

CANDIDATE EXAM HANDBOOK

2025/26

This handbook is reviewed and updated annually

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Introduction

Gordon's School 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/assemblies
- 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)

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.

The Gordon's School AI Policy for Students can be found on the school website.

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...**

Refer to **Malpractice Policy** (Exams) – on the school website

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

- Candidates should be informed that they 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

Your teacher will inform you of:

- the dates when coursework/non-examination assessments will be conducted
 - the deadlines for submitting your work
 - whether the work is internally or externally assessed
 - the mark awarded for internally assessed work and how to request a review of the marking and/or appeal internal assessment decisions
- Please Refer to Instructions for conducting coursework, Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments and Information for candidates documents included in appendices. The Gordon's School non-examination assessment internal review process infographic is also available on the school website

AI in assessments

- Misuse of AI is cheating.
- Make sure you know the rules
- Talk to your teachers
- Reference clearly

Please refer to Appendix 9 JCQ AI Poster for students & the Gordon's School AI Policy for students available on the school website.

Written timetabled exams

- Individual candidate timetables will be issued in the Spring Term
- Candidates must check timetables including the date, time, subject title and level for all written exams and refer any questions to the Examinations Officer
- Check if you have any clashes, where you have two subjects scheduled for the same time, these will need to be referred to the Examinations Officer
- Check if you have more than 6 hrs (A Level) or 5.5 hours (GCSE) of exams in one day, these will need to be referred to the Examinations Officer
- The JCQ information for candidates documents can be found attached to this document and on the school website

Exam room posters – Warning to candidates, Unauthorised items, please refer to Appendix 6 & 7

Contingency session - Summer 2026

In the event of a national event or emergency affecting exam dates during the Summer 2026 series the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) have allocated **Wednesday 24th June 2026** as a contingency exam date.

Please ensure you are available on this date.

Refer to [ICE 15](#)

On-screen tests

Any on-screen tests will take place in India 2 or 4. Rooms will be identified on the main school timetable.

Please refer to Appendix 3 Information for candidates – on-screen tests

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

- Check if you have any clashes, where you have two subjects scheduled for the same time, these will need to be referred to the Examinations Officer
- Depending on the timing/circumstances of the clash students will be offered to sit one examination after another (with a short supervised break without revision materials) or one exam to be sat in the morning session with the other in the afternoon session (students will be supervised between each exam including their lunch break) paper revision material will be allowed
- Check if you have more than 6 hrs (A Level) or 5.5 hours (GCSE) of exams in one day, these will need to be referred to the Examinations Officer and an agreed timetable put into place which may include overnight supervision arrangements put into place

Refer to [ICE 7](#)

Where you will take your exams

The majority of our exams will take place in the Theatre (GCSE) and the Rec (A Level)

On screen tests will take place in India 2 and/or 4

Art & Photography exams will take place in PM1 and/or PM2

Music Exams will take place in Medway 4 and/or 5

All exam rooms will be equipped with an analogue clock for students to monitor the time during their exams. No exam room will be equipped with a digital clock.

What time your exams will start and finish

- Morning exams usually start at 09:00, afternoon exams usually start at 13:30

- GCSE students will have an exam briefing in the Chapel at 08:45 (after registration) for morning exams and 13:15 for afternoon exams
- AS/A level students must arrive 15 minutes before the start of an exam (usually at the back of the Rec) where a member of staff will brief students
- The length of an examination is shown on your individual candidate timetables (if you have an access arrangement of extra time this needs to be added)
- The start and finish times (including extra time) will be displayed on the board at the front of the examination room
- There is at least one analogue clock in the examination rooms
- Candidates with rest breaks will be given a note on their desk with the 'new' finish time after each break is taken
- You will not be allowed to leave the examination room earlier than the normal end time of the exam even if you have finished

Supervision during your exams

- Exams are invigilated by a team of invigilators employed by the school
 - Students are expected to behave in a respectful manner towards invigilators and follow their instructions at all times
 - Invigilators are in the examination room to supervise the conduct of examinations and they must follow the strict rules and regulations when conducting exams as directed by the JCQ and Awarding Bodies
 - The Examinations Officer and / or a member of the Wider Leadership Team will be present at the start of your exam for identification and discipline purposes
 - Invigilators will distribute and collect the examination papers
 - Read out all relevant JCQ instructions
 - Tell you when to complete the front cover of the examination paper, start and finish the examination
 - Hand out extra paper if required
 - Deal with any problems that occur during the examination, for example a candidate feeling ill and report all incidents to the Examinations Officer
 - If you wish to go to the toilet during an exam, put your hand up and an invigilator will escort you to the nearest toilets. You will not be allowed any extra time to do this unless you have a previous authorised access arrangement of rest break
 - Invigilators cannot discuss the examination paper with you or explain any of the questions
 - The invigilator will announce when you have 5 minutes left and tell you when to stop
 - You must stop writing immediately and remain silent, facing the front. Remember that you are still under examination conditions until you have left the room
 - Please note some of your peers may still be sitting an exam as they may be doing a different paper, which is longer, or have extra time so the exam room should remain silent
 - Invigilators will collect all question papers, answer booklets and additional paper
 - If you have used more than one answer booklet or loose sheets of paper, ensure your name and candidate number is written on them all and insert them inside your answer booklet
 - Remain seated in silence until told to leave the exam room, usually done one row at a time
 - Leave room in silence, do not scrape chairs, please show consideration for other candidates who may still be working
 - Remember to collect any belongings, mobile phones, bags etc. on your way out of the exam room
- Do not congregate outside the exam room walk away from the entrance

