form of written work, audio and visual materials, computer programs and data ("Student Materials"). Awarding bodies may use the Student Materials to evaluate candidates' performance in the relevant assessment. They may also use the Student Materials for other purposes as outlined in their privacy policies and in accordance with their terms. Candidates should be directed to the relevant awarding body's privacy notice if they require further information about how their Student Materials may be used by the awarding body.

Refer to [GR 6](#)

Copyright

- The copyright of any work created by candidates submitted to an awarding body for assessment (referred as Assessment Materials) belongs to the candidate. When submitting this work, the awarding body is granted a non-exclusive, license to use the assessment materials.
- Candidates may access Student Materials (including examination scripts) through the access to scripts arrangements set out in paragraph 5.13.

Refer to [GR 6](#)

Coursework assessments/non-examination assessments

- Some subjects/qualifications contain elements of coursework/non-examination assessments.
- Candidates must ensure that they read any Relevant JCQ information for candidates' documents – paying particular attention to the coursework, non-examination assessments, and social media documents (all available on the school website and JCQ website)
- The use of AI (AI is artificial intelligence, with content being created by the computer/software. If used, it the site/ tool and date it was created must be referenced. Incorrect used of AI may lead to plagiarism reports and malpractice investigations.)
- Candidates will be made aware of any assessments and or coursework and any deadlines by the subject teacher.

- Work will be marked by the subject teacher and internally verified/moderated in line with centre policies
- Refer to [Instructions for conducting coursework](#), [Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments](#) and [Information for candidates documents](#)
- Refer to [JCQ AI poster for students](#)
- Refer to [JCQ AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications](#) (Centre engagement with and discussion of AI)

Further information can be found in the centre's **Exams Internal Appeals Procedure** and **Non-examination Assessment policies**.

Written timetabled exams

- Candidates will be informed of their entry for a qualification by their subject teacher.
- Candidates will receive a letter detailing any written timetabled exams in the weeks prior to the examinations
- There is a noticeboard dedicated to examinations in the centre, detailing exam dates
- Seating arrangements/exam room details will be available on the board upon entry into the centre for the exam
- Exam room posters (warning to candidates and unauthorised items) will be on display throughout the centre and are available on the school website
- The JCQ information for candidates' documents – written examinations, social media are also available on the school website

Refer to [GR 5.8](#)

The centre will... ensure that the JCQ *Information for candidates* documents (coursework, non-examination assessments, on-screen tests, social media and written examinations) and awarding body privacy notices are distributed to all candidates whether electronically or in hard copy format prior to assessments and/or examinations taking place... (Candidates **must** also be made aware of the content of the JCQ *Unauthorised items* and *Warning to candidates' posters*).

Contingency session - Summer 2026

The JCQ Contingency day for the 2025-2026 academic year is Wednesday 24th June 2025.

Refer to [ICE 15](#)

What to do if you identify you have two or more exam papers timetabled at the same time (a timetable clash)

- A timetable clash occurs when a candidate is entered for two or more examinations scheduled to take place at the exact same time on the same day
- If candidates have an examination clash, they will be provided with supervision arrangements and an updated timetable.
- If the clash is within the same session and it is feasible to do so, the candidate will take a short, supervised break before sitting the second subject paper
- The centre has an Overnight Supervision Arrangements Policy in place if it is necessary to delay a paper until the following day

Refer to [ICE 7](#)

Further information can be found in the centre's **Exams Overnight Supervision Policy**.

Where you will take your exams

Exams will take place in the classrooms at the centre. Details of which room will be on the board in the morning of the exam

What time your exams will start and finish

- Morning start times for examinations is 9am
- Afternoon start times for examinations is 1:30pm
- If there is an alteration to the start time due to transport, candidates will be informed by the staff member that manages this
- Candidates must remain in the examination rooms in line with JCQ minimum requirements

Supervision during your exams

- Exams are supervised by staff members as invigilators.
- Invigilators must follow strict rules and regulations when conducting exams, as directed by JCQ and awarding bodies

