CANDIDATE EXAM HANDBOOK

Effective from 1 September 2026

This handbook is reviewed and updated annually

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Date of next review	31/10/2027

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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
- 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

- To maintain the integrity of qualifications, strict Regulations are in place
- 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
- 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 24 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 AI has been used, 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/), 25/01/2027. You should also acknowledge the sources used by the AI tool in generating the content.

You **must** retain a copy of the question(s)/prompts used to generate the AI content and the AI generated content itself 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 from other sources 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 not crediting the source. This includes outputs from AI tools. **Plagiarism is a form of cheating which is taken very seriously**.

Candidates and parents/carers should also refer to the centre's **Exams Managing Behaviour Policy** and **Exams Malpractice Policy**, both of which are available on the school website. These policies provide further information on the conduct expected of candidates in examinations and assessments, the processes followed when breaches of regulations are alleged or identified, and the consequences that may result from misconduct or malpractice.

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.
- Candidate notice and opt-out: A candidate may notify the awarding body, by giving notice to the centre, that they wish to opt out of the awarding body's use of their Student Materials for the purposes set out above.

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 section 5 in the in the JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres and is found under section 5 (Results and Certificates).

Refer to (GR 6)

Coursework assessments/non-examination assessments

- Relevant JCQ information for candidates documents – AI (Artificial Intelligence and assessments, coursework, non-examination assessments, social media which must be read and understood **prior to beginning** work.
- The use of AI (e.g. what AI is, when it may be used and how it should be acknowledged, the risks of using AI, what AI misuse is and how this will be treated as malpractice)
- Reading and understanding the Candidate declaration (form) **prior to beginning** work and understanding the declaration **must not** be signed until candidates have completed their work and handed it in for final assessment
- 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 AI and Assessments: A quick guide poster for students

Refer to AI Use in Assessments: Your role in protecting the integrity of qualifications

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… notify candidates, including any private candidates entered through the centre, of their examination entries and the dates and times of their examinations/assessments… ensure that the JCQ Information for candidates documents (AI (Artificial Intelligence and assessments), coursework, non- examination assessments, on-screen examinations, 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 sessions - Summer 2027

The JCQ contingency day for the 2026-2027 academic year is on the morning and afternoon of 23 June 2027

Refer to ICE 15

On-screen examinations

Refer to Information for candidates – on-screen examinations

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

Overnight Supervision Arrangements Policy).

- 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,** which is located on the school's website.

Refer to ICE 7, 8

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, between 10.00am and 12.00 noon.
- 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 5.3, 5.7, 5.8 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.**

