



Examinations Handbook

Information for students and parents/carers

2025/26

*You can **lose marks** or even **face disqualification** if you don't follow the advice contained here.*

*Please **always ask** if you don't understand something.*

Introduction

We want you to understand the examination process, and be confident about what will happen during your external 'public' examinations and also your college exams.

This handbook contains everything we think you need to know, and you should therefore read it carefully. You should show it to your parents/carers so that they are also aware of the examination regulations and procedures.

If you have any questions that are not covered, please ask. We can then give you the answer and we will also think about including it in the handbook in future years.

Students, you can see the Examinations team in college – they are based near Costa in MB1.9.

Parents/students, you can contact the exams team via email – exams@asfc.ac.uk

Documents that are referenced in this handbook are available to students on Canvas.

Privacy policies

Your data (for example your name, date of birth etc.) will be transferred to the exam boards for the purpose of delivering their qualifications, and for other administrative reasons as necessary.

You can read the **JCQ Information for candidates – Privacy Notice** if you want to understand more about how your data is handled by the JCQ exam boards:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/privacy-policy-2/>

Information contained in this handbook reflects JCQ regulations and expectations in documents contained here, which you should understand clearly before sitting JCQ examinations:

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

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Exam entries – personal details

Every time you view a timetable, you should check that your personal details are correct. Timetables can be found on your CEDAR profile – menu bar.

Your data was checked with you when you enrolled at College. However, if there are any changes needed you must see the Examinations team as soon as possible for further advice. If your name is incorrect on your timetable you will be asked to bring your passport or birth certificate into college to prove your correct name.

The exam boards charge to update names once they are printed on your final certificates, and you will be liable for these charges if you did not correct them when you had the opportunity.

Timetables – external public exams

External public exams (including controlled assessments, external assessments and set tasks) take place at various times across the college year – a calendar can be found on Canvas and exam schedules are posted outside the Exams Office.

Some exam timetables (mainly A levels, BTECs and GCSEs) are produced in generic format (i.e. not personalised for individual students) in advance of the exam period. For other qualifications (e.g. NCFE/Cache and Criminology) the exam periods when students will need to be available are also confirmed. These dates can be found on Canvas and the College website.

Personalised timetables will be posted on individual student profiles on CEDAR in advance of each set of exams. Read your timetable carefully so that you know the date, time, room and seat number for each of your exams.

Both students and parents/carers can access this information.

Contingency days

The exam boards always set aside a number of contingency days for A level, GCSE and BTEC students. This year they are:

- Wednesday, 24th June – ALL DAY

Even if you don't have exams on this day or your timetabled exams finish before the last date, you are asked to remain available in case the exam boards need to put their contingency plans into action.

Timetables – college Mocks

Generic versions of these exam schedules are published on Canvas and the College website.

Personalised copies can be found on personal CEDAR profiles in exactly the same way as for external exams, prior to the examination period.

All these exams will be run as close to public exam conditions as possible to give students the opportunity to practise arrangements which might differ slightly to their experience at their previous school.

Speaking tests

Information about trial speaking tests will be provided by your language teacher.

Your public exam speaking test is an important part of your overall grade. It is a formal exam and therefore subject to the same rules as the written exams that take place in May / June.

The date and time of your test will not be printed on your personalised timetable, so you must check with your teacher.

You must not swap appointments with other students as the exam boards have strict rules about the order in which tests must take place.

You must not have your watch, phone or any web-enabled device with you during your test, even if switched off.

It is essential that you do not disturb tests that have already started.

A missed test will be mean a zero mark, unless you are ill and follow the illness procedure.

Speaking test illness procedure

Because we use external examiners for our speaking tests, missed tests cannot be rescheduled and will be mean a zero mark.

Serious illness

If you are genuinely too ill to attend on the day of your test, a parent must phone college by 8.15am when further advice can be given. You are likely to be asked to provide a Doctor's note or to come to college to demonstrate that you are too ill to take the test.

Art exam

Your A level Art exam is an important part of your overall grade. The dates and times given to you for your exam cannot be moved without discussion with your teacher.

Coursework / NEA (non-examination assessment)

Your coursework / NEA marks are an important part of your overall grade.

The exam boards have very strict rules about how this is prepared, and to avoid the risk of malpractice, you should make sure you understand the rules and abide by them, including the correct use of AI tools/software (i.e. Chatbot). Your teacher will be able to explain the rules and clarify anything that is unclear.

There is advice produced by the exam boards: **JCQ Information for Candidates** which can be found on Canvas.

