Examination Handbook for Candidates & Parents/Carers

2026 - 27

"The Journey is Everything"

Odyssey House School **Wokingham**	Child-Centric Excellence Ownership Nurturing Innovation Agility

Introduction

This handbook provides candidates and their parents/carers with a summary of the important information relating to examinations and non-examination assessments (NEAs).

Our aim is to ensure that every candidate:

- understands what is expected of them;
- is properly prepared for examinations and assessments;
- knows the rules that must be followed;
- understands where to seek help or clarification; and
- has the best possible opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Candidates should read this handbook carefully and parents/carers are encouraged to discuss the information with their child.

This handbook is not a school policy and has solely been designed to provide a summary of the requirements and regulations issued by the Joint Council for Qualifications. Care and attention has been taken in the creation of this handbook to ensure that it is up to date and relevant to the present 2026 – 27 academic year.

In any event the procedures and guidelines issued by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) will be followed.

Candidates and Parents/Carers are encouraged to review the following as necessary:

- Information for candidates – Joint Council for Qualifications
- Instructions for Conducting Exams (ICE) – Joint Council for Qualifications

Important Contacts

Head of Centre: Tristan Powell

Curriculum & Assessment: Cameron Reily

SENCO / Access Arrangements Contact: Tamsin Butcher

Examinations Officer: Sian Twyman

If you are unsure about an examination or assessment rule, ask a member of staff before acting.

It is much easier to clarify a rule beforehand than to deal with a possible breach of examination or assessment regulations afterwards.

The following appendices are at end of this document and are made reference to within the document itself.

Appendix 1: Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Information & Posters

- Social Media
- AI (Artificial Intelligence)
- Unauthorised Items
- Warning to Candidates

Appendix 2: Student Declaration

Appendix 3: Student Consent for Script Access

Part A: Written Examinations

Information for candidates – Written exams – Joint Council for Qualifications

1. Before the Examination

Candidates will be provided with details of their examination arrangements, including:

- examination dates;
- starting times;
- examination rooms;
- seating arrangements, where appropriate;
- any approved access arrangements.

Candidates should check this information carefully and immediately inform a member of staff if they believe anything is incorrect. Parents/carers can support candidates by ensuring they are aware of their examination timetable and arrive at school in good time.

2. Attendance and Punctuality

Candidates are expected to attend every examination for which they have been entered.

Candidates should arrive at the location specified by the school in sufficient time to be registered and prepared for the examination.

If a candidate believes they may be late, they or their parent/carer should **contact the school immediately** and follow the instructions provided.

Candidates should not assume that arriving late means they cannot sit the examination. The school will determine what action is appropriate in accordance with awarding body and JCQ regulations.

3. Examination Room Expectations

Candidates must follow all instructions given by examination staff and invigilators.

Once under examination conditions, candidates must:

- remain silent and not communicate with other candidates or behave in a way that disturbs other candidates
- sit in their allocated place;
- listen carefully to instructions and follow invigilator instructions;
- only use permitted materials and equipment; and

The JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations set the standards and procedures centres must follow to ensure examinations are conducted securely and consistently. Any breach of these expectations may be considered malpractice.

Candidates should also see the JCQ produced posters (*see Appendix 1c & 1d*).

4. Equipment

The school will provide all candidates with the necessary equipment that they require for each exam.

Candidates must not use correction pens, erasable pens or other equipment where this is prohibited by examination regulations.

5. Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices

Candidates must follow the specific instructions provided by the school and examination staff before entering the examination room. This includes the current examination regulations concerning mobile phones and other electronic or communication devices.

Candidates should pay particular attention to instructions relating to unauthorised items such as:

- mobile phones;
- smart watches;
- watches;
- headphones or earbuds;
- internet-enabled devices; and
- other communication or electronic equipment.

Where a candidate has an agreed access arrangement an electronic device can be permitted (i.e. I-Pod) and the school will communicate the requirements relating to this.

Possession of prohibited items during an examination could be treated as malpractice and handled in line with JCQ Guidance and may result in a penalty.

Candidates should also see the JCQ produced posters (*see Appendix 1c & 1d*).