Exam room conditions

- Candidates will be escorted to their examination room
- Candidates are under formal exam conditions (no talking, interacting with or disturbing other candidates, not in possession of any unauthorised items) from the moment they enter their examination room, and until they are given permission to leave by the invigilator (after the candidate states that they have finished the exam)
- Candidates must remain in exam conditions during supervised rest breaks
- Candidates must listen to and always follow the instructions of the invigilator in the exam room
- Candidates must not communicate with or disturb other candidates
- The centre number, subject title, paper number, the actual starting and finishing times, and date of each exam will be visible to all candidates in the exam room
- Candidates must complete the front of their answer booklets when the invigilator announces to do so and not before
- Candidates must not open the question paper until the exam begins – failure to follow this will result in a report to the relevant awarding body
- If candidates require additional answer sheets/books they are to raise their hand and wait for the invigilator to attend their desk before speaking with them quietly

Refer to [ICE 19](#)

Candidates are under formal examination conditions from the moment they enter the room in which they will be taking their examination(s) until the point at which they are permitted to leave.

Candidates must not talk to, attempt to communicate with or disturb other candidates once they have entered the examination room. If they do, this must be reported to the relevant awarding body.

Candidates must not open the question paper until the examination begins. If they do, this must be reported to the relevant awarding body.

Further information can be found in the centre's **Leaving the Examination Room Policy**.

Refer to [ICE 23](#)

Where you will sit in the exam room

- Seating plans will be available on the door of the examination room
- Candidates must use this to find their desk. Invigilators can assist them where needed

How your identity is confirmed in the exam room

Candidates' identity is confirmed by the invigilator in the room. The invigilator is an existing staff member so aware of the candidate's identity prior to exams.

Further information can be found in the centre's **Candidate Identification Procedure**.

Refer to [ICE 16](#)

What equipment you need to bring to your exams

All Exams stationery and bottled water is provided by the centre

Refer to [ICE 18](#)

Using calculators

- Candidates must be aware of JCQ and awarding body instructions regarding the use of calculators in exams
- Calculators are provided by the centre in examinations that require them

Refer to [ICE 10](#)

What you must not bring into the exam room

- Candidates must not bring any unauthorised item into the exam room – including but not limited to headphones, mobile phone, any watch, music player, smart glasses, smart device, prepared notes
- If these regulations are breached, a malpractice report will be submitted to the relevant awarding body

Food and drink in exam rooms

- Candidates are not permitted to take any food or drink into examination rooms
- The centre will provide clear bottled water or cups of water

Further information can be found in the centre's **Food and Drink Policy** subject to JCQ regulations.

Refer to [ICE 18](#)

What you should wear for your exams

Candidates must be in the correct school uniform.

Where your personal belongings will be stored during your exam

All personal belongings will be stored in the office, as per the usual school day arrangements.

What to do if you arrive late for your exam

- Any candidate that arrives after 10am or 2:30pm will be classed as very late under JCQ regulations
- It is the discretion of the Headteacher if very late candidates are permitted to sit the exam
- Any very late arrivals are reported to the awarding body, which may result in them not accepting the paper

Further information can be found in the centre's **Candidate Late Arrival Policy**.

Refer to [ICE 21](#)

What to do if you are unwell on the day of your exam

- If a candidate becomes unwell on the day of an examination, the parent/carer must call the centre and speak to the Headteacher
- If a candidate feels unwell during exam, they are to raise their hand and speak to an Invigilator quietly
- It is important that any illness is reported to the Headteacher and/or Exams Officer so that the correct advice/guidance can be provided

What happens if you have an unauthorised absence from your exam

- Candidates must attend all examinations that they are entered for
- Forgetting, oversleeping or mis-reading times are not satisfactory explanations for absence

Further information can be found in the centre's **Candidate Absence Policy**.

Refer to [ICE 22](#)

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

- If an emergency occurs in the exam room, candidates must remain under exam conditions and follow the guidance of the Invigilator
- If an evacuation is necessary, candidates are instructed to stop writing, remain under exam conditions and follow the guidance of the Invigilator

Further information can be found in the centre's **Emergency Evacuation Policy**.

Refer to [ICE 25](#)

Candidates with access arrangements/reasonable adjustments

- All access arrangements (including extra time, reader, scribe, supervised rest breaks, prompt, use of laptop etc) must be approved by the SENCo, that are then submitted in an application to the awarding bodies
- Candidates and class teachers are involved in these decisions based on normal way of working conditions and evidence
- The SENCo will inform teachers and learners of any approved access arrangements
- Access arrangements will also be detailed on the exam register and candidate cards on exam desks

Further information can be found in the centre's **Access Arrangements Policy**.