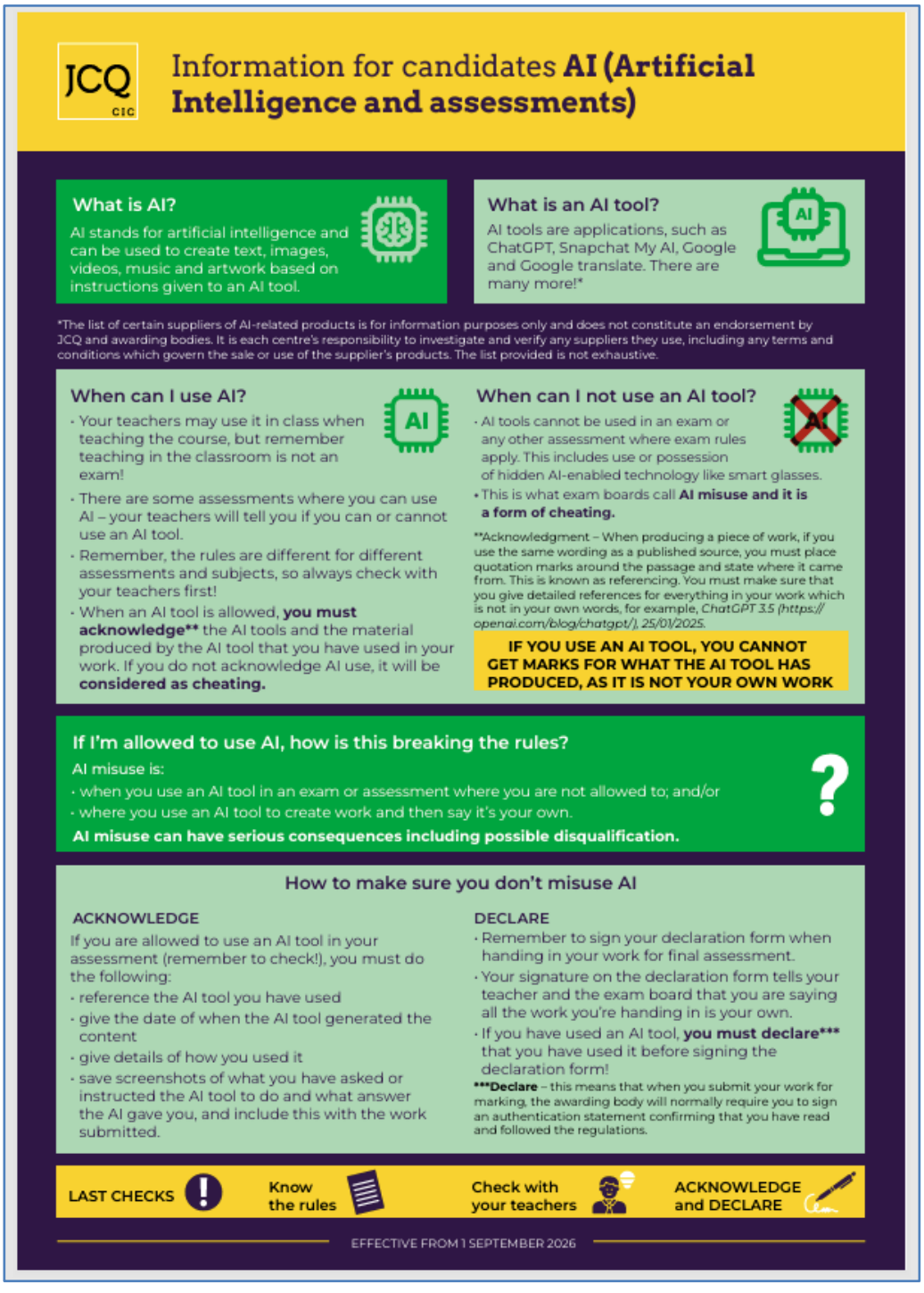
Refer to GR 5.8

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

You **must** read this information, **prior** to beginning your assessments, 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.

AI (Artificial Intelligence and assessments) www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates/

Information connected to Malpractice can also be found here: Malpractice – Joint Council for Qualifications

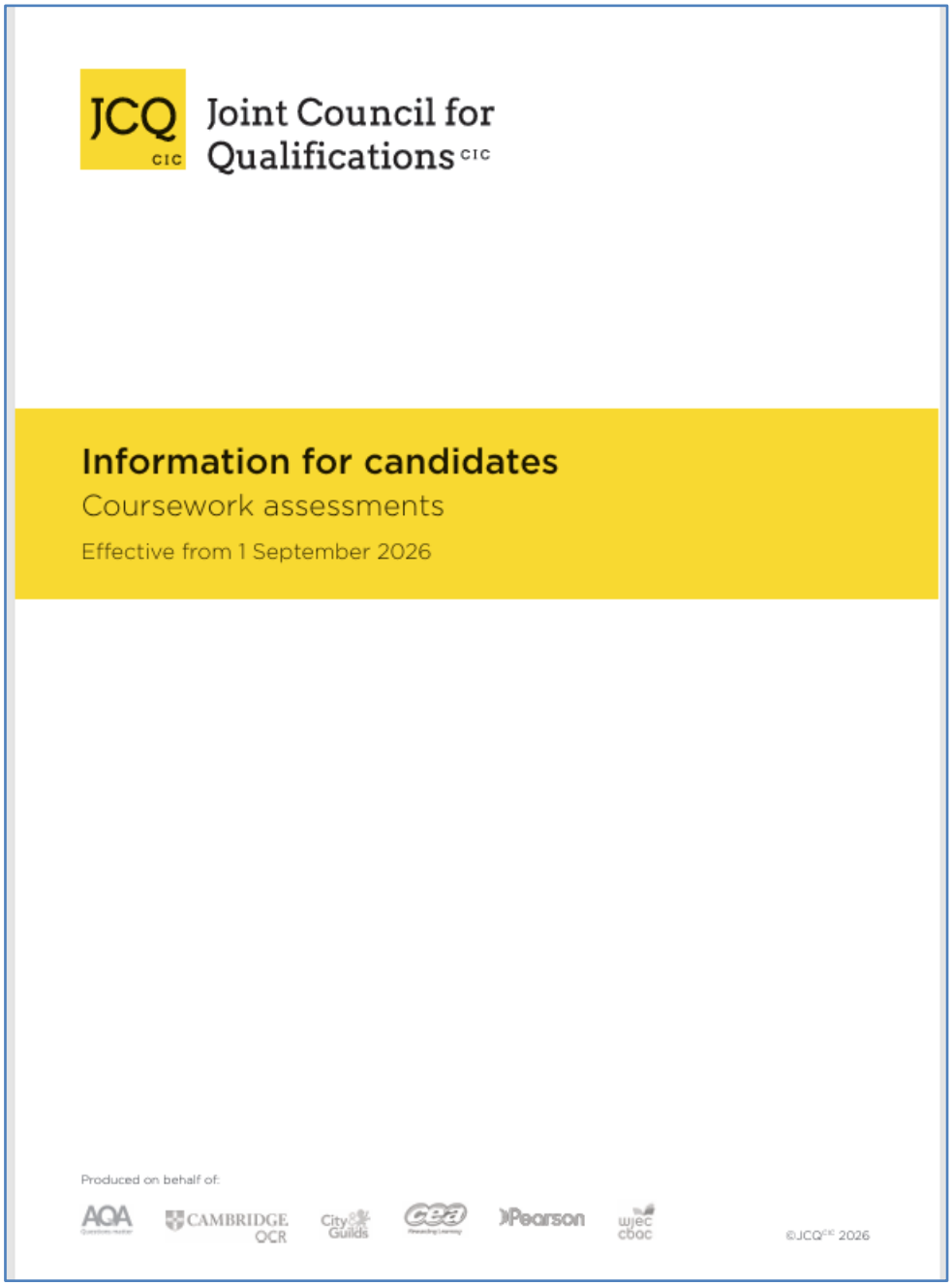


Appendix 2

JCQ Information for candidates – Coursework assessments

You **must** read this information, **prior** to beginning your work, if you are undertaking qualifications that contain elements of coursework assessment. If there is anything that you do not understand, you **must** ask your teacher.

