Manchester Academy

CANDIDATE EXAM HANDBOOK

2026/27

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Introduction

Manchester Academy 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 inform candidates about:

- malpractice in examinations/assessments.
- the use of their personal data and copyright.
- all relevant information about their exams and assessments in advance of any exams/assessments being taken.
- any exams-related policies/procedures that they need to be made aware of.
- the appeals process.

Malpractice

Malpractice rules exist so that no student is at more of an advantage during exams.

- Every student in the country must follow the same rules.
- Regulations are in place to maintain the integrity of qualifications.
- Malpractice means any act or practice which is in breach of the rules.
- Any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice will be investigated and reported to the relevant awarding body/bodies.
- Students have the instructions for conducting examinations read to them at the start of their PPEs so they are familiar with them prior to the summer exam period.
- 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.

Full information can be found here: http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents

Things not to bring into an exam:

- Phones, earbuds, watches, headphones, iPods, any other smart devices etc.
- Revision notes.
- Bottles or pencil cases which have labels and/or are not transparent.
- Food or drinks other than water - unless permitted for medical reasons.

Things not to do in an exam venue:

- Communicate verbally or non-verbally with, distract or disturb any other student.
- Get up from your pre-allocated seat without permission from the invigilation staff.
- Open the exam materials before the start time or continue working after the end time.

Things not to do on online:

- Buy/ask for/share exam content.
- Pass on rumours of what is in exams.
- Share your work.
- Work with others so that your coursework is not your own independent work.
- Use AI in relation to any examined coursework - unless told otherwise by your teacher.

Awarding bodies may, at their discretion, impose the following sanctions against candidates:

- Warning.
- Loss of marks for a section/component/unit.
- Disqualification from a unit/qualification.

Personal data

- The awarding bodies use information about you to deliver the examinations and assessments which you have entered.
- The awarding bodies also use some of the information about you for equality monitoring and other statistical analysis.
- The awarding bodies may share information about your results with official bodies such as the Department for Education and the examinations regulators (e.g. Ofqual in England) and also relevant local authorities and the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS).
- An awarding body may also use information about you to investigate cheating and other examination malpractice and will share information about malpractice with other awarding bodies.

Copyright

- The copyright of any form of work created by a candidate that is submitted to an awarding body for assessment (referred to as Assessment Materials) belongs to the candidate.

- By submitting this work, a candidate is granting the awarding body a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to use their assessment materials (referred to as Assessment Licence).
- If a candidate wishes to terminate the awarding body's rights for anything other than assessing his/her work, the awarding body must be notified by the centre and it is at the discretion of the awarding body whether or not to terminate such rights.

Use of Your Exam Work

- **Student materials** include anything you submit for assessment, such as written work, audio or video recordings, computer programs, and data.
- **You keep the copyright** to any work you create and submit for assessment.
- By submitting your work, you give the awarding organisation permission to use it as needed to run exams and qualifications.

How your work may be used

Your work may be used for essential qualification activities, including:

- Marking and moderation
- Standardisation of marking
- Awarding grades and qualifications
- Quality assurance and malpractice detection
- Improving assessment processes, including the use of automated and AI-supported systems
- These uses are a required part of the assessment process, and **you cannot opt out of them**.

Other ways your work may be used:

The awarding organisation may also use your work for:

- Training teachers and examiners
- Examiner reports and assessment publications
- Research related to assessments and qualifications
- If your work is used for these purposes, **all personal details will be removed so you cannot be identified**.

Your right to opt out:

- You can choose **not** to allow your work to be used for the additional purposes listed above (training, publications, and research).
- To do this, tell your school or college, and they will notify the awarding organisation.
- Please note that opting out **does not affect** the awarding organisation's right to use your work for essential assessment and qualification activities.

Contingency sessions - Summer 2027

This is one or more days that students must be available for, after the GCSE season has ended, in the event of any national disruptions to exams:

- The awarding bodies have designated **Wednesday 23 June 2027** as the 'contingency day' for examinations.
- Do not book any travel or other arrangements until after this date

Timetable clashes

Occasionally exam timetable clashes occur which is when two exams are scheduled at the same time. This can happen because different awarding bodies each have their own timetable.

- You will sit one of your exams at the expected start time, then have a short, supervised break for you to sit your second examination right after where possible.
- All the usual exams rules will apply, and you will have no access to your phone. You will need to remain with an invigilator/staff member until all exams have been sat.
- Do not worry if you have a timetable clash. We will make a plan and inform you on when you will sit each exam involved in the clash.

Exams start and finish times

Exams all over the country have the same official morning and afternoon start times:

- The morning start time is **9:00** and the afternoon start time is **13:00.**
- You will be expected to remain in the exam room until the end of the exam.
- It is essential that you are on time for school and get your registration mark at **8:30.**
- If you arrive late to your exam, admission to the exam is entirely at the discretion of school.
- You will be considered *very late* if you arrive an hour after the official start time, admission into the exam may not be granted, and the exam board may not accept your work.