Results

- Candidates can collect their results from school on the specified results day in August
- Candidates will receive specific information relating to the date and time of results day during the Summer term
- Upon collection of results, candidates will have the opportunity to speak to the Exams Officer or Headteacher
- If candidates are unable to attend to collect their results, they can complete the results day slip nominating someone else on their behalf, which the appointed person must bring with them
- Any non-collections of results will be posted to the candidate to the address that is held on file. Results are sent via first or second class, with the centre taking no responsibility for loss or non-delivery

Refer to [GR 5.12](#) and [Post-Results Services](#) information

Post-results services

- Candidates can apply for review of results, under the agreement of the Headteacher
- Details of the available post result services, charges and deadlines are provided to candidates with their results
- Candidates are also able to request access to their scripts using the post results form
- Post result service request must be signed by the candidate
- Candidates are made aware that results can go up or down during reviews

Further information can be found in the centre's **Access to Scripts, Reviews of Results and Appeals Policy**.

Refer to [GR 5.13](#) and [Post-Results Services](#) information

Certificates

- Certificates are issued to candidates that achieved a pass grade, i.e. 9-1, Pass etc
- Candidates must check that all their personal information is correct on all certificates. If they are not, the certificate must be returned to the Exams Officer immediately, so that a replacement can be requested

- Candidates will receive information of when they can collect their certificates when the centre has received them
- Certificates must be collected in person and signed for on collection.
- Any candidates that are unable to collect their certificates themselves can appoint someone to collect on their behalf, but they must put this in writing and sign it
- The centre will retain any non-collected certificates for 12 months, before securely destroying them

Further information can be found in the centre's **Certificate Issue Procedure and Retention Policy**.

Refer to [GR 5.14](#)

Internal appeals procedure

- Some qualifications contain components of non-examination assessments (NEA) which are internally marked and contribute to the final grade of the qualification
- Candidates are informed of these marks by their subject teacher
- Candidates have the right to appeal any marks, following the internal appeals procedure
- Further information can be found in the centre's Internal Appeals Procedure Policies

Refer to [GR 5.3z](#), 5.7 and 5.13

Complaints policy

- Candidates have the right to complain regarding exams
- Grounds for complaint could be surrounding teaching and learning, access arrangements and special consideration, entries, how exams were conducted, results, post-results
- Concerns can be raised verbally or in writing to the Headteacher
- Formal complaints must be raised in writing to the Headteacher

Further information can be found in the centre's **Exams Complaints Policy**.

Refer to [GR 5.8](#)

JCQ Information for candidates - coursework

You **must** read this information if you are undertaking qualifications that contain elements of coursework assessment.



Information for candidates

Coursework assessments

Effective from 1 September 2025

Produced on behalf of:



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Information for candidates - Coursework 2025-2026 <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents>

JCQ Information for candidates – non-examination assessments

You **must** read this information if you are undertaking qualifications that contain components of non-examination assessment.



Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments (GCE & GCSE specifications)

1 September 2025 to 31 August 2026

This document provides subject teachers, senior leaders and heads of centre with a single, definitive source of generic guidance and instructions for GCE and GCSE qualifications.

Produced on behalf of:



©JCQ[®] 2025

Information for candidates – non-examination assessments 2025-2026 <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents>

JCQ Information for candidates – written exams

You **must** read this information before you take any externally assessed written exams.



Information for candidates

Written examinations

With effect from 1 September 2025

Produced on behalf of:



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Information for candidates – written exams 2025-2026 <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents>

JCQ Information for candidates – social media

You **must** read this information to help you stay within examination/assessment regulations when using social media.