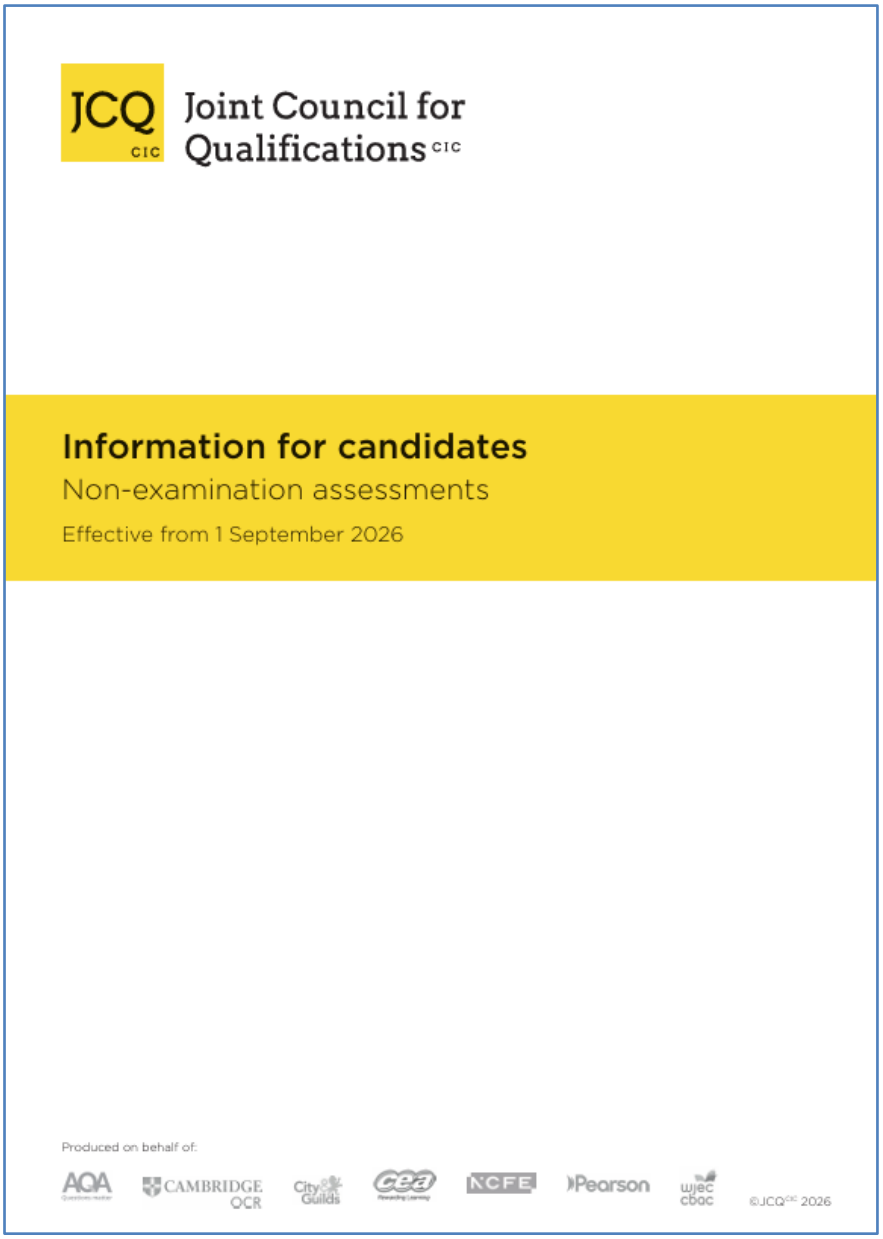
Information connected to Coursework assessments (Effective from 1 September 2026) can be found here: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates/



JCQ Information for candidates – Non-examination assessments

You **must** read this information, **prior** to beginning your work, if you are undertaking qualifications that contain components of non-examination assessment. If there is anything that you do not understand, you **must** ask your teacher.

