

Exams Guide for Candidates

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Introduction

This guide has been designed to inform you about exam procedures, to answer some of the most frequently asked questions, and to guide candidates, parents, carers and guardians through the exam process at Barking & Dagenham College.

On exam days it is best to contact Reception on 02080903020 and leave a message as the main focus will be starting the exams on time.

Please look at the following webpage regarding information from the Joint Council for Qualification that candidates must read and understand so that they will comply with all the current examination regulations. Any breach of these regulations can be classed as malpractice.

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents/>

Exams Team contact details

If you have any questions, exam related queries or need to contact the Exams Team for any reason, you can do so on the below.

Email: exams@bdc.ac.uk

Phone: 02080903020 ext 7078

Definitions

Special consideration

A post-examination adjustment that compensates candidates who were suffering from a temporary illness or condition or who were otherwise disadvantaged at the time of the exam.

Joint Council for Qualifications (referred to as JCQ in this document)

The regulatory body for examinations and assessments

Awarding Body

An exam board which sets exams and awards qualifications such as GCSEs.

Formal examination conditions

The environment created by following the JCQ and Awarding Body regulations. This means candidates must not talk to, attempt to communicate with or disturb other candidates once they have entered the exam room. The room becomes designated for exam taking only.

Centre supervision

A member of centre staff, or an invigilator, will always be in the same room as the candidates

What is 'Malpractice'?

Malpractice is the term that JCQ and Awarding Bodies use for any irregularity or breach of regulations. The Exams Team is required to, and will, report any breach to the appropriate Awarding Body and they will decide on what action to take based on the nature of the breach. Some breaches carry automatic loss of marks as a minimum penalty such as having a mobile phone on your person and leaving the exam room without a member of staff. The JCQ take the integrity of exams very seriously and it is important that candidates listen carefully to the invigilator's instructions.

The Awarding Body can take various actions such as awarding 0 marks for a single paper, disqualifying a candidate from all papers/units sat for a qualification and can go as far as barring the candidate from entering exams for a set period of time. Awarding Bodies are also able to share malpractice information with each other meaning that one malpractice incident with one Awarding Body can impact qualifications and exams with another.

Examples of what the JCQ and Awarding Bodies consider malpractice are:

- a breach of the instructions or advice of an invigilator, supervisor, or the awarding body in relation to the examination or assessment rules and regulations;
- bringing into the examination room or assessment situation unauthorised material, for example: notes, study guides and personal organisers, own blank paper, calculators (when prohibited), dictionaries (when prohibited), watches, instruments which can capture a digital image, electronic dictionaries (when prohibited), translators, wordlists, glossaries, iPods, mobile phones, MP3/4 players, pagers, or other similar electronic devices;
- copying from another candidate;
- use of AI in a controlled assessment, coursework, non-examination assessments or the contents of a portfolio
- disruptive behaviour in the examination room or during an assessment session (including the use of offensive language);
- exchanging, obtaining, receiving, passing on information (or the attempt to) which could be assessment related by means of talking, electronic, written or non-verbal communication;
- making a false declaration of authenticity in relation to the authorship of controlled assessment, coursework, non-examination assessment or the contents of a portfolio;

- Impersonation: pretending to be someone else, arranging for another person to take one's place in an examination or an assessment;

Coursework/Controlled Assessments

Some qualifications have internal assessments which must be completed and marked, and the results and work sent to the Awarding Body, before formal exams take place. The College sets deadlines that allow time for this process and these deadlines cannot be changed. Candidates who do not meet the coursework or controlled assessments deadlines or requirements will not be allocated a mark for this part of their course and their overall grade will suffer. They may also not be eligible for special consideration for the formal exams should they be ill as they will not have completed all of the requirements of the qualification.

Sometimes a candidate will not agree with the internal assessment's marks awarded by the course tutor. If this cannot be resolved by discussion between the tutor and candidate concerned, the candidate may appeal to the Quality Team who will put into action the agreed appeal process. This will be the final stage in the normal process of considering and resolving disputes. It is expected that it will be used only in exceptional circumstances. The appeals procedure can be obtained by contacting the Quality Team.

