CANDIDATE EXAM HANDBOOK

2025/26

This handbook is reviewed and updated annually

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Introduction

Nexus Herts Federation 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)

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**…

Refer to the School's website to view the following centre's policies **Managing Behaviour Policy** (Exams) and/or **Malpractice Policy** (Exams)

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

- *Relevant JCQ information for candidates documents - coursework, non-examination assessments, social media (maybe refer to the location of these if provided as appendices or signpost to where these documents are provided electronically)*
- *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)*
- *When assessments will take place*
- *How candidates are informed about their assessments*
- *Any relevant deadlines that must be met (dependent on the assessment type)*
- *How work is marked/assessed, etc.*
- *When candidates are informed of their centre-assessed marks (also refer to the internal appeals procedure (internal assessment decisions) and requesting a review of the centre-assessed marks)*
- *Which, if any, work is externally marked/assessed, etc.*

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)

Written timetabled exams

- *Candidate statement of entry (to check that personal details and exam entries are correct)*
- *What to do if this information is incorrect*
- *Candidate exam timetable (to ensure candidates know the date and time of all their exams/assessments), and any relevant information regarding seating arrangements, exam rooms, etc.*
- *The JCQ information for candidates documents – written examinations, social media (maybe refer to the location of these if provided as appendices or signpost to where these documents are provided electronically)*
- *Exam room posters – Warning to candidates, Unauthorised items (maybe refer to the location of these if provided as appendices or signpost to where these documents are provided electronically)*

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 (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

Refer to ICE 15

24 June 2026 – National Contingency day for all Schools, in the event of a national disruption to a day of examinations in the summer 2026 examination series.

On-screen tests

(refer to the JCQ information for candidates document– on-screen tests) OR delete this box if not relevant to any candidates in your centre

Refer to 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)

Overnight Supervision Arrangements Policy).

- *JCQ guidance on what constitutes a timetable clash*
- *How a timetable clash within the same session will be managed (where one paper will be taken, followed immediately/after a short, supervised break by the next paper(s) in the same session and the formal examination conditions that will be in place at all times in the exam room)*
- *How a timetable clash over exam sessions will be managed and the centre supervision arrangements that will be put in place, etc.*
- *Provide a definition of 'formal examination conditions' and 'centre supervision'*

Refer to ICE 7

Where you will take your exams

- Exams will take place on the site that you normally attend or unless otherwise instructed.

What time your exams will start and finish

- *Your centre's start times (perhaps explain JCQ awarding body/other awarding body published starting times if relevant here)*
- *Your centre's policy for how long candidates must remain in exam rooms (if different to the JCQ awarding body/other awarding body minimum requirement), etc.*

Supervision during your exams

- *Exams are supervised by a team of invigilators (perhaps indicate if invigilators will be external or internal staff that candidates may know)*
- *Explain invigilators must follow strict rules and regulations when conducting exams as directed by JCQ awarding bodies, etc.*

Exam room conditions

- *How candidates are invited or escorted into the exam room*
- *Explain candidates are under formal examination conditions from the moment they enter the exam room until they are given permission to leave by the invigilator (Provide a definition of 'formal examination conditions')*
- *Candidates must listen to and follow the instructions of the invigilator at all times in the exam room*
- *Candidates must not communicate with or disturb other candidates*
- *What information is displayed in the exam room (centre number, subject title, paper number and the actual starting and finishing times, and date, of each exam)*
- *Any relevant information relating to the completion of the front of their answer books (first name and surname that matches their entry information, candidate number, etc.) and that candidates must only do this when the invigilator's announcement instructs them to*
- *Any relevant information regarding the use of additional answer sheets/answer books, etc.*
- *Candidates must not open the question paper until the exam begins*

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.

You may also want to make reference where/if relevant to your centre's **Leaving the Examination Room Policy**.

Refer to ICE 23

Where you will sit in the exam room

- *How candidates are seated (and/or how the room is set out)*
- *How to find your desk (and what to do if you can't find your desk), etc.*

How your identity is confirmed in the exam room

Candidate Identification Procedure. Refer to ICE 16

What equipment you need to bring to your exams

The Centre will provide the necessary equipment/stationery for the exam.

