

**Royal Alexandra
&
Albert School**



**Public Examinations
2010-11**

**A reference guide for students taking
external exams and their parents/guardians**

This guide has been produced for any students and their parents/guardians to provide them with the information they need to take examinations at this Centre. It contains Centre and School procedures as well as Joint Board regulations. Please read it carefully, and make sure you understand all that it contains.

These Instructions are for use in all General and Vocational Qualifications. They apply to written, on-screen examinations and Controlled Tests, as well as practical and oral examinations and timed examinations in Art.

**A reference guide for students taking public exams
and their parents/guardians.**

This booklet contains very important information for all those taking any Public Examination over the next academic year; all pupils who will take any such exam should familiarise themselves with the content of this booklet, to save themselves, or the school, any embarrassment.

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Mock Examinations

Mock examinations are carried out under exactly the same conditions as the real thing for two reasons:

1. As a practice for the real thing, so that students understand what is expected of them.
2. On the very rare occasion that an unforeseen event prevents a student doing the real exam, the Mock paper result can be used – provided it has been sat under the right conditions.

Entering exams

Entries for exams are made in:

GCSE	Early October	for	November Examinations; Modules and English Lang re-sits
GCSE/GCE	Late October	for	January Examinations
GCSE	Late January	for	March Examinations
GCSE	Mid-February	for	May/June Examinations
GCE	Mid-March	for	June GCEs
BTEC	September	for	Beginning of 2yr course

Entries made after the official dates are subject to penalty charges. There are also penalties for late amendments, such as changing tier or withdrawal from an exam. Charges at cost are made for re-sits. Before the actual entry is made, students are asked to check carefully their entries and personal details.

Speaking tests

These are marked by the Exam Board, but carried out and recorded in school under exam conditions.

Coursework and Controlled assessments

Not all subjects now have a coursework element, but any student work assessed by the teachers may also be sent away for external moderation. Deadlines for this material are rigid and failure to present by the teacher's deadline may mean a late or nil result. Remember; BTEC work is continually assessed; there are no written examinations. So all work has to be done well and submitted by the deadlines.

Appendices A to E are the official notices sent by the Joint Boards.

Before written exams

Check you have an up-to-date copy of your timetable. For the summer, this will be issued to you when you have checked your entry, usually before the Easter holiday.

Check you have the right equipment for the exam. One old, black biro is not enough! Only a see-through pencil case is allowed. No bags or coats are allowed into the room, **nor are mobile phones**. Make sure you have read and understood the regulations (**Appendix B and Appendix C**).

Your own calculator is essential - you must be able to operate it properly as no borrowing from other students is allowed in the examination room.

Special Needs and access arrangements

Some students may be entitled to dictionaries, readers, prompts, scribes, extra time, etc. These students will be identified and assessed by the SENCO before the examination period, as the examination Boards need notice, and all medical certificates and other paperwork needs to be in place. As a Centre, we are subject to inspections at any time, and failure to comply with regulations could mean disqualification as a Centre.

If it is felt that additional time or support will be needed, please contact the SENCO; this must be done well in advance of the exam, as some conditions must have Board approval. Arrangements cannot be made on

the day, except in an emergency, for example, in the case of a broken arm.

On the day of the exam

Arrive in good time; be at least 15 minutes early. You may not enter the room, however, until you are asked to do so.

Our exams start to fit in with our School day, so our start times are as close to **8.30am** and **1.30pm** as possible. As you will see, we start earlier than the official start time of 9.00am. Do check the seating plan to a) find where you will be sitting, and b) to remind yourself of your candidate number as you will need this for every exam.

Should your arrival on the day be delayed, there is no reason to panic. As long as you can reach school within an hour of the official starting times (9.00am or 1.30pm), you will be allowed to sit the exam, and may have the full time allowed. Arriving after those times (10.00am, 2.30pm), you may take the exam, but you will be warned that the Board may not accept your paper.

The exam starts from the moment you enter the room, so you should not talk with any other student once you walk through the doors. You may only sit on the pre-arranged seat. During the exam you should sit and face the front the whole time; do not put yourself at risk by looking around, or talking with friends. The signal to put pens down is still not the time to talk; papers must be collected up and checked, so the exam actually finishes when you have left the room. Some students have extra time; you must not disturb them.