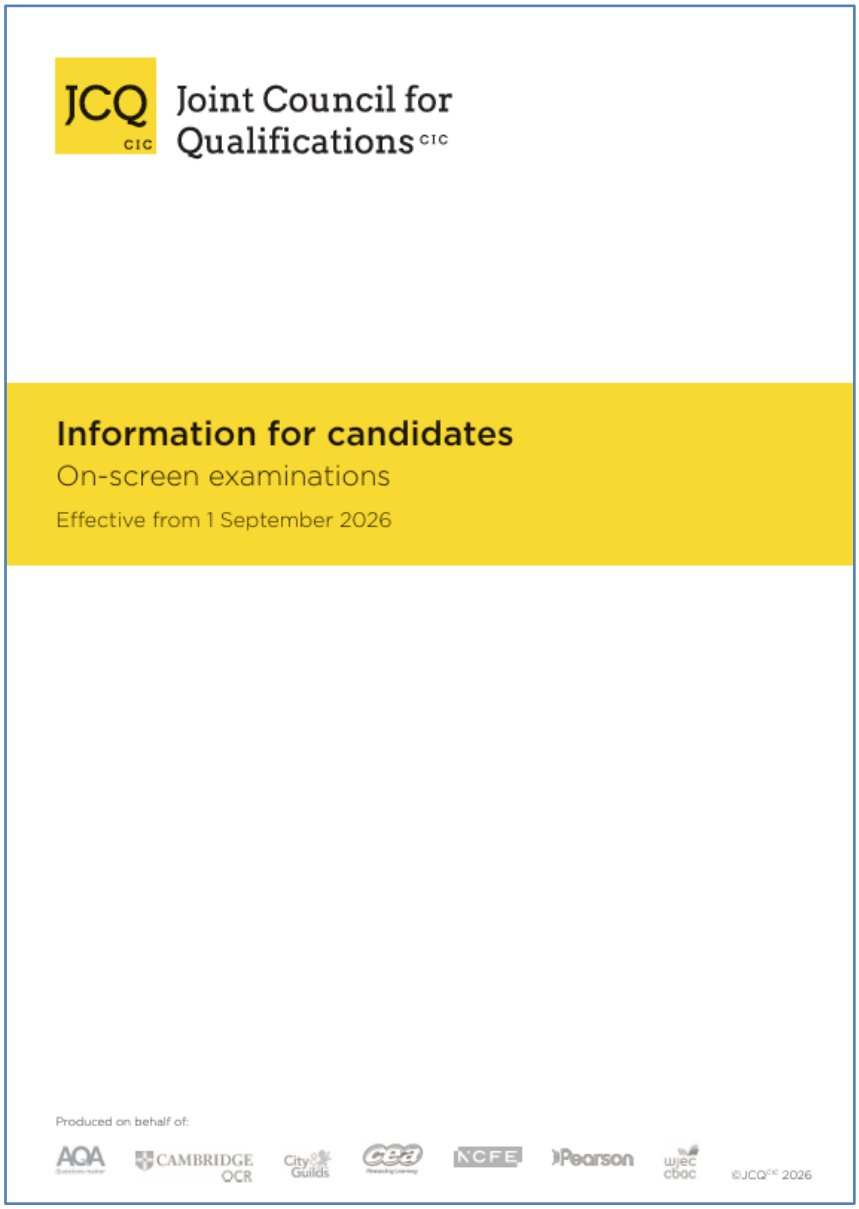
Information connected to Non-examination assessments (Effective from 1 September 2026) can be found here: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates/



JCQ Information for candidates – On-screen examinations

You **must** read this information **prior** to taking any externally assessed on-screen examinations as part of your qualification(s). If there is anything that you do not understand, ask your teacher.

Information connected to On-screen examinations (Effective from 1 September 2026) can be found here: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates/