Candidate examination entries

When the entries have been submitted and accepted by the Awarding body, candidates will receive an email which will include their individual exam timetable. This details the subjects they have been entered for along with the dates, time and rooms for the exams.

This should be checked thoroughly and the candidate must inform their tutor or the Exams Team if there are any errors or problems with the subjects/tiers or any error regarding personal details e.g. name spelt incorrectly.

Some practical and online exams take place all year round and candidates are notified of those exam dates and time by their tutor as and when they are made available.

Contingency days

Contingency days are agreed by the JCQ and the Awarding Bodies and are designed to be used in the event of national or significant local disruption to examinations. For example, they may be used in the event of a nationwide lockdown, mass strikes impacting transport or extreme weather conditions. Candidates should make themselves available for these dates should examinations be moved. Dates are available on the College website.

Can candidates take holiday during exam time?

Dates for exams are fixed by the Awarding Bodies and are subject to change until the final timetable is confirmed; usually two months before the exam series begins. Some exams take place once a year and missing an exam would mean failing the course or waiting a year to resit the exam. Due to this, we would advise against booking holidays during term time.

What happens if a candidate has more than one exam at a time?

If a candidate is timetabled to sit two or more exams at the same time, this is a 'clash'. If the exams exceed three hours (including breaks) in a morning or afternoon session then the College will endeavour to move the starting time (to another time on the same day) to allow for a longer break between exams. Candidates must be under staff supervision until the scheduled time of the exam is

completed. Regardless, candidates sitting two or more exams in one session will have a minimum of a 15-minute supervised break between exams.

In very rare cases, more than five and a half hours of exams will be scheduled on one day and it may be necessary for a paper to be taken the next day. In this case, there is a requirement that the candidate is supervised overnight. This is essential to avoid compromising the integrity of the exams and needs to be organised well in advance.

If an exam is delayed from a morning to an afternoon session (or vice versa), the candidates will be supervised in isolation. They should bring some revision or reading material and their lunch and a drink.

They will not have any access to electronic media (mobile phone, etc). Even attempting to communicate with other learners (who are not under the same supervision) will result in disqualification from that paper.

Where will exams be held?

The College uses multiple rooms to run exams and the room will vary depending on the type of exam that the candidate is taking. The tutor or the Exams Team will notify the candidate of the room before the exam. We advise candidates to arrive 15 minutes before the start of the exam to be able to locate the room and be seated to enable to exam to start on time.

How are candidates supervised during exams?

Internal invigilators will supervise candidates under the direct management of the Exams and Assessments Manager. Once candidates enter the exam room, they must be supervised and follow the invigilators instructions at all times. The invigilators are experienced in exams procedures and are subject to rigorous training.

Behaviour expected during exams

All candidates are emailed a copy of the 'Notice to Candidates', which is produced by JCQ and the Awarding Bodies. This gives general guidelines for how candidates should conduct themselves in the exam.

Barking & Dagenham College, the JCQ and the Awarding Bodies take breaches of the exam rules and regulations very seriously.

Any activity that may distract, disturb or upset other candidates will not be tolerated.

The Exams Team, Invigilators and the Senior Management Team have the power to remove disruptive candidates from the exam room.

Candidates are asked to wait quietly outside the exam room and to enter and leave in silence. This avoids disturbance to other candidates, helps to maintain a calm atmosphere for those students who may be nervous about their exams and is a requirement under the JCQ regulations.

Candidates who try to communicate with other candidates once inside the exam room, or who create a disturbance will be asked to leave and will be reported to the Awarding Body. This may result in the candidates being disqualified from that paper and a mark of 0 being awarded.

What can candidates expect on the day of an exam?

When candidates arrive to the exam room they will be greeted by the invigilator and asked to quietly wait outside the exam room while other candidates arrive. The invigilator will read instructions outside of the exam room before they let candidates into the room. These will include;

- asking that mobile phones are switched off and placed in bags along with any other prohibited items
- informing candidates that once they enter the exam room they are under exam conditions and can no longer communicate with other candidates
- where the designated area for belongings is located.

When candidates enter the room, they will place their belongings in the designated area and go to the sign in desk at the front of the room. Here candidates will show the invigilator their ID card (the side showing their full name), they will mark them present and will tell the candidates their desk number.