You must not share any aspect of your work online or through social media and the exam boards also provide guidance on that in the document **JCQ Information for Candidates (using social media)** also on Canvas.

If you do not abide by the rules you risk losing marks or being disqualified, so please inform yourself and keep yourself safe.

Marks for coursework / NEA (non-examination assessment)

Your work is marked and standardised in college before being submitted to the exam boards.

You will be told your NEA mark(s) by your subject teacher(s) in the first instance. A summary of all your marks will then be issued to you by email **on Tue 5th May (for Art - Thu 14th May)**.

If you are concerned about the accuracy of your mark you **must** see your teacher **in person**. They will be able to respond to your concerns, and explain the reasons for your mark to you.

If, **after** speaking to your teacher, you remain concerned, you may decide to request a review of marking, **by 4pm on Mon 11th May** at the latest **(for Art – 4pm on Wed 20th May)**.

To request a review of marking you should email the relevant Head of Department from your **college email account**. You must not email from a personal address and someone else cannot email on your behalf (e.g. parent or carer). Your request should include a short statement which explains why you think your mark is inaccurate. It is not enough to say that you are disappointed with your mark, or that you feel it isn't fair, without providing additional supporting information.

Please think carefully because the result of a review of marking could be that your mark stays the same, your mark goes up or your mark goes down. This could affect your overall grade in either a positive or negative way.

Requests for reviews received after the relevant dates cannot be considered.

The ASFC policy '*Review of Marking of Non-Exam Assessments*', which explains things in more detail, is available from the exams office on request. You may also request a copy of the college complaints procedure from reception.

You should note that all NEA marks are moderated by the exam boards before they publish the results in August, and therefore might change before you receive your final grade.

Exam clashes

More than one exam in a morning or afternoon is called a clash. In some cases, you will take one exam straight after the other, as detailed on your timetable.

You must not leave the exam room without supervision at the end of the first exam as this will mean you cannot take the second exam.

In some circumstances, one of your exams will be moved from morning to afternoon (or vice versa). If this is the case, there will be a line on your timetable explaining the change. Read this carefully so that you know what to expect.

You will be supervised between your exams and will not be allowed to use any web-enabled devices (phone, iPad, smart watch, computer etc.). During this time, you cannot have contact with other students, except those who are being supervised along with you; nor with teachers. You will need to bring a packed lunch as you won't be able to buy your lunch at college that day.

Ensure you bring some revision to occupy you while you are being supervised.

If you don't understand your clash instructions, please speak to a member of the Examinations team well in advance of the day.

Where you will take your exams

The majority of exams will take place in the Sports Hall. We also regularly use MB2.15 (Library IT centre) and MB3.14 (Lecture Theatre).

Other rooms across college are used as needed. Read your timetable carefully as you may be in a different room to your friends.

Timekeeping and punctuality

Students are advised to **be in college for 8.00am for a morning exam or 12.30pm for an afternoon exam**. This is to allow for difficulties on the journey to college and to avoid students being late for an exam.

A full range of food is available for purchase at this time and students can spend time preparing themselves for the exam they are about to take.

Students must be **outside their exam room by 8.45am or 1.15pm** in order for the exams to start on time at 9.00am or 1.30pm, respectively.

If you arrive to the room later than advised above, you may be refused entry to the exam. Students **MUST** take responsibility for their arrival on time. Excuses such as 'my bus was late' or 'there was traffic' are unacceptable as the majority of students set out with enough time to overcome issues like this.

Please bear in mind that if the exam starts without you, **you may be refused entry to the exam**. If you are admitted, the Exam Board **may refuse to accept your work**.

Invigilators

All exams are supervised by a team of experienced specialist invigilators.

They are there to see that the exam runs smoothly and that all students get the opportunity to do their best. **If there is something that is bothering you during the exam, please let an invigilator know and they will do their best to help.**

All our invigilators follow strict rules laid down by JCQ. They must take action if they see anybody breaking a rule, so listen carefully to what they say and ask if you are unsure of anything at all.

If you have any questions about the invigilators, please speak to a member of the Exams team.

Exam conditions

You are under exam conditions from the moment you enter the exam room and must not communicate with other candidates in any way from this point on. This includes non-verbal communication. You must also not behave in a disruptive or disrespectful manner.

You may only speak to the invigilators.

Once seated you should face the front at all times and ensure that you look only at your own work. To avoid any misunderstanding, do not look toward students in the desks on either side of you or behind you, even if you have finished the exam.