Supervision during your exams

- Your exams will be supervised by a team of external invigilators trained to follow strict rules and regulations when conducting exams.
- You must follow all of the invigilators' instructions and treat them with the same respect that you would a member of internal Manchester Academy staff, always following the MA way.

Personal items

- You must wear full school uniform to all exams.
- All other coats, bags and personal items must be left in the Faith Room before going to your exam venue.
- We recommend that you leave any items that are very precious to you at home and do not bring them into school.

Using the toilet during your exams

- You should avoid using the toilet during your exams, where possible.
- If you need the toilet, you must raise your hand and wait silently for an invigilator.
- It is at the discretion of the invigilator if you are allowed to have a toilet break at that time and they will escort you.
- Toilet breaks will be granted if the student has medical need and toilet pass or if it is an emergency situation.
- Toilet breaks are not permitted in the first 30 minutes or last 30 minutes of an exam.
- You will not receive extra time to complete your exam due to a toilet break.

Access arrangements

Access arrangements are additional support that you may have to help you complete your exam successfully, such as:

- Use of a word processor (laptop), reader pen or bilingual dictionary
- Extra time (+25%)
- Supervised rest breaks
- Alternative rooming
- Prompter or scribe

Access arrangements are granted based upon assessment from an external JCQ registered assessor and must be a students' normal way of working. Your child can speak to the SENCO (Mrs Stead) or HLTA (Ms Fox) if they have any questions about access arrangements.

Exam room conditions

It is really important that you understand how to enter, remain in and exit the exam room for all of your exams:

- You must enter and leave the exam room in silence, when instructed.
- You will be under formal exam conditions from the moment you enter the exam room until you the moment you leave. This means you may not communicate with anybody, except for the invigilators, in the exam room – even when walking to your seat.

- The examination halls will be set out with candidate numbers and photographs on each desk. Please familiarise yourself with your seat number before entering the exam room.
- You will be provided with basic stationary.
- You are not allowed to open your question paper until you are instructed to do so.
- You will hand your exam papers to the invigilators when the exam has finished, and must not take any exam materials out of the exam venue.
- You will leave all stationary tidily on your desk.

Posters at the entrance to each exam venue will remind you of these rules.

Illness on the day of your exam

- If you are unwell on the day of exams, you must let us know as soon as possible.
- If you feel unwell during the examination, you must let the invigilators know.
- We may be able to apply for special consideration to reflect your illness at the time of exam, however it is likely medical documentation will be required as evidence of the illness e.g. a hospital letter.

Unauthorised absence

- If you have an unauthorised absence from an exam, you may be charged the exam fee.
- Persistent absentees will be addressed by SLT.

Results

- You will be invited into school on **Thursday 20th August 2027** to collect your provisional results.
- You will be invited into school in November to collect your official certificates as this is after the deadline for enquiries about the results.
- It is important you attend results day so we can support the transition to your next stage of education.
- If you cannot attend results day in person, please contact the Exams Officer (Mrs Lyne Bennett/Miss Nasir) who will advise what you need to do next in regard to giving permission to someone else to collect your results.

Post-results services

Depending on the circumstance, we will provide post results services such as review of marking, access to scripts and remarks.

- Remarks are requested through school.

- Remarks are suggested for students whose result is very close to the next grade boundary.
- Remarks of your exams is not always guaranteed, and SLT will decide whether it is advisable. This is because often students return a lower grade as a result of remarking.

Internal appeals

- You will have the opportunity to appeal an internal grade if you feel that the correct procedures have not been followed.
- You will be given an appeals from which you must complete and return to SLT.
- This process can take up to 10 days.
- Manchester Academy's full internal procedures can be found on the school website.

Please speak to SLT if you would like more information about appeals.

Complaints

- You may make a complaint regarding our delivery or administration of a qualification.
- Complaints may be based on: teaching and learning; access arrangements; early/late entry/withdrawal from a qualification; conducting exams.
- Please speak to SLT if you would like more information about complaints.

Appendices: JCQ information

On your exam day

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

Before sitting your exams, ensure you know:

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

What you will need:

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

Contingency sessions:

- ☐ There are contingency sessions within the Summer 2026 exam timetable on the morning and afternoon of 24 June 2026. Make sure you are available on 24 June 2026.

What you cannot take into your exams:

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



Other important information:

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

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

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

Information for candidates
AI (Artificial Intelligence and assessments)

What is AI?

AI stands for artificial intelligence and can be used to create text, images, videos, music and artwork based on instructions given to an AI tool.

What is an AI tool?

AI tools are applications, such as ChatGPT, Snapchat My AI, Google and Google translate. There are many more!*

*The list of certain suppliers of AI-related products is for information purposes only and does not constitute an endorsement by JCQ and awarding bodies. It is each centre's responsibility to investigate and verify any suppliers they use, including any terms and conditions which govern the sale or use of the supplier's products. The list provided is not exhaustive.