6. Food and Drink

Drinking water is provided to candidates by the school in a clear see-through bottle with no label in line with JCQ Guidance. Food is not permitted within the examination room.

Any medical requirements should be discussed with the school in advance.

7. During the Examination

Candidates should:

1. listen carefully to all instructions;
2. check that they have the correct examination paper;
3. complete the required candidate details on the front cover when instructed to do so;
4. read the instructions on the examination paper carefully;
5. manage their time appropriately;
6. raise their hand if they require assistance;
7. stop writing immediately when instructed; and
8. always remain under examination conditions until instructed otherwise.

Invigilators can help with examination procedures but cannot explain questions or give candidates help with their answers.

8. Illness, Injury or Unexpected Circumstances

If a candidate is ill, injured or experiences another serious circumstance that could affect an examination or assessment, the school should be informed **as soon as possible**.

Parents/carers should contact the school even if they are unsure whether the circumstances are relevant.

The school will consider whether any appropriate arrangements or applications are available under the relevant regulations.

9. Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments

Some candidates may be entitled to approved access arrangements or reasonable adjustments.
These might include, where appropriate and where formally approved:

- extra time, supervised rest breaks;
- a reader or computer reader;
- a scribe or use of a word processor;
- modified papers; or alternative room arrangements.

Access arrangements are not simply awarded on request. They must meet the relevant eligibility requirements and, where applicable, represent the candidate's normal way of working.

Candidates and parents/carers should speak to the appropriate member of staff if they have questions about arrangements.

Part B: Non-Examination Assessments

Non-examination assessments – Joint Council for Qualifications

A **Non-Examination Assessment (NEA)** is an assessment that does not meet the regulatory definition of a formal examination. NEAs are used to assess subject-specific knowledge and skills that may not be appropriately assessed through a timed written examination.

Depending on the subject, this might include; practical work, projects, investigations etc.

The precise arrangements vary between qualifications and subjects.

For students at OHS Wokingham this has relevance to the following:

- ASDAN Key Skills & Personal Development
- AQA Unit Awards
- Level 1 Introductory BTECs in Sport, Public Services, Land-Based Studies, Art & Design and Digital Media
- Level 1 / 2 BTEC in Home Cooking

1. The Candidate's Responsibilities

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that the work submitted for assessment is their own.

Candidates should:

- follow their teacher's instructions;
- understand the requirements of the task;
- meet deadlines;
- keep their work safe and secure;
- acknowledge sources appropriately;
- complete work under the required level of supervision;
- tell their teacher about assistance received where required; and
- complete any required authentication declaration.

JCQ's candidate guidance emphasises that candidates must keep their work secure, must not allow others to copy it, and must ensure that submitted assessment work is their own.

Candidates should also follow the guidance in reference to Social Media (*see Appendix 1a*).

2. Help from Teachers and Other People

Teachers will explain what candidates are required to do and may provide guidance in accordance with the rules for a particular assessment. However, there are restrictions on how much assistance can be provided once an assessed task has begun.

Candidates must not ask another person to complete, rewrite improve any assessed work on their behalf.

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3. Malpractice Malpractice – Joint Council for Qualifications

Malpractice is any action that could undermine the integrity of any examination or assessment.

Examples (not exhaustive) can include:

- cheating including plagiarism;
- copying another candidate's work or allowing another candidate to copy your work;
- submitting work completed by another person including submitting AI-generated material improperly;
- communicating during an examination and/or possessing prohibited materials or devices;
- accessing unauthorised information; or
- failing to follow examination or assessment regulations.

Suspected malpractice may have to be reported to the relevant awarding organisation.

Consequences can be serious and may include loss of marks or other sanctions determined by the awarding organisation.

Candidates should also see the JCQ produced posters (*see Appendix 1c & 1d*).

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4. Research and Referencing

Candidates may be asked to undertake independent research.

Where sources are used, candidates must follow instructions about acknowledging and referencing them appropriately. Sources might include books, websites, online resources and other published materials. Copying material and presenting it as the candidate's own work is not acceptable and may be plagiarism.