When candidates locate their desk, they must check that details on the information sheet on the desk are correct. If not, candidates must go back to the invigilator. Candidates must only sit at the desk that has been assigned by the invigilator.

Once all candidates are seated, the invigilator will announce the exam formally, and candidates will be cautioned that they are subject to the exam regulations. Any instructions or erratum notices will be read out. Exam papers will be distributed and candidates will be warned that they are not to open the exam papers until told to do so. Candidates will be asked to complete their details on the front of their answer booklet. The invigilator will begin the exam.

If candidates have any issues during the exam, such as a pen running out, needing a tissue or to go to the toilet, they should raise their hand to attract the attention of the invigilator. The invigilator is not able to help with any questions regarding the exam paper itself.

The invigilator will announce the end of the exam and candidates will be asked to stop writing and remain seated until all papers are collected and counted. The invigilator will instruct candidates to collect their belongings and leave the exam room section by section. Candidates are still under exam conditions and must remain silent until they have left the exam room.

What happens if a candidate cannot find their desk/name in the exam room?

Occasionally, a candidate's desk number is not where it should be or they are not able to find themselves on the attendance register outside the exam room. There are a number of possible reasons for this and candidates will be asked to wait for a few moments whilst the Exams Officer investigates.

Every effort is made to keep these problems to a minimum and will not impact any candidates chance of taking an exam for which they have been entered for.

How is a candidate's identity confirmed in the exam room?

Candidates are required to show the invigilator their College ID card that displays their full name and photograph. If a candidate forgets their ID, they are required to go to reception and collect a day pass.

If for any reason reception is unmanned and the candidate is unable to obtain a day pass, the invigilator will accept another form of photo ID if the tutor is present and can also confirm the identity of the candidate.

What do candidates do if they finish early?

Candidates should use all of the available time of their exam and spend any time at the end checking their answers. After the first hour, candidates may raise their hand to attract the invigilators attention and ask to leave. The invigilator will collect the candidate's paper and the candidate will be asked to collect their belongings and leave the room in silence.

Candidates who leave the exam room before the first hour unsupervised, would be considered as having committed malpractice by JCQ and this would be reported to the appropriate Awarding Body.

Candidates being able to leave the exam room early is at the invigilators discretion and may not always be possible if this will cause disruption to other candidates.

What equipment should candidates bring to written exams?

Candidates should bring to every exam:

- Two black pens
- A pencil
- A ruler
- A rubber
- Maths equipment (protractor and compass)
- Calculator

All of this equipment should be kept in a clear pencil case.

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that they bring the correct equipment to their exams.

Can candidates use pencil to write their answers? What happens if they do?

All answers must be written in black pen and pencil may be used for graphs and drawings only. Awarding Bodies scan exam papers and copies are sent to examiners for marking. Text written in anything other than black pen may not show clearly once scanned and the examiner may not be able read the answers.

Can candidates use highlighters or coloured pens in their answers?

No. Coloured pens and highlighters may be used to highlight parts of the question and pieces of text but cannot be used in the answer itself.

Can candidates have extra paper if the space provided is not enough for them to answer a question?

Yes. Candidates can raise their hand and ask for an additional answer booklet. They must write their details from their candidate slip on the booklet and clearly indicate the question that they are answering. At the end of the exam, this must be placed inside the answer booklet and handed to the invigilator.

Can candidates use additional paper for rough work?

Candidates may use scrap paper for online exams. This cannot be taken out of the exam room and must be handed to the invigilator at the end of the exam.

For paper based exams, paper for rough work cannot be provided as this would be against the JCQ regulations. All rough work and workings out must be completed in the answer booklet. Candidates should neatly cross through any rough work with a single line, as it will be forwarded to the examiner.

Can candidates leave the room with the exam paper?

No. The exam paper must be handed in to the invigilator and cannot be taken out of the exam room by a candidate under any circumstances. Even if a candidate feels that they did not do their best and that they will not get the grade they desire, the paper must be collected by the invigilator and submitted to the Awarding Body for marking.

What are the regulations governing the use of calculators?

Calculators are allowed in exams unless the exam paper and specification state that they are not.

For some subject papers, especially Maths, explicitly prohibit the use of calculators. Candidates must not have on them, or attempt to use, any form of calculator for those exams. The invigilators will communicate this at the start of the exam.