You must not touch your question paper until you are told to do so. You must follow the instructions of the invigilators at all times.

You remain under exam conditions until you have left the room at the end of the exam.

Where you will sit in the exam room

Your individual timetable contains details about your seat number.

Seating lists will be posted outside the exams office in case you have forgotten your seat number. If you are unsure of your seat, please check the Exams Office board before going to your exam room.

Once in the room, there will be a yellow desk card showing your name and photo to confirm it is your place. If someone is in your seat, tell an invigilator.

How your identity is confirmed in the exam room

Within the first 30 minutes of the exam, the invigilators will carry out a silent identity check as they patrol the room. This is a regulatory requirement.

To do this they need to be able to see the photo on your desk card so please do not cover it with your question paper, answer book or pencil case.

If you have covered your card, they may need to briefly lift the obstruction, but this will only take a few seconds and you should not be concerned.

If you regularly wear a full face-covering, please see a member of the Exams team to discuss verifying your identity.

What equipment you need to bring to your exams / assessments

You should consider the equipment needed for each of your exams. Bring it in a completely see through pencil case or bag (no patterns or coloured tints are allowed).

As a minimum:

- Black biros (2-3 is advisable in case one runs out) (they must not be erasable ink)
- Pencils (2 is advisable in case one breaks)
- Eraser
- Ruler (ensure this is a basic ruler without formulae or times tables on it)
- Highlighters (2-3 should be sufficient)
- Calculator (*without* a lid). Not permitted in some exams / assessments so check with your teacher if necessary. Always read the resource list on the front of your question paper.
- Compasses and a protractor

SPECIAL NOTE: Known candidates with confirmed diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes MUST bring their monitoring device/equipment with them to every exam AND this device MUST be handed in to the lead invigilator. This may include a mobile phone, which should be in aeroplane mode and be on or near your desk, depending on need.

Extras which may be needed:

Everything you need for the exam should be placed on your desk when you sit down. Once the exam has started you must not be reaching in to your pockets without the permission of an invigilator.

No other equipment should be brought in (for example whiteout, glue sticks, gel pens), as not only are they useless in an exam, they also make your pencil case over-full. This makes it difficult for the invigilators to check the contents at a glance and if they need to pick your pencil case up to check it, you, or other people around you, may be disturbed.

The invigilators are authorised to remove equipment if necessary.

A small supply of basic equipment is available in every exam room, but it is absolutely for emergencies only. Please don't arrive without your equipment expecting it to be provided for you as we do not hold enough equipment to do this.

Calculators

Where calculators are permitted, it is your responsibility to ensure it complies with exam board rules, is of a suitable size and has sufficient battery life. Consider replacing the batteries before your first exam / assessment, and bringing a spare calculator in case of problems. Please refer to Calculator requirements on JCQ website for acceptable models/makes.

Calculators must not offer any of these facilities:

- Language translators
- Symbolic algebra manipulation
- Symbolic differentiation or integration
- Communication with any other machines or the internet

They must not:

- Have a lid, case or instructions
- Be borrowed from another candidate during the exam / assessment

- Have retrievable information stored in them (databanks, dictionaries, formulae, text)

You are responsible for:

- Its power supply
- Its working condition
- Clearing anything stored in the calculator before the exam start

Calculators may be subject to spot checks before you enter the exam room or while you are waiting for the exam to begin.

Drinks etc.

Only water in a completely clear, non-tinted, re-sealable container of a suitable size (up to 500ml) is allowed in the exam room. Sports caps are preferred to screw tops. You must remove bottle labels.

Bottles containing anything other than water, that are not completely see through, with labels/logos on or that are over 500ml will be taken away from you. This includes reusable bottles which must not have any lettering, patterns or markings on them.

Chewing gum and sweets are not allowed under any circumstances.

What you should not bring into the exam room

Unauthorised material is taken very seriously by the Exam Boards and must not be with you in either a written exam, art exam, a speaking test, or onscreen exam. This includes:

- Mobile phones
- Any other web-enabled devices (smart watches or glasses, iPods, tablets, etc.)
- Any electronic storage equipment
- Ear buds, ear pods etc.
- A watch of any kind
- Subject notes
- Calculator lids, cases and/or instruction leaflets
- Bags and coats (only normal indoor clothing is allowed)
- Blotting paper
- Tissues in packets or folded tissues

The consequences of having unauthorised material with you in an exam can be extremely serious, including disqualification under terms of malpractice.

Watches

You are **not allowed to have a watch of any kind** with you in the exam room.