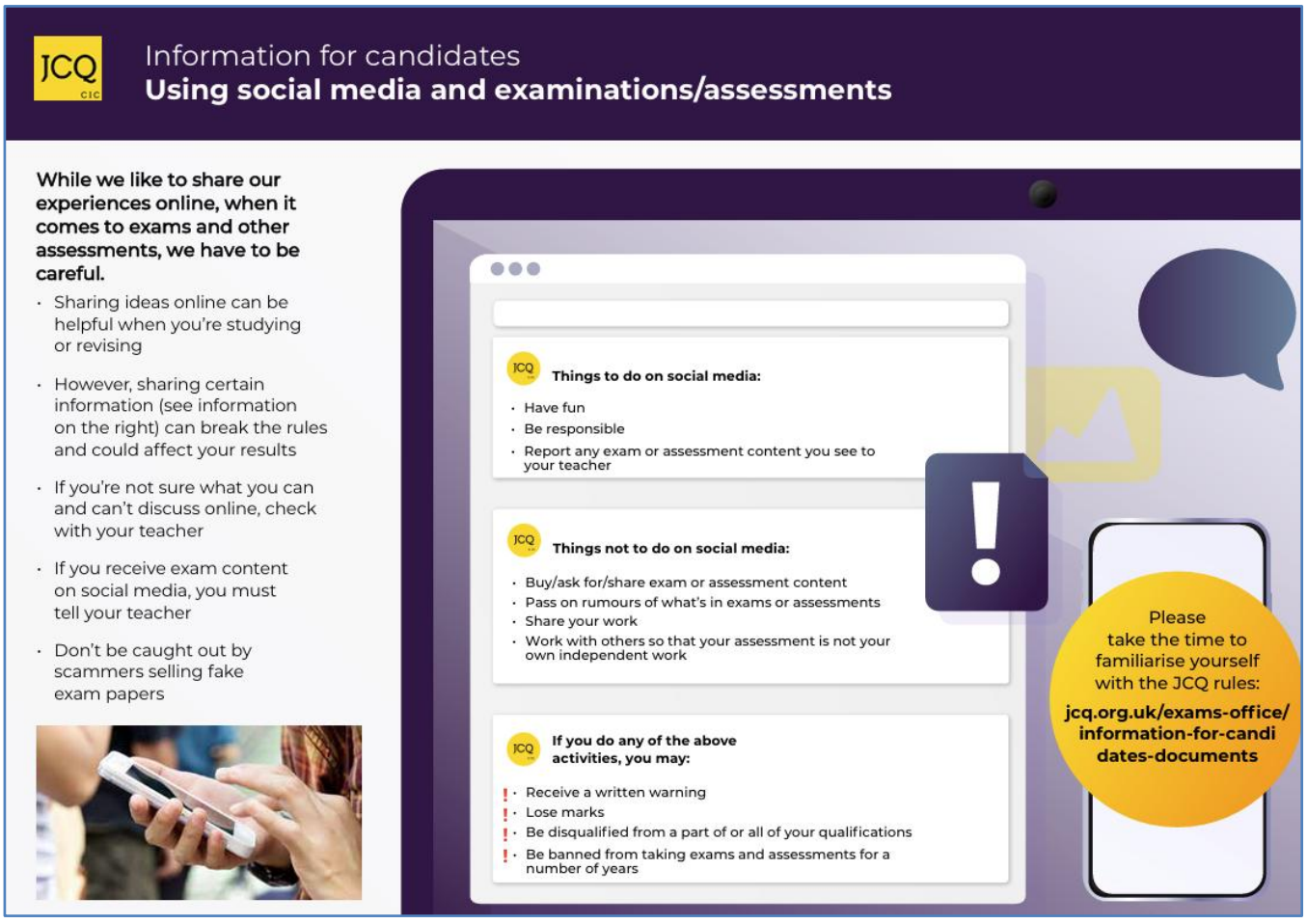


Appendix 5

JCQ Information for candidates – Social media

You **must** read this information, **prior** to beginning your assessments/exams, to help you stay within examination/assessment regulations when using social media. This information explains: Things to do on social media; Things not to do on social media; What may happen if you do anything on social media that you must not do.

Information connected to *Social media* can be found here: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates/