Don't waste your time when you think you have finished. Check over your paper carefully and also do make sure you have filled in the front properly. Some papers, especially those with lined booklets to write in, ask you to write in the numbers of the questions you have done so you need to make sure you do this.

In some papers, such as Mathematics, any jottings or calculations are well worth doing in the answer space – even if your answer is wrong, you

might have written something which could give you a mark. Write down facts which will give you marks and look at the number of marks for the question. However, many papers are now marked on-line, so write within the area covered by the thick black lines found in the corners, and do not write in the margin.

Be aware sometimes that unforeseen problems do occur, and exams run over the expected finishing time. If you are being collected from school, please make sure that there is a time interval between the expected finishing time and your collection time, so that you do not have to panic that someone is waiting. Also, ensure you do not have external appointments during an exam time.

After the exam and getting your results

On results day, there will be a 'provisional statement' notice issued by the school as a temporary notice for you to give to Colleges as proof of your results. These should NOT be confused with the Certificate proper, which will be sent out later (see below).

You can call in to collect this slip after 10.00am, phone in, and/or have the slip sent to you at the address shown on the school database. Should you wish the notification to be sent to another address, please remember to leave that address with the School Office. This is important for Year 11s, who will be moving on; results for Year 10s and under can be collected on or after the first day of term.

Sometimes there are problems and delays with some results, and you will be told when to expect them.

Certificates

These usually arrive at school about mid-October. When they have been received from all the Boards, these will be despatched to each individual student, according to the address held on the school database. As they are important life-long documents, they should be stored carefully. Our current practice is to look after any certificates gained in any years prior

to Year 11, and send them with your final year certificates; however, you may collect them beforehand if you wish.

Resits

The school pays for each exam entry; however, there is no limit to resits of Modules (which repeat during the year). Resits will be charged to students or parents/guardians at cost. Occasionally, the final Maths or English Language paper may be re-sat (only in November) which will incur invigilator fees.

BTECs

These have no final examinations and are continually assessed.

Appeals

Coursework appeals procedures

The school is committed to ensuring that whenever its staff assesses students' work for external qualification, this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the specification for the qualification concerned. Assessments should be conducted by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills. Students' work should be produced and authenticated according to the requirements of the examination board. Where a set of work is divided between staff, consistency should be assured by internal moderation and standardisation. If students believe that this may not have happened in relation to his/her work, he/she may make use of this appeals procedure.

Note that appeals may only be made against the process that led to the assessment and not against the actual mark or grade. (See Appendix F).

Appeals after results

There are systems in place for appealing against exam results. Following the publication of results, teachers look at the marks and may decide that the marks are very close to an upper grade. In this case they may put in

an appeal for a check or remark for you. If any cost is involved the school will pay (if the grade is raised there is no cost). If you decide you want to appeal independently then any cost is down to you. There is only a limited time so this has to be done quickly (by mid-September) – although the Boards may take some time to produce a result!

However, whoever puts in an appeal **must** have your permission, so you will be required to sign a form. If you are sent one, fill it in quickly! Although it says ‘grades may go down’, **we** would not expect them to if we make an appeal.

Questions?

If you are still unsure of any of the points raised in this documents, do ask your teacher, Head of Department, Deputy Head or the Exams Officer.

Appendices - Official notices: Published by the Joint Boards **AQA, City & Guilds, CCEA, Edexcel, OCR, WJEC.**

Appendix A **Information for candidates**

Coursework Assessments

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

Before you submit any coursework 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 or lecturer.

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

Using information from published sources (including the internet) as the basis for your coursework is a good way to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of a subject, but 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, pg.29).

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://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/16/sosteacher/history/49766.shtml>), downloaded 12 February 2011.

You must also include a bibliography at the end of your work, which lists the full details of publications you have used in your research, even where these are not directly referred to, for example: Morrison, A. (2000) “Mary, Queen of Scots”, London: Weston Press.

If you copy the words or ideas of others and don’t 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 who will then record the nature of the assistance given to you.

If you worked as part of a group on an assignment, for example, undertaking field research, you must each write up your own account of the assignment. Even if the data you have is the same, the description of how that data 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 for submitting drafts and final pieces of work.

