



2026/2027 EXAMS HANDBOOK

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Emergencies on Exam Day

If, for any reason, you think you are going to be late to the exam, or you are having other issues, you should call your centre as soon as possible to make them aware:

Wickford: 01268 552482

Fairview: 01268 542367

Starting times for exams

Morning 9.30am

Afternoon 1.30pm

If you arrive to start the exam after 10.00am or 2.00pm, you will be considered very late and we will inform the examining board, who may not mark your exam.

If you are genuinely ill on exam day, you will be asked to complete a medical form which can be used as evidence for the exam board, if required.

Exams Manager: Jane Cosh 01268 436583

exams@css-essex.co.uk

Rules of the Exam Room

- All bags, belongings, outwear, electronics, phones, watches (even if analogue), smart glasses, headphones, etc. to be handed in
- Hats, hoodies, and other headwear must be removed – it could be considered malpractice if you do not comply
- **No talking once you have entered the exam room**
- No food or drinks allowed in the exam room (except water provided)
- Sit at your allocated desk
- You will be told when you can leave the exam room – this will vary with exam but is likely to be at least one hour after the start of the exam
- Follow ALL invigilator instructions

Listen and follow all the instructions given by the invigilators

- Put your hand up if you need to attract an invigilator's attention for reasons such as:
 - You think you've been given the wrong exam paper
 - You don't have all the materials you need
 - The paper is incomplete or badly printed
 - You need the toilet or feel ill
- You must **NOT** ask for any explanation of the questions or exam as the invigilators are not allowed to discuss the exam
- Make sure you fill in your name and candidate details on the front of the exam. You may also need to sign the front of the paper.
- Do any rough work and calculations on the exam paper itself and put a single line through any rough work you do not wish marked.
- Written work to be in black pen and diagrams are to be drawn in pencil

- Calculators are allowed where specified – these will be provided for you
- Only write your answers in the designated boxes/area
- Do not doodle or deface your exam paper – the board may refuse to mark it

In the unlikely event of an emergency, follow all instructions given by the invigilators

On your exam day

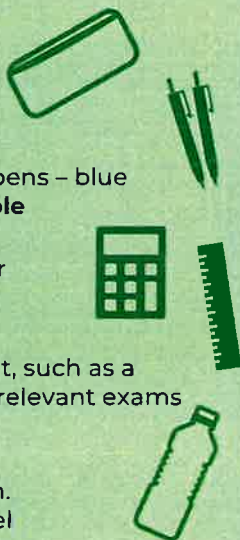
This checklist will help you to be as prepared as possible for your exams so that you can focus on doing your best on the day.

Before sitting your exams, ensure you know:

- ☐ the date, time and location of each of your exams. You might find it helpful to write this information in a calendar or planner.
- ☐ who to contact at school or college in case there's an emergency that makes you late or unable to sit your exam.

What you will need:

- ☐ a clear pencil case
- ☐ at least two black ink pens – blue pens are **not acceptable**
- ☐ an approved calculator for relevant exams
- ☐ appropriate equipment, such as a ruler or protractor, for relevant exams
- ☐ a clear water bottle if you wish to take one in. It **must not** have a label



What you cannot take into your exams:

- ☐ any type of phone
- ☐ revision notes
- ☐ any type of watch (this includes analogue, digital and smart watches)
- ☐ smart devices (e.g. earbuds, smart glasses or tablets)



Other important information:

- ☐ Listen carefully to the invigilator's instructions, which will be specific to your exam. If you are unsure of anything, please raise your hand and wait for the invigilator to respond.
- ☐ Fill in your details on the front of your answer booklet.
- ☐ If you need an additional answer sheet, raise your hand and wait for an invigilator to provide one. Remember to add your details to this sheet.
- ☐ If you need to use the toilet or feel unwell, raise your hand and wait for an invigilator to escort you from the exam room.
- ☐ Remember to stay silent – talking to a fellow candidate could result in disqualification from all your exams.

Contingency sessions:

- ☐ There are contingency sessions within the Summer 2027 exam timetable on the morning and afternoon of 23 June 2027. Make sure you are available on 23 June 2027.

If you have any questions about your exams, ask your teacher or exams officer.