Invigilators have to remove and report any watches, and this could lead to a penalty being imposed on you by the exam board. You will always be given the opportunity to turn in your unauthorised material (like a watch) at the time of the invigilator announcements before the assessment has begun. This is the last opportunity without penalty.

All our exam venues have large clocks so that you always know what the time is.

At the start of every exam

When you enter the exam room you will usually find a question paper, and sometimes a separate answer book on your desk.

Do not touch these, turn any pages or write anything until you are told you may.

While you are waiting for everyone else to sit down, you can look to see that you have been given the correct question paper and that you have everything you need. You can also check the time allowed and begin reading the instructions carefully.

When the invigilator begins the announcements, give them your full attention as all the information is designed to help you.

During every exam

Once the exam has started, ensure you use the answer book and any continuation booklets according to the instructions. Never write outside the designated area as your work may not be seen by the examiner.

It is your responsibility to produce legible handwriting.

Number your questions as you go along, especially if you are using a continuation booklet.

Do any rough work in your answer book and then neatly cross through it. It is not necessary to obliterate it. You are not allowed extra paper for rough working – only ask for it if you have run out of space for your answers.

Do not make notes on your hands or arms during the exam as this may be misunderstood as notes you have brought into the room with you. Do not come into

the room with any marks on your hands or arms as your exam may be interrupted for us to check that the marks are not an attempt to cheat.

Do not graffiti your answer book as the exam board may decide to reduce your marks or disqualify you from the exam.

Toilet breaks

Toilet breaks are for emergencies only.

If you need to go to the toilet, attract an invigilator's attention as soon as possible.

They will need to call for someone to supervise and you will have to wait for that person to arrive before you can leave the room.

Toilet breaks are not allowed close to the end of an exam as the invigilators need to focus on their responsibilities.

You are not permitted any extra time at the end of an exam as a result of taking a toilet break, and that is why it is sensible to go to the toilet beforehand, and drink in moderation during an exam.

At the end of every exam / assessment

When the invigilator tells you to stop writing you must do so straight away. You must not attempt to finish a question or a sentence and should immediately close your answer book and put your pen down. Only when you are told, you may finish filling in your candidate details on any continuation booklets.

Help to speed up the collection process by holding up your completed answer books (and any other materials as instructed) for collection.

Remain in absolute silence as you leave, and until you are well away from the room. Respect the fact that there may still be others working, sometimes in different rooms. If you are in the Sports Hall your belongings will be stored in the GH building during your exams. Please be mindful that classes are ongoing in the GH building, and noise should be kept to a minimum.

Keep yourself safe by not commenting on the exam you have just taken either on the internet or through social media.

What you should wear for your exams and your appearance

Only normal indoor clothing should be worn. You will not be allowed to enter the venue wearing outdoor coats or jackets, padded body warmers, hats, scarves or gloves. The Examinations Manager's decision is final and no debate will be entered into on the day.

Only religious and culturally significant head wear is allowed and students can check in advance with a member of the Exams team if they are unsure what is allowed.

Wear layers on cold days in case the venue is cooler than you prefer.

Personal belongings

Try not to bring any valuable items, including mobile phones and smart watches, to college on an exam day. **Items removed from candidates within exam venues but before assessments commence, are secured in named bags and taken to MB Reception to be collected by candidates after the examination.**

Sports Hall

If you do bring a coat, bag and/or valuables leave them in the GH Building storage room near the Sports Hall entrance. This room will be locked during the exam.

Other rooms

If you bring a coat, bag and/or valuables to any other room you may bring them into the room and leave them where indicated by the invigilator. Please be aware that this puts you at risk if you have not properly turned your phone and/or smart watch off. Please think very carefully about this – students are caught every year with their phones not switched off and we have to report them to the exam board.

College takes no responsibility for items stored in the changing rooms, or left in bags and coats.

What to do if you arrive late for an exam / assessment

Please set out in plenty of time to reach college on an exam day, but if you are unavoidably late, ring college on **0161 330 2330**.

Be clear about the fact that you have an exam. Do not leave a voicemail message as this may not be listened to quickly enough. One of our receptionists will log your call and explain what you should do next.

Most importantly though, when you arrive at college you must go to the Exams Office and not straight to the exam venue.

What to do if you are unwell on the day of an exam / assessment

If you feel slightly unwell on an exam day, but well enough to take the exam, come to college as normal. Speak to a member of the Exams team if you need any advice.

If you feel too ill to take the exam you should either get a Doctor's note (dated that day) or travel to college to be assessed by our staff. Report to main reception and ask to see a member of the Exams team.