Exam room conditions

As soon as you enter the exam room you are under formal exam conditions (for full set of rules, please read attached Information for Candidates – Written Exams)

You must not:

- Speak
- Take in any notes or other unauthorised material into the exam
- Distract or communicate with other candidates

You must:

- Remove and switch off any technological or web enabled products like mobile phones / ipods / fitbits / watches (both digital or analogue) and place in boxes provided at the back of the exam room. If you are found to have any of these items with you, which is not allowed, even if you did not intend to use it, this will be reported to the Awarding Body
- Listen to and follow the instructions of the invigilator
- Face the front at all times
- Put your hand up if you need anything and wait for the invigilator to come to you
- Only take in a clear plastic pencil case with the equipment needed for that exam
- When instructed complete the front cover of your answer booklet
- Centre number, subject title, paper number, date, start and finish times will all be written on the white boards at the front of the hall
- Candidates must not open the paper until the invigilator starts the exam

Any calculator covers must be removed and placed upside down on the floor

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.

Candidates will be told when to stop writing at the end of the exam, they must stop immediately. Invigilator's will collect all exam scripts and relevant exam material. Once all candidates (with exception to those that may have an exam access arrangement such as extra time or rest breaks) scripts have been collected the invigilator's will allow one row at a time of students to leave the exam room in silence, not forgetting to collect any personal belongings.

Refer to [ICE 23](#)

Where you will sit in the exam room

- You will be asked to line up in surname alphabetical order outside the exam room
 - If there is more than one exam going on at the same time you will be asked to line up in separate queues
 - The invigilator will instruct when each group is to enter the exam room and direct to seating
- Each candidate will have a card on their desk identifying their name and candidate number

How your identity is confirmed in the exam room

- A member of WLT and/or the Exams Officer will be outside the exam room for identification & discipline purposes
- Each candidate will have a candidate card on their desk which has a four digit candidate number, this is used by all the Awarding Bodies to identify you. You must write it on all your examination papers. It is a good idea to remember it

- You must write your name and number exactly how it appears, please note legal names are used for exams, not 'known as' names

At the beginning of the exam invigilators will come round the room to take the register, they will take this information from your exam card

Refer to [ICE 16](#)

What equipment you need to bring to your exams

- You are responsible for providing your own equipment for examinations
- You must not lend equipment or attempt to borrow from another candidate in the examination room
- Only material listed on the question paper is allowed in the examination room
- You must not have on or near you any other material

You will need:

- Transparent pencil case or clear plastic bag
 - Black ball point pens – no blue pens and no gel pens as scanners may not be able to read blue/gel ink
 - Pencil, sharpener and rubber eraser – no correction fluid or pens
 - Ruler with cm and mm
 - Highlighters must not be used in your answers but can be used on question papers if these are not being sent to the examiner
 - Calculators may be allowed for some exams. No instructions or lid, make sure you have new batteries and that they are reset. (see section below on using calculators)
- Clear plastic drink bottle (if desired) with water only and with any labels removed

Using calculators

In this section a calculator is defined as an electronic device whose primary purpose is to carry out mathematical calculations. This is the published guidance on calculators unless specifically varied by an awarding body in a qualification specification.

- The instructions on the question paper will say whether calculators are allowed or not. If the instructions do not include such a statement, calculators should be treated as standard equipment and may be used by candidates
- Where the use of a calculator is allowed, candidates are responsible for making sure that their calculators meet the awarding bodies' regulations
- Candidates must be told these regulations beforehand and be familiar with the *Information for candidates* documents
- During an examination a calculator must not be able to offer any of these facilities:
 - a) language translators;
 - b) symbolic algebra manipulation;
 - c) symbolic differentiation or integration;
 - d) communication with other machines or the internet;
- During an examination a calculator must not give access to pre-stored information. This includes:
 - a) databanks, such as the periodic table (with the exception of scientific constants);
 - b) dictionaries;
 - c) mathematical formulae;
 - d) text.
- A calculator must not be borrowed from another candidate during an examination.

- 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
- An invigilator may give a candidate a replacement calculator
- 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
- A series of FAQs on the use of calculators in examinations may be found at:
https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/FAQs-%E2%80%93-Using-Calculators_FINAL.pdf

Refer to ICE 10

What you must not bring into the exam room

- Mobile phones, watches any potential technology/web enabled sources of information
 - Any notes, books, revision materials
 - Possession of unauthorised materials/items will be reported to the relevant exam board and could result in disqualification
- Unauthorised items in the exam room poster attached

Food and drink in exam rooms

- No food is allowed in the exam room unless it has been authorised by the Examinations Office i.e. unwrapped cough sweet or sugar 'boost' for a diabetic

A clear plastic water bottle (if desired) with all labels removed

What you should wear for your exams

- Full school uniform must be worn at all times for written exams.
- Permission may be given in advance for Gordon's logo P.E. kit in certain practical exams.