When can I use AI?

- Your teachers may use it in class when teaching the course, but remember teaching in the classroom is not an exam!
- There are some assessments where you can use AI – your teachers will tell you if you can or cannot use an AI tool.
- Remember, the rules are different for different assessments and subjects, so always check with your teachers first!
- When an AI tool is allowed, **you must acknowledge**** the AI tools and the material produced by the AI tool that you have used in your work. If you do not acknowledge AI use, it will be **considered as cheating**.

When can I not use an AI tool?

- AI tools cannot be used in an exam or any other assessment where exam rules apply.
- This is what exam boards call **AI misuse and is a form of cheating.**

**Acknowledgment – When producing a piece of work, if you use the same wording as a published source, you must place quotation marks around the passage and state where it came from. This is known as referencing. You must make sure that you give detailed references for everything in your work which is not in your own words, for example, *ChatGPT 3.5 (https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/), 25/01/2025.*

IF YOU USE AN AI TOOL, YOU CANNOT GET MARKS FOR WHAT THE AI TOOL HAS PRODUCED, AS IT IS NOT YOUR OWN WORK

If I'm allowed to use AI, how is this breaking the rules?

- AI misuse is when you use an AI tool in an exam or assessment where you are not allowed to; and/or
- Where you use an AI tool to create work and then say it's your own.

How to make sure you don't misuse AI

DECLARE

- Remember to sign your declaration form when handing in your work for final assessment.
- Your signature on the declaration form tells your teacher and the exam board that you are saying all the work you're handing in is your own.
- If you have used an AI tool, **you must declare***** that you have used it before signing the declaration form!

***Declare** – this means that when you submit your work for marking, the awarding body will normally require you to sign an authentication statement confirming that you have read and followed the regulations.

ACKNOWLEDGE

If you are allowed to use an AI tool in your assessment (remember to check!), you must do the following:

- reference the AI tool you have used
- give the date of when the AI tool generated the content
- give details of how you used it.
- save screenshots of what you have asked or instructed the AI tool to do and what answer the AI gave you, and include this with the work submitted.

LAST CHECKS — Know the rules — Check with your teachers — ACKNOWLEDGE and DECLARE

EFFECTIVE FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2025

Guidance for parents, carers and students about access arrangements

WHAT ARE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS?

- Access arrangements allow students with specific needs, such as special educational needs or disabilities, to access an exam.
- They allow students to show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the exam.

HOW WILL THE PROCESS START?

- Parents and carers should let the SENCo know as soon as possible if their child has additional needs. Good and open communication is important.
- Students in further education should record their additional needs on the college's enrolment form.
- The SENCo will work with teachers and the student to identify possible arrangements.
- Various access arrangements are available. For example, support for students who have difficulties with reading, writing, speed of working or concentration.
- Not all students with additional needs will require access arrangements. This depends on whether their difficulty affects their access to exams. Additional needs or a diagnosis alone do not entitle a student to access arrangements.

WHO WILL MAKE THE ASSESSMENT?

- If a student has learning difficulties, the school or college's appointed assessor must conduct the assessment to determine the need for access arrangements, such as 25% extra time.
- If an external assessor diagnoses a learning difficulty (for example, dyslexia or dyscalculia), the assessment can only be used as evidence for access arrangements if the assessor has liaised with the school or college and received the necessary access arrangements paperwork in advance of the assessment taking place.
- Specialists (for example, a medical consultant or a psychiatrist) are responsible for providing a formal diagnosis. They are **not** responsible for decisions about access arrangements.
- The school or college must decide which access arrangements a student has for their exams.
- Teachers must give evidence to show that an access arrangement is needed. The school or college will record how effective the arrangement is in the classroom, in internal tests or in mock exams.

WHAT ELSE NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- The school or college will have to apply for some arrangements.
- If a student has complex needs, a school or college can discuss their needs with the exam board.

FINALLY

Schools and colleges **must** follow the rules. They are inspected and if they are found to be breaking the rules, this will be malpractice.

If you have any questions about access arrangements, please speak to the school, college or SENCo.

Information for candidates
Using social media and examinations/assessments

While we like to share our experiences online, when it comes to exams and other assessments, we have to be careful.

- Sharing ideas online can be helpful when you're studying or revising
- However, sharing certain information (see information on the right) can break the rules and could affect your results
- If you're not sure what you can and can't discuss online, check with your teacher
- If you receive exam content on social media, you must tell your teacher
- Don't be caught out by scammers selling fake exam papers



Things to do on social media:

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

Things not to do on social media:

- Buy/ask for/share exam or assessment content
- Pass on rumours of what's in exams or assessments
- Share your work
- Work with others so that your assessment is not your own independent work

If you do any of the above activities, you may:

- Receive a written warning
- Lose marks
- Be disqualified from a part of or all of your qualifications
- Be banned from taking exams and assessments for a number of years

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the JCQ rules:

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