The use, or attempted use, of any calculator (unless listed as equipment for the exam) will be regarded as malpractice.

The JCQ regulations on calculators can be found below.

Calculators must be:

- Of a size suitable for use on the desk
- Either battery or solar powered
- Free of lids, cases and covers which have printed instructions or formulae

Calculators must not:

- Be designed or adapted to offer any of these facilities:
 - Language translators
 - Symbolic algebra manipulation
 - Symbolic differentiation or integration
 - Communication with other machines or the internet
- Be borrowed from another candidate during an examination for any reason
- Have retrievable information stored in them. This includes:
 - Databanks
 - Dictionaries
 - Mathematical formulae
 - Text

The candidate is responsible for the following:

- The calculators power supply
- The calculators working condition
- Clearing anything stored in the calculator

What should candidates NOT bring with them?

Some items are **strictly banned** from exams and should be left in the designated area. They cannot be brought to the candidate's desk under any circumstances. The Awarding Bodies consider possession of these items in an exam as malpractice, and the most likely outcome would be disqualification from that paper. These items are:

- Mobile Phone
- Watches (of any kind)
- Personal CD/MP3/Ipod/Airpods/Any other earphones
- Potential technological/web enabled course of information

The regulations state that mobile phones and watches must be left in the designated area and cannot be on the candidate's person.

This applies to all examinations and assessments that take place at the College. Any student found to have a phone or watch, even if they are/do not intend to use it, will be reported to the appropriate Awarding Body. Should this happen, the candidate will be disqualified from that paper and possibly from other exams.

It is a very serious offence and our advice is that watches and phones should not be brought to exams. The College cannot take responsibility for their security and items are brought at the candidates own risk.

The following items are prohibited and must be handed in before the start of an exam in addition to any mobile or data storage devices. The College cannot be responsible for the security of these while the exam is in progress.

- Tippex, correction fluids, tape or erasable pens. Candidates should cross through work they do not want marked with a single line.
- Gel pens
- Notes, papers and textbooks are only allowed in certain exams (candidates will be informed by tutors in advance if this is the case)
- No drinks, food items or chewing gum. Water is allowed in a clear bottle.

Can candidates keep their mobile phones on their person if they have an emergency and are expecting a call?

Candidates are not allowed a mobile phone on their persons or in their reach under any circumstances. In this scenario, candidates should inform the invigilator of the situation before the exam begins and they will advise accordingly.

Can candidates bring food and drink into the exam room?

Candidates may bring water in a clear bottle; labels must be removed. Reusable bottles that are not clear are not permitted as they do not meet the JCQ requirements. During the exam, we would recommend the bottle being placed under the desk to reduce the risk of spillage.

Candidates should ensure that they have something to eat and drink before each exam, and that they have been to the toilet.

Candidates who do need to use the toilet during the exam will be escorted by a member of staff to the closet facilities. Candidates should note that amount of time spent outside of the exam room will be lost.

Food is not permitted in the exam room except for medical reasons. This must be discussed and agreed with the learning support team before the exam series begins. Any food brought to the exam room must be free from packaging and in a clear container.

What should candidates wear for the exam?

We would recommend that candidates wear comfortable and appropriate clothing. As exams are taken onsite and during College hours, the College's usual dress code applies. Candidates will be required to leave coats in the designated area.

In exceptional circumstances, such as broken heating during the autumn exam series, candidates may be permitted to wear coats in the exam room. The invigilator will ask the learner to show that their pockets are empty and that they have nothing on their person. If the candidate removes their coat during the exam, the invigilator will place it in the designated area.

What happens if a candidate is running late?

If a candidate is late, they should call Reception immediately. Depending on the examination, it may still be possible for the candidate to sit the exam. The College must follow the Awarding Body and JCQ regulations and candidates are not able to sit the exam an hour after the awarding bodies published start time for that exam.

For example, a candidate arriving after 10am for a 9am exam would be considered very late by the Awarding Body and would not be able to sit the exam. The Awarding Body would not award the candidate any marks for that paper as they have not been supervised and may have been able to communicate with other candidates prior to entering the exam room.

What should a candidate do if they are unwell at the time of one of their exams?