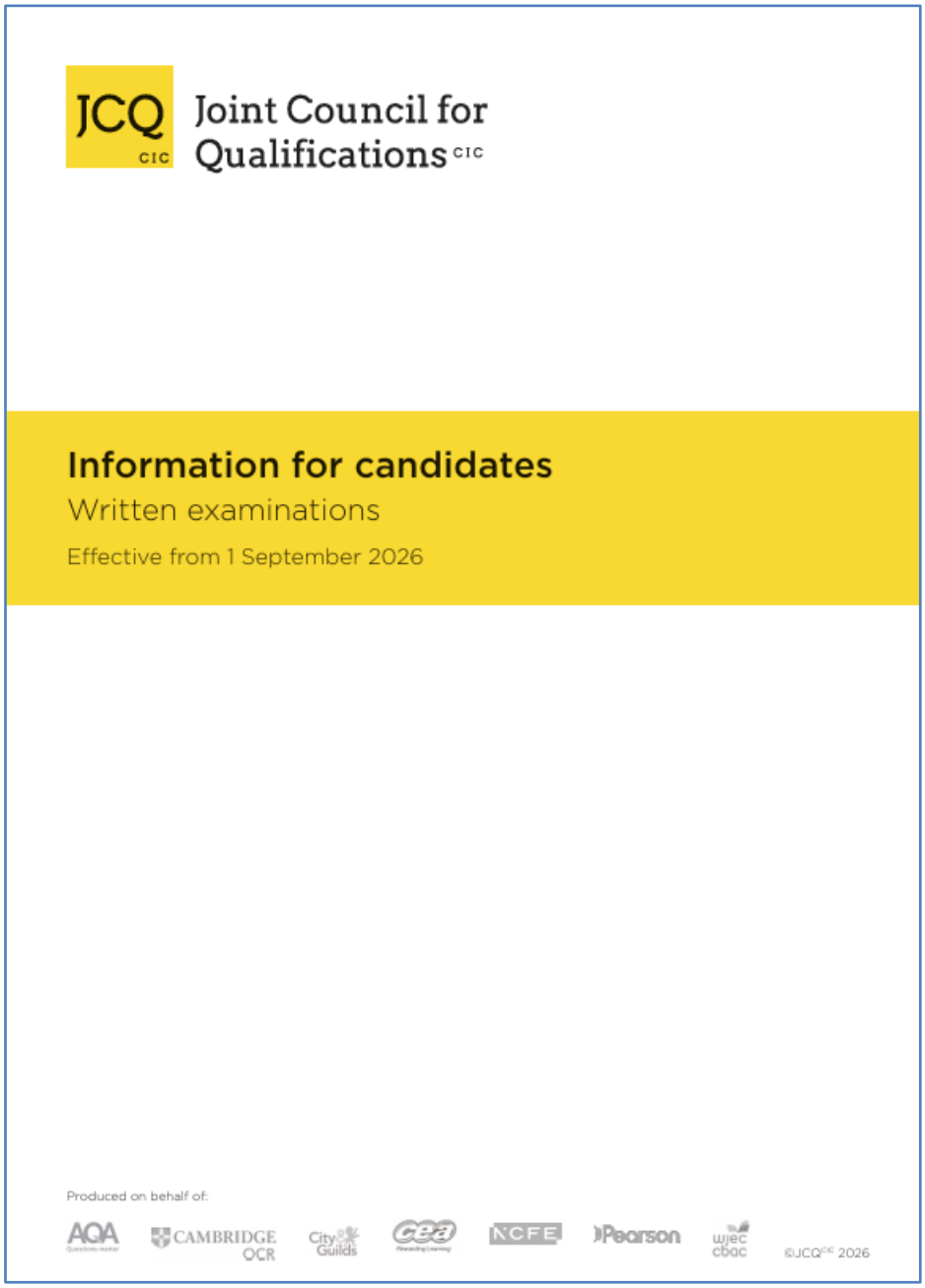


Appendix 6

JCQ Information for candidates – Written examinations

You **must** read this information **prior** to taking any externally assessed written examinations. If there is anything that you do not understand, ask your teacher.

Information connected to Written examinations (Effective from 1 September 2026) can be found here: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates/



JCQ *Unauthorised items* poster

You **must** read this information **prior** to taking any externally assessed on-screen or written examinations. If there is anything that you do not understand, ask your teacher.

This poster will be displayed outside each exam room. **Before** you enter the exam room, you **must** remind yourself that *"Possession of unauthorised items* (such as a mobile phone, smart glasses, any type of watch or any storage or web-enabled device) *is a serious offence and could result in* ***DISQUALIFICATION*** *from your examination and your overall qualification."*

Unauthorised items poster (Effective from 1 September 2026) can be found here:
www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/instructions-for-conducting-examinations-ice/