Sixth Form students are expected to adhere to the normal sixth form dress code

Where your personal belongings will be stored during your exam

We strongly advise that you bring as little personal belongings as possible to an exam. However, if you have a bag or coat it can be placed in the entrance hall of the Theatre or back of any other exam room.

What to do if you arrive late for your exam

- You should get to school as quickly as possible and report to the Examinations Officer in the School Office. If it is still possible for you to sit the examination, a member of staff will escort you to the exam room.
- You must not enter an examination room without permission after an examination has begun.

If you arrive very late, the school must inform the Awarding Bodies, giving the reason and evidence for your lateness. The awarding body may decide not to accept your work.

Refer to ICE 21

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

- Inform school immediately, preferably the Examination Officer direct, so that we can help and advise you

- If it is decided you are too ill to sit the exam where possible medical evidence (from your GP/Hospital) should be provided
 - The school will complete a 'Special Consideration' request on your behalf. Please note a minimum of 15% of the complete assessment must be completed to receive a grade
 - If you feel unwell but manage to attend the exam, please inform the Examination Officer so a 'Special Consideration' request can be completed
- If you feel ill during an exam put your hand up and an invigilator will assist you. If you think this has affected your performance inform the Examination Officer so a 'Special Consideration' request can be completed

What happens if you have an unauthorised absence from your exam

- If you miss the examination, you cannot take it on another day. Timetables are regulated by the Awarding Bodies and you must attend on the given date and time

If you miss an exam without good reason, you risk not gaining your final GCSE or GCE

Refer to [ICE 22](#)

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

- If the fire or lockdown alarm sounds during an examination, the invigilators will tell you what to do
- Do not panic, do not communicate with other students and listen to the invigilators instructions

Any type of interruption during your exam will be reported to the Awarding Body

Refer to [ICE 25](#)

Candidates with access arrangements/reasonable adjustments

- Some students are entitled to various access arrangements they should have been put into place during the Autumn or beginning of the Spring Term and therefore been put into practice during your mock exams
 - The Access Arrangement Co-ordinator will discuss arrangements with individuals before any exam seasons and informed parent/carers. This includes rooming
 - All invigilators should be aware of your access arrangement, if you feel you are entitled to an arrangement but are not given it put up your hand and notify an invigilator who will investigate immediately
 - Special consideration is an adjustment to the marks of a candidate who is eligible for consideration, under special circumstances such as illness, bereavement, injury, domestic crisis etc
 - The allowance for special consideration is from 0% (consideration given but addition of marks considered inappropriate) to 5% (reserved for really exceptional cases)
 - You should be aware that any adjustment is likely to be small and no feedback is provided.
 - Students are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared for the whole course but their performance in the examination or in the production of coursework is affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control
 - The Examinations Officer must be informed immediately so that the necessary paperwork can be completed
- You will be required to provide evidence for your application

Results

- Year 13 A Level & level 3 BTEC results can be collected from school from 08:00 on Thursday 13th August 2026
- Year 11 GCSE & level 2 BTEC results can be collected from school from 10:00 on Thursday 20th August 2026
- Y10 & Y12 external BTEC unit results will be issued by tutors upon student return in September
- A Statement of Results will also be available to all students on their student portal

The Examinations Officer and Senior members of staff will be available on both results day

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

Post-results services

Post-results services available:

- Copy of script
- Review of marking

On results day if you have not got the grades you need for sixth form/college/university

- Speak with a member of staff available on both results days who will be available for advice.
- If you feel strongly that you require a review of marking or copy of script to ascertain whether a review of marking would be viable a review of marking / access to scripts form will be in your results envelope and emailed to you. Complete the form and return to the Examinations Officer by the deadline stated on the form. All fees will need to be paid and student's signature obtained before a post-results service can be submitted.

Please note that if you apply for a Review of Marking results can go up, down or stay the same. If a grade goes up the fee charged will be reimbursed by the exam body for any review scripts that enabled the mark to rise.

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

Certificates

Certificates arrive in school during November of the examination year. They will be posted to the last home address held on the school system unless the Examinations Officer has been informed in writing of a change of address. If you were expecting a certificate and not received it by mid-December of the examination year please contact the Examinations Officer immediately

If you need replacement copies at a later date you will need to go directly to the awarding bodies to request a replacement at a substantial cost

Refer to [GR 5.14](#)

Internal appeals procedure

The schools Internal Appeals Policy in exams can be found on the school website. (about us – reports & policies)

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

Complaints policy

The schools Complaints Policy in exams can be found on the school website (about us – reports & policies)

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 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.

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

JCQ Information for candidates – on-screen tests

You **must** read this information if you will be taking any externally assessed on-screen tests as part of your qualification(s).

Information for candidates – on-screen 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 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 – 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)

<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.*"

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