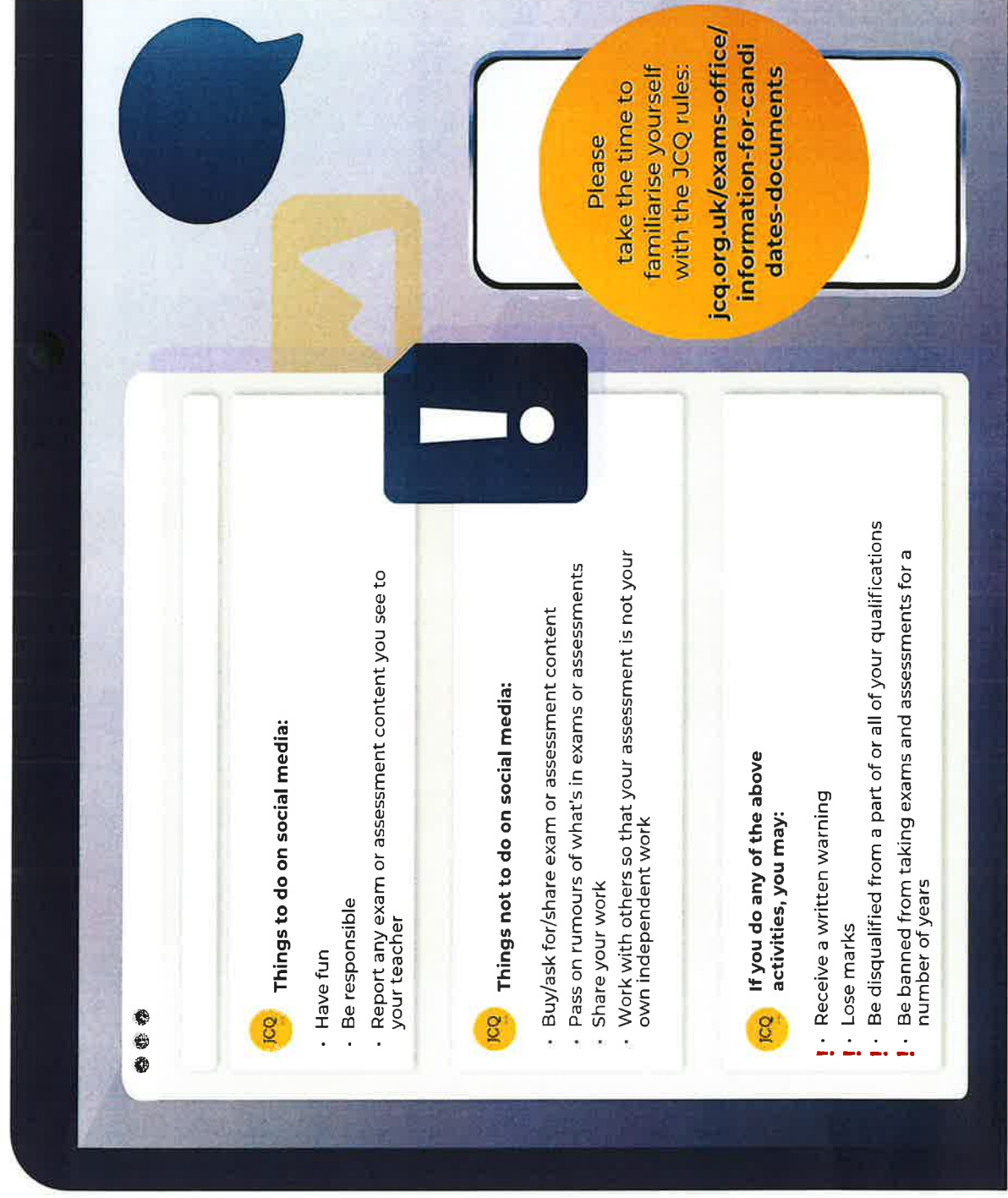


You can also find useful information about preparing for exams at www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents

Information for candidates Using social media and examinations/assessments

While we like to share our experiences online, when it comes to exams 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

Things to do on social media:

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

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

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:
jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents



Joint Council for
Qualifications^{CIC}

Information for candidates

Coursework assessments

Effective from 1 September 2026

Produced on behalf of:



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OCR

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Guilds



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

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

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

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

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

The regulations state that:

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

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

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

For material taken from the internet, your reference should show the date when the material was downloaded and **must** show the precise web page, not the search engine used to locate it. This can be copied from the address line. For example: http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/october/28/newsid_2621000/2621915.stm, downloaded 5 February 2027.

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 as well as the AI generated content itself and authentication purposes in a non-editable format (such as a screenshot) and provide a brief explanation of how you used it. This **must** be submitted with your work for final assessment so that your teacher can review the work, the AI-generated content and how it has been used.

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

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

Preparing your coursework – good practice

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

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

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

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

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

Don't be tempted to use any prepared or generated online solutions and try to pass them off as your own work – this is cheating.

Electronic tools used by awarding bodies can detect this sort of copying.

You **must not** write inappropriate, offensive or obscene material.