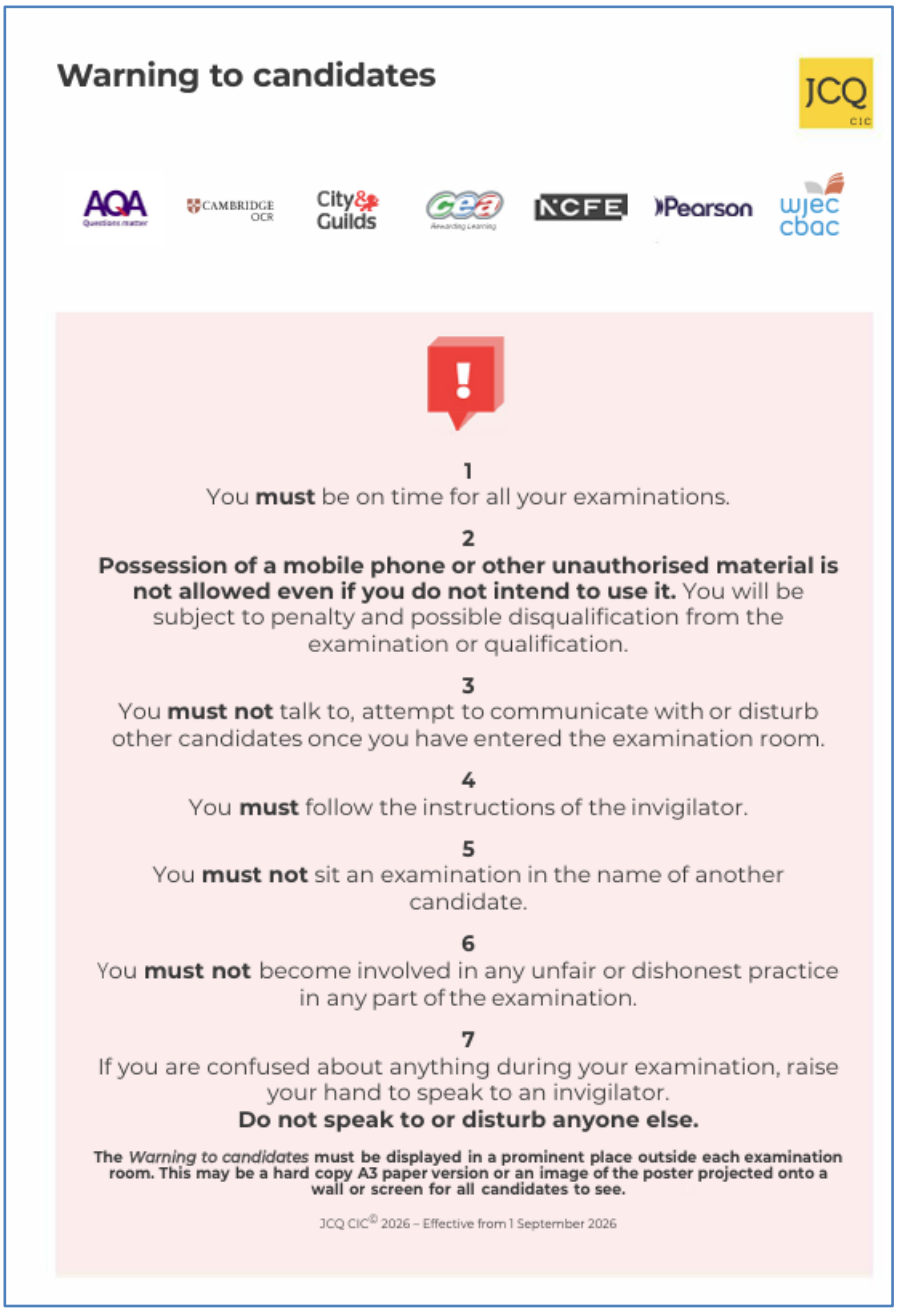


JCQ *Warning to candidates* poster

You **must** read this information **prior** to taking any externally assessed on-screen or written examinations. If there is anything that you do not understand, ask your teacher.

This poster will be displayed outside each exam room. **Before** you enter the exam room, you **must** remind yourself of all the warnings.

Warning to candidates poster (Effective from 1 September 2026) www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/instructions-for-conducting-examinations-ice/



Warning to candidates

JCQ CIC

AQA · Cambridge OCR · City & Guilds · CEA · NCFE · Pearson · WJEC CBAC

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 during your examination, raise your hand to speak to an invigilator.
Do not speak to or disturb anyone else.

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.

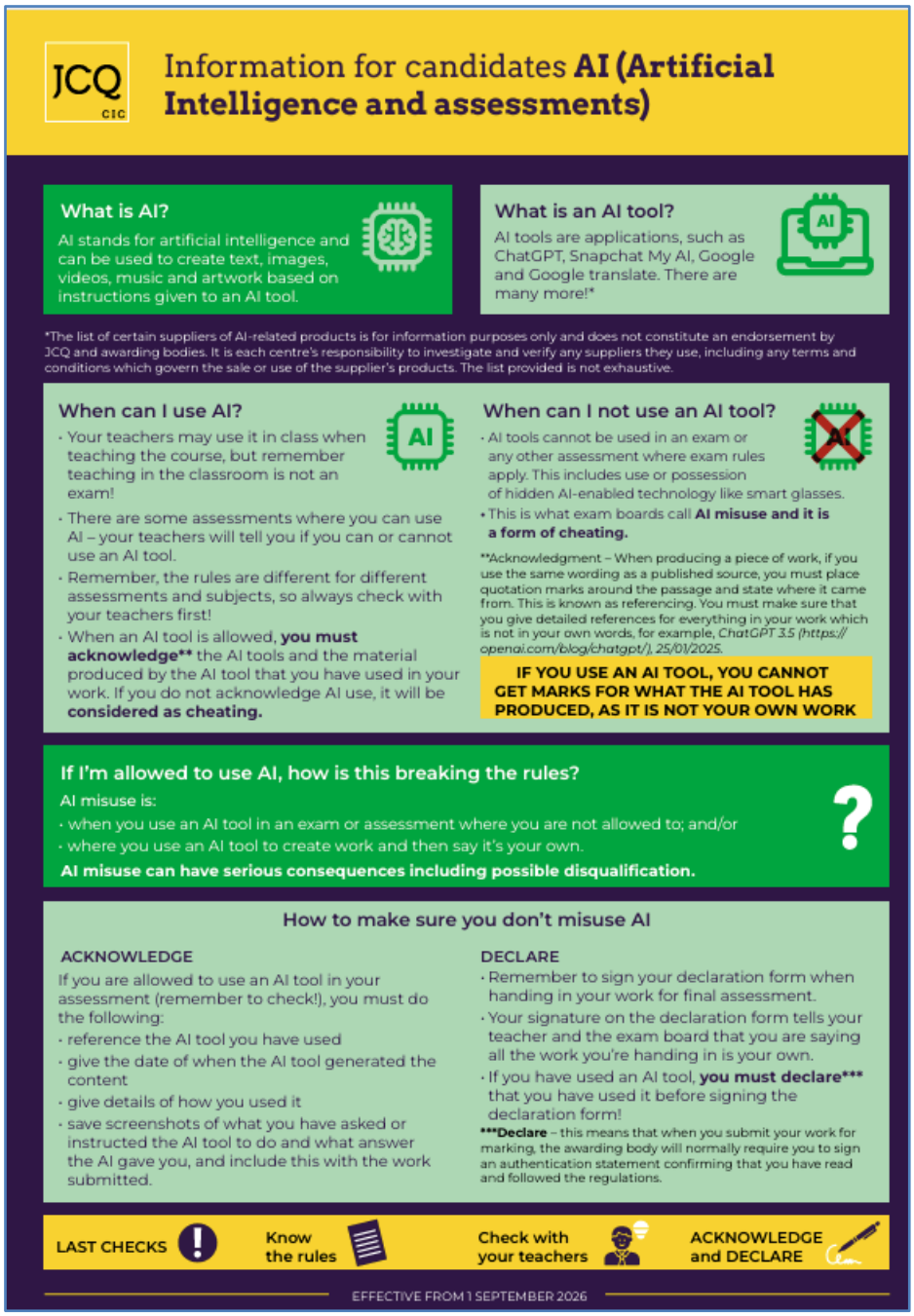
JCQ CIC© 2026 – Effective from 1 September 2026

JCQ AI poster (for students)

This is a quick guide to help you to better understand the rules of AI and Assessments.