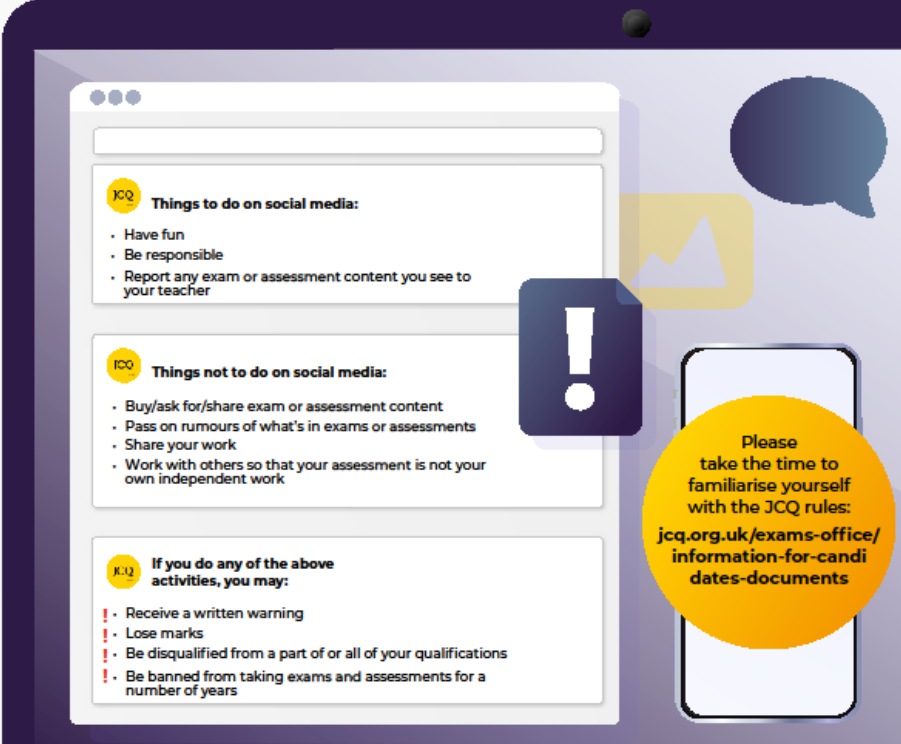


Information for candidates Using social media and examinations/assessments

While we like to share our experiences online, when it comes to exams and other assessments, 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 or assessment content you see to your teacher

JCQ Things not to do on social media:

- Buy/ask for/share exam or assessment content
- Pass on rumours of what's in exams or assessments
- Share your work
- Work with others so that your assessment 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 exams and 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://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents)

Information for candidates – social media 2024 <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents>

JCQ Information for candidates - AI (Artificial Intelligence and assessments)

You **must** read this information to help you stay within examination/assessment regulations when using artificial intelligence. This information explains: What is AI? What is an AI tool? When can I use AI? When can I not use an AI tool? If I'm allowed to use AI, how is this breaking the rules? How to make sure you don't misuse AI.



Information for candidates AI (Artificial Intelligence and assessments)

What Is AI?



AI stands for artificial intelligence and can be used to create text, images, videos, music and artwork based on instructions given to an AI tool.

What Is an AI tool?



AI tools are applications, such as ChatGPT, Snapchat My AI, Google and Google translate. There are many more!*

*The list of certain suppliers of AI-related products is for information purposes only and does not constitute an endorsement by JCQ and awarding bodies. It is each centre's responsibility to investigate and verify any suppliers they use, including any terms and conditions which govern the sale or use of the supplier's products. The list provided is not exhaustive.

When can I use AI?



- Your teachers may use it in class when teaching the course, but remember teaching in the classroom is not an exam!
- There are some assessments where you can use AI – your teachers will tell you if you can or cannot use an AI tool.
- Remember, the rules are different for different assessments and subjects, so always check with your teachers first!
- When an AI tool is allowed, **you must acknowledge**** the AI tools and the material produced by the AI tool that you have used in your work. If you do not acknowledge AI use, it will be **considered as cheating**.

When can I not use an AI tool?



- AI tools cannot be used in an exam or any other assessment where exam rules apply.
- This is what exam boards call **AI misuse and is a form of cheating**.

**Acknowledgment – When producing a piece of work, 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 known as referencing. You must make sure that you give detailed references for everything in your work which is not in your own words, for example, ChatGPT 3.5 (<https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>), 25/01/2025.

IF YOU USE AN AI TOOL, YOU CANNOT GET MARKS FOR WHAT THE AI TOOL HAS PRODUCED, AS IT IS NOT YOUR OWN WORK

If I'm allowed to use AI, how is this breaking the rules?