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.**

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

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

Sanctions for breaking the regulations

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

- you will be awarded zero marks for your work;
- you will be disqualified from that unit for that examination series;
- you will be disqualified from the whole subject for that examination series;
- you will be disqualified from all subjects and barred from entering again for a period of time.

The awarding body will decide which sanction is appropriate.

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



Joint Council for
Qualifications^{CIC}

Information for candidates

Non-examination assessments

Effective from 1 September 2026

Produced on behalf of:



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

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.

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

Preparing your work - good practice

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

If you worked as part of a group on an assignment, for example undertaking field research, you **must** write up your **own account** of the assignment. Even if the information you have is the same, you **must** describe in your own words how that information was obtained. You **must draw your own conclusions from the data**.

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

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

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

You **must not** write inappropriate, offensive or obscene material.

Research and using references

In some subjects, you will have an opportunity to do some independent research into a topic.

The research you do may involve looking for information in published sources, such as textbooks, encyclopedias, journals, TV, radio and on the internet.

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

Using information from published sources (including the internet) as the basis for your assignment is a good way to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of a subject. You **must** take care how you use this material though - you **cannot** copy it and claim it as your own work.

The regulations state that:

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

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

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. A reference from a printed book or journal should show the name of the author, the year of publication and the page number. For example: Morrison, 2000, p29.

For material taken from the internet, your reference should show the date when the material was downloaded and **must** show the precise web page, not the search engine used to locate it. This can be copied from the address line. For example: http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/october/28/newsid_2621000/2621915.stm, downloaded 5 February 2027.

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.

You may be required to include a bibliography at the end of your piece of written work. Your teacher will tell you whether this is necessary. Where required, your bibliography **must** list the full details of publications you have used in your research, even where these are not directly referred to. For example: Curran, J. *Mass Media and Society* (Hodder Arnold, 2005).

If you copy the words, ideas or outputs 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. It could also include AI-produced material. **Plagiarism is a form of cheating which is taken very seriously.**

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

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

Sanctions for breaking the regulations

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

- you will be awarded zero marks for your work;
- you will be disqualified from that component for the examination series in question;
- you will be disqualified from the whole subject for that examination series;
- you will be disqualified from all subjects and barred from entering again for a period of time.

The awarding body will decide which sanction is appropriate.

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



Joint Council for
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Information for candidates

On-screen examinations

Effective from 1 September 2026

Produced on behalf of:



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

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

A. Regulations – Make sure you understand the rules

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

C. Calculators, dictionaries and computer spellcheckers

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

D. Instructions during the on-screen exam

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

E. Advice and assistance

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

F. At the end of the on-screen exam

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



Joint Council for
Qualifications^{CIC}

Information for candidates

Written examinations

Effective from 1 September 2026

Produced on behalf of:



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

If there is anything you do not understand, ask your teacher.
You should also check with your teacher which calculator you may use in your exams.

A. Regulations – Make sure you understand the rules

- 1** Be on time for all your exams. If you are late, your work might not be accepted.
- 2 Do not** become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice during the exam.
- 3** If you try to cheat or break the rules in any way, you could be disqualified from **all** your exams.
- 4** You **must not** take any unauthorised material into the exam room, including:

- (a) notes;
- (b) earphones or earbuds (e.g. AirPods), MP3/4 players or similar devices, smart devices, smart glasses, tablets (e.g. iPads or iPods);
- (c) a mobile phone;
- (d) a watch (e.g. analogue, digital, smartwatch);

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

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

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

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

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

C. Calculators, dictionaries and computer spellcheckers

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

D. Instructions during the exam

- 1 Always listen to the invigilator. Always follow their instructions.
- 2 Tell the invigilator at once if:
 - (a) you think you have not been given the right question paper or all of the materials listed on the front of the paper;
 - (b) the question paper is incomplete or badly printed;
 - (c) you think you have not been given the expected access arrangement(s).
- 3 Read carefully and follow the instructions printed on the question paper and/or on the answer booklet.
- 4 **Do not** start writing anything until the invigilator tells you to fill in all the details required on the front of the question paper and/or the answer booklet. **Do not** open the question paper until you are told that the exam has begun.
- 5 Remember to write your answers within the designated sections of the answer booklet.
- 6 Do your rough work on the proper exam stationery. Cross it through and place any additional answer sheets inside your answer booklet. (For CCEA examinations place any additional sheets behind your answer booklet.)

Make sure you add your candidate details to any additional answer sheets that you use, including those used for rough work.

E. Advice and assistance

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

F. At the end of the exam

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

Place any loose additional answer sheets inside your answer booklet.

Make sure you add your candidate details to any additional answer sheets that you use.

For CCEA examinations, any loose additional answer sheets should be placed **behind** your answer booklet.

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