This information quickly explains: What is AI? How can AI be misused in assessments? How do I make sure I don't misuse AI? What happens if I misuse AI?

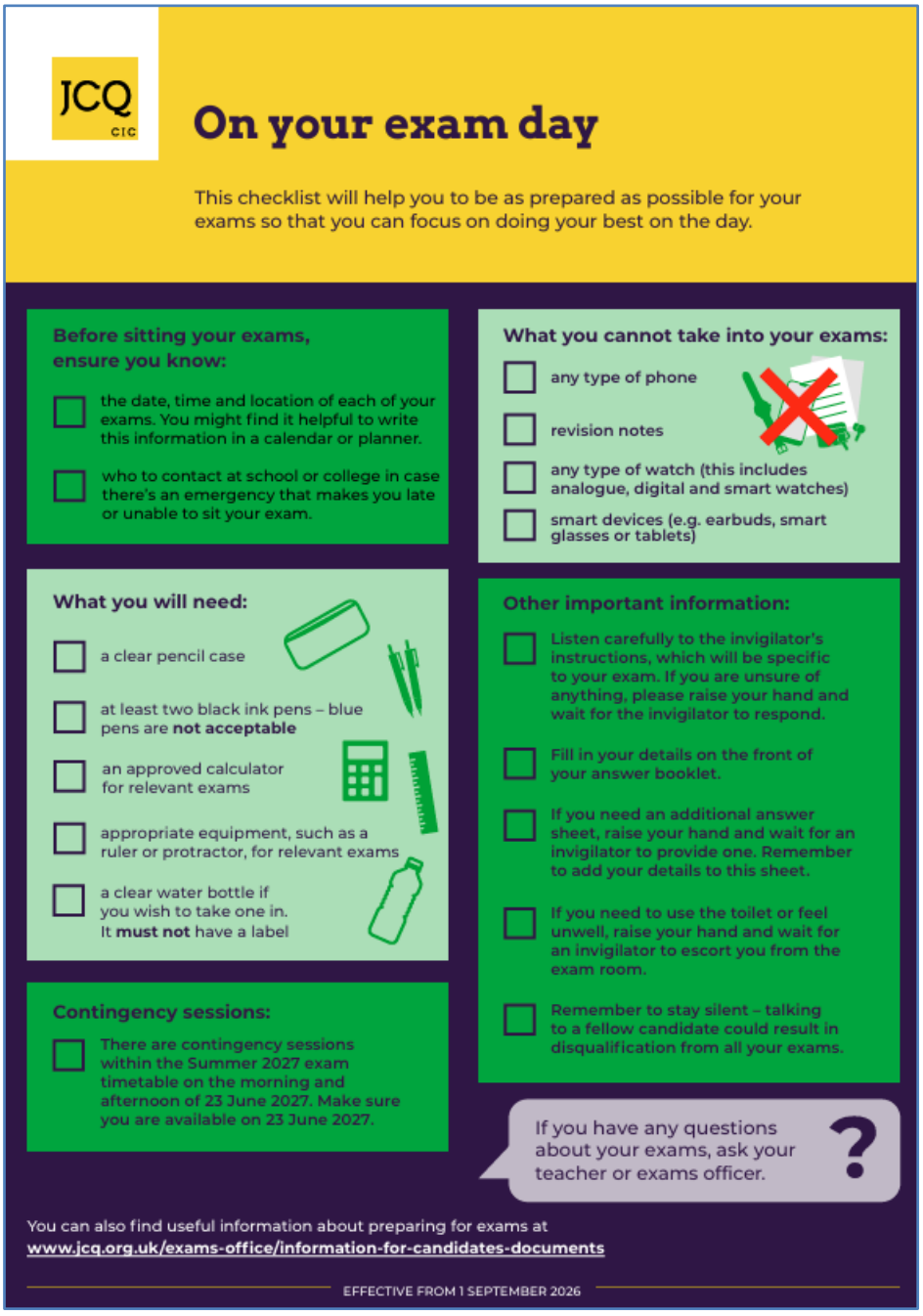
Information connected to AI and Assessments: A quick guide for students can be found here: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates/



JCQ Information for candidates – Preparing to sit exams

This checklist will help you to be as prepared as possible for your exams so that you can focus on doing your best on the day.

Information connected to *Preparing to sit exams* can be found here: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates/ (Effective from 1 September 2026



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 the 24th November 2026.

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 of the handbook**

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 and how Student Materials are used
- ☐ 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)

- ☐ AI (Artificial Intelligence and assessments)
- ☐ Coursework
- ☐ Non-examination assessments
- ☐ On-screen examinations
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Written exams

☐ **I am aware of the content of** the JCQ *Unauthorised items* and *Warning to candidates* posters

By signing here, I am confirming all of the areas ticked above

Candidate Signature: Overwrite your signature here

Date of signature: DD / MM / YYYY