- AI misuse is when you use an AI tool in an exam or assessment where you are not allowed to; and/or
- Where you use an AI tool to create work and then say it's your own.

How to make sure you don't misuse AI

DECLARE

- Remember to sign your declaration form when handing in your work for final assessment.
- Your signature on the declaration form tells your teacher and the exam board that you are saying all the work you're handing in is your own.
- If you have used an AI tool, **you must declare***** that you have used it before signing the declaration form!

***Declare – this means that when you submit your work for marking, the awarding body will normally require you to sign an authentication statement confirming that you have read and followed the regulations.

ACKNOWLEDGE

If you are allowed to use an AI tool in your assessment (remember to check!), you must do the following:

- reference the AI tool you have used
- give the date of when the AI tool generated the content
- give details of how you used it.
- save screenshots of what you have asked or instructed the AI tool to do and what answer the AI gave you, and include this with the work submitted.

LAST CHECKS


Know the rules


Check with your teachers


ACKNOWLEDGE and DECLARE


EFFECTIVE FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2025

Information for candidates - AI (Artificial Intelligence and assessments)

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/>

JCQ *Unauthorised items* poster

This poster will be displayed outside each exam room. You **must** note that "*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.*"



AQA

City & Guilds

CCEA

NCFE

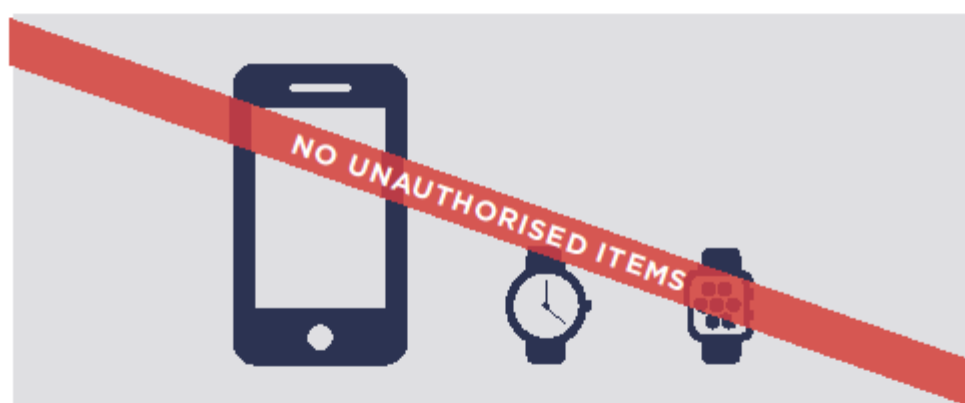
OCR

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.

©JCQ 2025 – Effective from 1 September 2025

Unauthorised items poster <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/exam-room-posters>

JCQ *Warning to candidates* poster

This poster will be displayed outside each exam room. You **must** note all the warnings.

Warning to candidates

 AQA	 City & Guilds	 CCEA	 NCFE	 OCR	 Pearson	 WJEC
--	--	---	---	--	---	---

**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.

Warning to candidates poster <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/exam-room-posters>

JCQ AI poster for students

This poster is a quick guide to help you to better understand the rules for use of AI in assessments.



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

AI and Assessments: A quick guide for students poster <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/>

CANDIDATE CONFIRMATION

To confirm you have received, read and understood the contents of this handbook, please sign and date the tear-off slip below and return to your Tutor by **13th November 2025**.

If there is anything you do not understand, you should ask your tutor for clarification.



CANDIDATE EXAM HANDBOOK

NAME: Overwrite your name here

Date I received the handbook: DD / MM / YYYY

I have read the contents

I understand (Tick all of the boxes that apply)

- ☐ What constitutes malpractice (and what AI misuse is) in examinations/assessments and the consequences of committing malpractice
- ☐ What my personal data is used for by awarding bodies
- ☐ Copyright

I have read and understand the current JCQ information for candidates documents as they relate to the qualifications I am taking (Tick all of the boxes that apply)

- ☐ Coursework
- ☐ Non-examination assessments
- ☐ On-screen tests
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Written exams

By signing here, I am confirming all of the above

Candidate Signature: Overwrite your signature here

Date of signature: DD / MM / YYYY