Candidates must have certified evidence of illness from a medical professional. They will advise as to whether the candidate is fit to sit the exam. If the candidate takes the paper despite being unwell, the medical professional should give the candidate a letter, which the College can forward onto the Awarding Body asking for special consideration on the grounds of illness.

If the candidate is unable, through illness, to sit a paper, the Awarding Body may, after examining the letter and any evidence of performance on other papers, decide to award a grade. It is essential that the candidate visits a medical professional on the day of the exam or previously. Retrospective information is not accepted and any letters must be forwarded to the Exams Team without delay as there is a tight deadline to submit the application.

Any illness, or family circumstances, which may impact exam performance, arising shortly before or during the exams, should be notified as soon as possible to the Exams Team so that special consideration can be applied for. Candidates should be aware that any adjustment is minimal and that no feedback from the Awarding Body is provided.

If a candidate feels unwell during an exam, they should inform the invigilator who will advise them accordingly.

What should a candidate do if they have a minor injury at the time of an exam?

Any injury which may impact exam performance, arising shortly before or during the exams, should be notified as soon as possible to the Exams Team so that special consideration can be applied for. Candidates should be aware that any adjustment is minimal and that no feedback from the Awarding Body is provided.

If a candidate suffers an injury that affects their ability to write then they must inform the Exams Team immediately. The College will then arrange for the candidate to be moved to an alternative room and a scribe will be provided.

What happens if a candidate does not turn up for an exam?

Absent candidates who are not able to present a doctor's note or a satisfactory reason for a request for special consideration, will receive a grade based only on those elements of the exams which have been sat and marked.

What do candidates do if the fire alarm sounds?

In the event of the fire alarm sounding, the below procedure will be followed.

- Candidates will be told to stop writing and close their exam paper
- Invigilators will advise the next course of action
- Candidates will be escorted in silence and taken to the closest fire point. Candidates will still be under exam conditions
- Once it is deemed safe to return to the exam room, candidates will be escorted back in
- The exam will restart and the time lost will be added to the end of the exam
- If it is not possible to return to the exam room, the Awarding Body will be notified and they will advise the next course of action.

What should a candidate do if they have access arrangements?

Some candidates are entitled to access arrangements for their exams. This is assessed, agreed and approved with the SENCo, Learning Support Team and Awarding Body before the exam takes place.

If the candidate is required to be in a separate room for their access arrangement, this will be communicated before the date of the exam. Some access arrangements, such as extra time, will be accommodated in the main exam room.

All agreed access arrangements are added to the seating plan and register in the invigilators exam pack so they are aware of the arrangements. Candidates can check with the invigilator if they are unsure their access arrangement is in place. If the arrangement is not on the seating plan/register, the Exams Team will liaise with the Learning Support Team to confirm if the arrangement has been agreed and approved by the Awarding Body.

Only access arrangements approved by the Awarding Body are able to be put in place on the day of an exam.

When do candidates get their results?

Results will be sent to candidate's College email address' from 9am on the national results days. Candidates are not required to come to College to collect their results. We would advise candidates check their email address prior to the day to ensure they can login.

What can candidates do if their results are substantially different to what they expected?

It must be remembered that exams can only measure performance on the day and that candidates can do better or worse than anticipated for a variety of reasons.

If there are serious ground for concern about a result then the College can request a Post Results Service from the appropriate Awarding Body. Details of the procedures and the fees involved are available from the Exams Team and are available on the College website. The process should be started as soon as possible after consultation with the Head of Department concerned. The final date for submission to the Awarding Bodies is within three weeks after results are issued

When will candidates receive their certificates?

The Awarding Bodies issue certificates well after the exams have taken place (usually at the end of October for summer exams). Certificates are posted to the candidate's home address once they have been processed by the Exams Team.

We advise candidates that have moved home address during the academic year to ensure their address has been updated with the Admissions Team at the front of the College.

What should candidates do if their certificates have not arrived or if they have lost them?

If certificates have not arrived or have been lost, contact the Exams Team. The Exams Team are able to request replacement certificates from the Awarding Body up to a year after the certificate was issued. After this, the Exams Team will provide the candidate with the relevant information to request the certificate directly from the Awarding Body themselves.