- *JCQ information regarding authorised equipment that should be brought by the candidate*

Refer to ICE 18

- *What materials and resources are provided by the centre, etc.*

Using calculators

The Centre will provide you with a calculator

Examples

- *You must be aware of JCQ awarding body instructions regarding the use of calculators in your exams*

Refer to ICE 10

What you must <u>not</u> bring into the exam room

Overtype here any relevant information.

Examples

- *JCQ information regarding unauthorised items*
- *What will happen if the regulations are breached, etc.*

Food and drink in exam rooms

- At North Herts ESC, not food allowed in the exam room

Refer to ICE 18

What you should wear for your exams

- Students to dress appropriately as **coats** will **not** be permitted in the exam room.

Where your personal belongings will be stored during your exam

- Personal belongings will be placed in lockers as per a normal school day.

What to do if you arrive late for your exam

- It is important to arrive on time for your exam. In the event that you are late, contact the centre office or Head of Centre to make them aware of the situation. Refer to ICE 21

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

- Contact the centre office or Head of Centre if you are unwell and unable to attend the exam
- Should you be unwell on the day of your exam likewise make your Head of Centre aware so that the necessary arrangements can be put in place.
- Should you become unwell during the exam, immediately inform your Invigilator so that it can be escalated to the Exam Officer
- Provide any relevant information ie. Sick note or any proof that can be submitted to the Exam Board to confirm the absence or acceptable reason for your absence.
- Provide any relevant information regarding application for special consideration, etc. (and the appropriate evidence that may need to be provided to support a request for special consideration)

What happens if you have an unauthorised absence from your exam

- In the event of absence from an Exam, inform the Head of Centre. Candidate will be marked as absent on the Exam Boards register which will affect the overall result of the final grade
  Refer to ICE 22

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

- Refer to centre's emergency evacuation policy/procedure and/or any specific instructions candidates need to be aware of.

Refer to ICE 25

Candidates with access arrangements/reasonable adjustments

- Access arrangements will be discussed and shared with you by SENCO and will form part of your normal way of working in class and will be apply for all of your exams.

Results

- Results Day – **20 August 2026**
- The centre will communicate the time of collection and acknowledgement of arrangements for the day.
- Subject Teachers and SLT will be present to discuss your results.
- In the event results are not collected this will be sent off by post however we encourage all students to be present and to collect their results.

Refer to GR 5.12 and Post-Results Services information

Post-results services

- *What services are available (reviews of results and appeals, access to scripts)*
- *Requests for post-results services must be made through the centre*
- *The centre's* ***Access to Scripts, Reviews of Results and Appeals Procedures***
- *How and when candidates are informed about the deadlines, fees and charges for these services*
- *How and when informed consent/permission is collected, etc.*

Refer to GR 5.13 and Post-Results Services information

Certificates

- Communication will be emailed to all students on when Certificates have been received by the Exam Boards.
- Students are welcomed back to the Centre to receive and sign for their certificates
- In the event, that one cannot collect, a candidate would need to nominate a family member would need to share proof of Identification on collection.
- Certificates to be kept save as the cost of replacement will be for your account.

Refer to GR 5.14

Internal appeals procedure

- *Details of the centre's internal appeals procedure/how candidates are informed of this*
- *The areas covered by the centre's internal appeals procedure*
- *How to appeal*
- *How to request a review of the centre's marking and timescales, etc.*

Refer to GR 5.3z), 5.7 and 5.13

Complaints policy

Overtype here any relevant information on the centre's **Complaints Policy** (Exams). Refer to GR 5.8

APPENDIX 1

JCQ Information for candidates - coursework

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

APPENDIX 2

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

APPENDIX 3

JCQ Information for candidates – on-screen tests

Information for candidates – on-screen 2025-2026 http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents

APPENDIX 4

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

APPENDIX 5

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 (Check for any current update by JCQ)
http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents

APPENDIX 6

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 **mus**t 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

APPENDIX 8

JCQ *Warning to candidate's* 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/

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 Exams Officer.

If there is anything you do not understand, you should ask your Form 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