Public exams will never be rescheduled, so it is important that you follow the guidance (above) so that we can give you the very best advice and support.

If you are taken ill at college before or during any exam then let a member of staff know immediately.

Special consideration

If you are ill or feel that your performance during an exam has been compromised in any way, for any reason, please see your Senior Tutor, who will engage with the Exams Department, regarding your situation, as you may be entitled to applying for Special Consideration. The Exams Manager will provide further information and guidance. Applications for special consideration must be made by students from their personal college exam accounts. Applications from parent or teachers will not be accepted.

The Examination Board may be able to take your circumstances into account, through the special consideration system, but only if you follow the guidance. Out of fairness to all students, we cannot deal with any issues that are brought to our attention after the deadline that has been published.

What happens if there is a fire alarm?

If the fire alarm sounds during an exam, remain silent, stop work straight away and listen to the instructions that the invigilator will give you.

If an evacuation is necessary, you must maintain exam conditions at all times. You must not communicate with other students at all and if you do so we will have to report you and it is likely that the Exam Board will disqualify you from that exam.

Once the emergency is over, the exam will start again and the end time will be adjusted so that you have exactly the right total time for the exam.

Exam Access Arrangements (EAs)

If you have qualified for an EAA, you will be aware via the IL Department.

Students with an access arrangement that alters their end time are usually seated in one of our designated EAA rooms. However, this may vary and is dependent on a number of operational factors.

If in doubt at all about any aspect of your arrangements, see the Examinations team.

If you arrive at an examination and do not have an access arrangement that you think you should have, please advise the invigilator, who will contact Exams to investigate.

Malpractice

You should be aware that college is obliged to notify an awarding body of any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice. This applies to coursework and NEA as well as exams.

Malpractice means doing something wrong whether intentionally or otherwise.

Keep yourself safe by taking the rules seriously.

Results

Public exam results will be issued via email to students' college email address:

- A level /L3 BTECs / NCFE-Cache / T- Levels – **Thursday 13th August 2026**
- GCSE / L2 BTECs – **Thursday 20th August 2026**

Results are also published on Cedar for parents/carers on the following working day.

On results day, and the days immediately afterwards, staff will be in college to advise you further.

For your information, the awarding bodies maintain a comprehensive archive record of candidates' examination results. The purpose is to provide an audit trail of the results certificated and to maintain an accurate record of an individual's achievement.

Post-results services

If you are disappointed with your public exam results, there are a number of options offered by the exam boards.

You will receive information on your results slip which will direct you to Canvas. After the main results period in the summer, information will also be posted on the college website. In summary you may ask for:

- A review of marking – if you feel a marking error may have been made
- A copy of your exam script – to see what you wrote and what mark it was given

There is a cost for these services.

Examinations staff and senior members of the teaching staff will be in college on and after results days and can give you more advice and guidance.

Certificates

Certificates for all qualifications that completed in the summer will be available to collect the following January. Students who aren't able to collect their own certificates can nominate a relative to pick them up on their behalf. More information will be sent to private email addresses that we have on record and publicised through social media.

Certificates from GCSE English and Maths re-sits taken in November will be available at the start of the summer term for students in post 19 Higher Education. GCSE certificates for first or second year students will be retained and handed out to students with other qualifying certificates at the time they are leaving college.

Lost certificates cannot be replaced by College, so please check them carefully and keep them somewhere safe when you receive them. Replacement certificates can, however, be ordered and purchased directly from relevant exam boards for a fee.

Contingency plans

In the highly unlikely event that the public examinations are ever cancelled we will collect all the necessary information to produce Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) as an alternative, following all relevant Government, Ofqual and examination board guidance at the time.

According to current guidelines, we would use evidence already collected in the following assessments:

- Mock 2 exams (December)
- Mock 3 exams (March)
- Other evidence from Formal Assessment Points (FAPs) as required

More information will be given to students and sent home if the TAG procedure becomes relevant.

As part of the normal feedback process after each of these assessments, we tell students their marks and the grade indicated by their work. However, Ofqual have asked us to make it clear that grades from these assessments will not have been quality assured by the examination board nor matched to whatever the TAG criteria may be. It is therefore vitally important to highlight that any grade achieved in these assessments is **NOT** a TAG and is not a prediction of what the TAG would be in the highly unlikely event that the exams are cancelled and the TAG system is put in place.

If you are unsure about anything contained in this handbook,

please go to the Examinations Office and speak to a member of the Exams team. They are here to help!