Your teachers are there to guide and assist you — showing them your work as it progresses will allow you and your teacher time 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.

You must always keep your coursework secure and confidential whilst you are preparing it; do not share it with your classmates. If it is stored on the computer network, keep your password secure.

Collect all copies from the printer and destroy those you don't need.

Don't be tempted to use essays from online essay banks — this is cheating. Electronic tools used by awarding bodies can detect this sort of copying.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves taking someone else's words, thoughts or ideas and trying to pass them off as your own. **It 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 are very familiar with work on the topic concerned — they may have read the source you are using (or even marked the essay you have copied from!).

☒ Internet search engines 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.

Penalties for breaking the regulations

If your work is submitted and it is discovered that you have broken the regulations, one of the following penalties will be applied:

☒ the piece of work will be awarded zero marks;

☒ 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.

Your awarding body will decide which penalty is appropriate.

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

Appendix B Information for candidates

For written examinations – effective from 1 September 2010

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

If there is anything you do not understand, especially which calculator you may use, ask your teacher.

A Regulations – Make sure you understand the rules

1 Be on time for all your examinations. If you are late, your work might not be accepted.

2 Do not become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice during the examination.

3 If you try to cheat, or break the rules in any way, you could be disqualified from all your subjects.

4 Only take into the examination room the materials and equipment which are allowed.

5 Do not take into the examination room any unauthorised materials or equipment which might give you an unfair advantage. This includes notes, calculator cases/instruction leaflets, bags, personal TVs/stereos, digital equipment, reading pens, electronic communication/storage devices, including mobile telephones, iPods, MP3/4 players or any other products with text/digital facilities. Any pencil cases taken into the examination 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 penalty and possible disqualification.

6 Do not use correcting pens, fluid or tape, erasable pens, highlighters or gel pens in your answers.

7 Do not talk to or try to communicate with or disturb other candidates once the examination has started.

8 If you leave the examination room unaccompanied by an invigilator before the examination has finished, you will not be allowed to return.

9 Do not borrow anything from another candidate during the examination.

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

1 Know the dates and times of all your examinations.

2 Arrive at least ten minutes before the start of each examination.

3 If you arrive late for an examination, report to the invigilator running the examination.

4 If you arrive more than one hour after the published starting time for the examination, you may not be allowed to take it.

5 Only take into the examination room the pens, pencils, erasers and any other equipment which you need for the examination.

6 You must write 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 Spell-checkers

1 You may use a calculator unless you are told otherwise.

2 If you use a calculator

make sure it works properly; check that the batteries are working properly;

clear anything stored in it;

remove any parts such as cases, lids or covers which have printed instructions or formulas;

do not bring into the examination room any operating instructions or prepared programs.

3 Do not use a dictionary or computer spell checker unless you are told otherwise.

D Instructions during the examination

1 Listen to the invigilator and follow their instructions at all times.

2 Tell the invigilator at once:

if you think you have not been given the right question paper or all of the materials listed on the front of the paper;

if the question paper is incomplete or badly printed.

3 Read carefully and follow the instructions printed on the question paper and/or on the answer booklet.

4 Fill in all the details required on the front of the question paper and/or the answer booklet before you start the examination. Make sure you fill these details in on any additional answer sheets that you use.

5 Remember to write your answers within the designated sections of the answer booklet.

6 Do your rough work on the proper examination stationery. Cross it through and hand it in with your answers. Make sure you add your candidate details to any additional answer sheets that you use.

E Advice and assistance

1 If on the day of the examination 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 examination if:

you have a problem and are in doubt about what you should do;

you do not feel well;

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 examination

1 If you have used more than one answer booklet and/or any loose sheets of paper, place them in the correct order. Remember to fasten them together with a treasury tag before you leave. Make sure you add your candidate details to any additional answer sheets that you use.

2 Do not leave the examination room until told to do so by the invigilator.

3 Do not take from the examination room any examination stationery, (i.e. the question paper, answer booklets used or unused), rough work or any other materials provided for the examination.

Appendix C Warning to Candidates

For examinations effective from 1 September 2010

1. You must be on time for all your examinations.
2. You must not become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice in any part of the examination.
3. You must not:
 - sit an examination in the name of another candidate;
 - have in your possession any unauthorised material or equipment which might give you an unfair advantage.
4. Possession of unauthorised material is breaking the rules, even if you do not intend to use it, and you will be subject to penalty and possible disqualification.
5. You must not talk to, attempt to communicate with or disturb other candidates once you have entered the examination room.
6. You must follow the instructions of the invigilator.
7. If you are in any doubt speak to the invigilator.

Appendix D GCSE and Principal Learning: Controlled Assessments

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

Before you submit any 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 or lecturer.

Controlled Assessment will provide you with 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.

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, but 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, pg.29).

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(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/16/sosteacher/history/49766.shtml>), downloaded 12 February 2010. You may be required to include a bibliography at the end of your work. Your teacher or lecturer will tell you whether a bibliography 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: Morrison, A. (2000) “Mary, Queen of Scots”, London: Weston Press.

If you copy the words or ideas of others and don’t show your sources in references and a bibliography, this will be considered as cheating.

2

Preparing your work – good practice

If you receive help and guidance from someone other than your teacher, you must tell your teacher who will then record the nature of the assistance given to you. If you worked as part of a group on an assignment, for example, undertaking field research, you must each write up your own account of the assignment. Even if the data you have is the same, the description of how that data 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 and assist you — showing them your work as it progresses will allow you and your teacher time 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.

You must always keep your work secure and confidential whilst you are preparing it; do not share it with your classmates. If it is stored on the computer network, keep your password secure. Collect all copies from the printer and destroy those you don't need.

Don't be tempted to use essays from online essay banks — this is cheating. Electronic tools used by awarding bodies can detect this sort of copying.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves taking someone else's words, thoughts or ideas and trying to pass them off as your own. It 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 are very familiar with work on the topic concerned — they may have read the source you are using (or even marked the essay you have copied from!).
- Internet search engines 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.

Penalties for breaking the regulations

If your work is submitted and it is discovered that you have broken the regulations, one of the following penalties will be applied:

- the piece of work will be awarded zero marks;
- 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.

Your awarding body will decide which penalty is appropriate.

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

Appendix E Coursework appeals procedures

1. Appeals should be made as soon as possible, and must be made at least two weeks before the end of the last externally assessed paper in the examinations series.
2. Appeals should be made in writing to the examinations officer who will investigate the appeal. If the examinations officer was directly involved in the assessment in question, he/she will appoint another member of staff of similar or greater seniority to conduct the investigation. Likewise if the examination officer is not able to conduct the investigation for any other reason.
3. The person conducting the investigation will decide whether the process used for the internal assessment conformed to the requirements of the awarding body and examination code of practice of the QCA. This will be done before the end of the series.
4. The result of the appeal will be made known in writing to the parties concerned, together with any correspondence with the awarding body, any changes made to the assessment of the piece of work in question and any changes made for the future.
5. A written record of the appeal will be kept and made available to the awarding body at their request. Should the appeal bring any significant irregularity to light, the awarding body will be informed.

After work has been assessed internally it is moderated by the awarding body to ensure consistency between centres. Such moderation frequently changes the marks awarded for internally assessed work. That is outside the control of the school and is not covered by this procedure. Details of the appeals procedure for the relevant awarding body are available from the examination officer.

Mobile Phones

NO MOBILE PHONES, IPODS, MP3/4 PLAYERS. NO PRODUCTS WITH AN ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION/STORAGE DEVICE OR DIGITAL FACILITY.

Possession of unauthorised items is an infringement of the regulations and could result in

DISQUALIFICATION

from the current examination and the overall qualification. Candidates are advised that mobile phones in particular **must not** be in their possession whether switched on or not.

Glossary

Abbreviation	Title	Explanation
BTEC		Vocational Qualification
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator	Co-ordinates Special Educational Needs matters.
AQA	Assessment and Qualifications Alliance	Exam Board
CCEA	Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment	Advisory Board
OCR	Oxford Cambridge and RSA	Exam Board
WJEC	Welsh Joint Education Committee	Exam Board
QCDA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority	Approves Qualifications
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education	Level 1 & 2 Qualification
GCE	'A' Level	Level 3 Qualification
ELC	Entry Level Certificate	Below Level 1 Qualification