There are several definitions of plagiarism, but they all have in common the idea of taking someone else's intellectual effort and presenting it as one's own.

The JCQ *Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures* define plagiarism as:

> *"unacknowledged copying from or reproduction of, third party sources or incomplete referencing (including the internet and AI tools)."*

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5. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Candidates must be especially careful when using artificial intelligence tools.
AI-generated material must **not be submitted as though it is the candidate's own independent work**.
Candidates must follow:

- their teacher's instructions;
- the requirements of the qualification;
- school policy;
- awarding body requirements; and
- current JCQ regulations and guidance.

For assessments completed on or after **1 September 2026**, awarding organisations have introduced updated

candidate and assessor authentication declarations with strengthened wording relating to the use of AI in NEA.

If in doubt, candidates should ask their teacher before using AI for any assessed work.

Candidates should also follow the guidance in reference to AI (*see Appendix 1b*).

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6. Keeping Assessment Work Secure

Candidates have a responsibility to protect their assessment work.
They should:

- keep passwords secure;
- store electronic work safely;
- collect printed copies;
- not share assessment work with other candidates;
- not post assessment work on social media;
- retain appropriate backup copies where permitted; and
- inform a teacher promptly if work is lost or damaged.

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7. Deadlines

Candidates must meet the deadlines set by their teachers.
Deadlines are important because teachers and examination staff may need time to:

- mark work;
- internally standardise marking;
- submit marks;
- provide samples to awarding organisations; and
- complete administrative requirements.

A candidate is experiencing difficulties meeting a deadline, must speak to their teacher **as early as possible**.

Part C: Results and Post-Results Procedures

1. Examination Results

The school will inform candidates and parents/carers about:

- when results will be available;
- where and how results can be collected or accessed;
- arrangements for candidates who cannot attend; and
- who to contact about questions or concerns.

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2. Reviews and Appeals

Following publication of results, post-results services may be available depending on the qualification and circumstances.
These can include services relating to the review of marking or moderation and access to examination scripts.
There may be:

- application deadlines;
- fees;
- candidate consent requirements; and
- specific eligibility conditions.

Candidates and Parents/Carers should contact the school before requesting any service.

For internally assessed work, contact the school regarding the procedures relating to the review of any internal assessment decisions before marks are submitted to the awarding organisation.

Part D: Supporting Candidates

1. How Parents and Carers Can Help

Parents/carers make an important contribution by:

- helping their child organise their revision;
- encouraging good attendance;
- ensuring examination dates are known;
- supporting regular sleep and healthy routines;
- ensuring their child arrives punctually;
- encouraging them to meet NEA deadlines;
- providing a suitable environment for independent study where possible;
- encouraging them to ask staff for help when unsure; and
- contacting the school promptly if illness or other circumstances may affect an assessment.

2. Candidate Checklist

Before examinations

☐ I know when and where my examinations are taking place.
☐ I know what equipment I need.
☐ I understand my access arrangements, if applicable.
☐ I know what items are prohibited.
☐ I know what to do if I am ill or late.

For non-examination assessments

☐ I understand the task and deadline.
☐ I have acknowledged sources appropriately.
☐ I have completed any required authentication declaration.
☐ The work I submit is my own.
☐ I have followed rules concerning AI.
☐ I have kept my work safe and secure.

Part E: Qualification Process at OHS Wokingham

GCSEs & Functional Skills Level 1 & 2	Externally set paper examinations. Externally marked.
BTECs	Internally set assignment briefs using Pearson Edexcel approved material. Internally marked by the course leader. Internally moderated & verified by another course leader and Cameron Reilly Externally moderated & verified
Entry Level Qualifications	Externally set paper examinations. Internally marked. Externally moderated.
ASDAN	Internal production of a portfolio related to specific ASDAN modules and internally quality assured. Externally moderated upon request.
AQA Unit Awards	Internally quality assured by staff and verified by Cameron Reilly. Externally moderated upon request.

Further Information

Awarding Body Candidate Privacy

Awarding bodies may use the Student Materials to evaluate candidates' performance in the relevant assessment. They may also use Student Materials for other purposes as outlined in their privacy policies and in accordance with their terms.

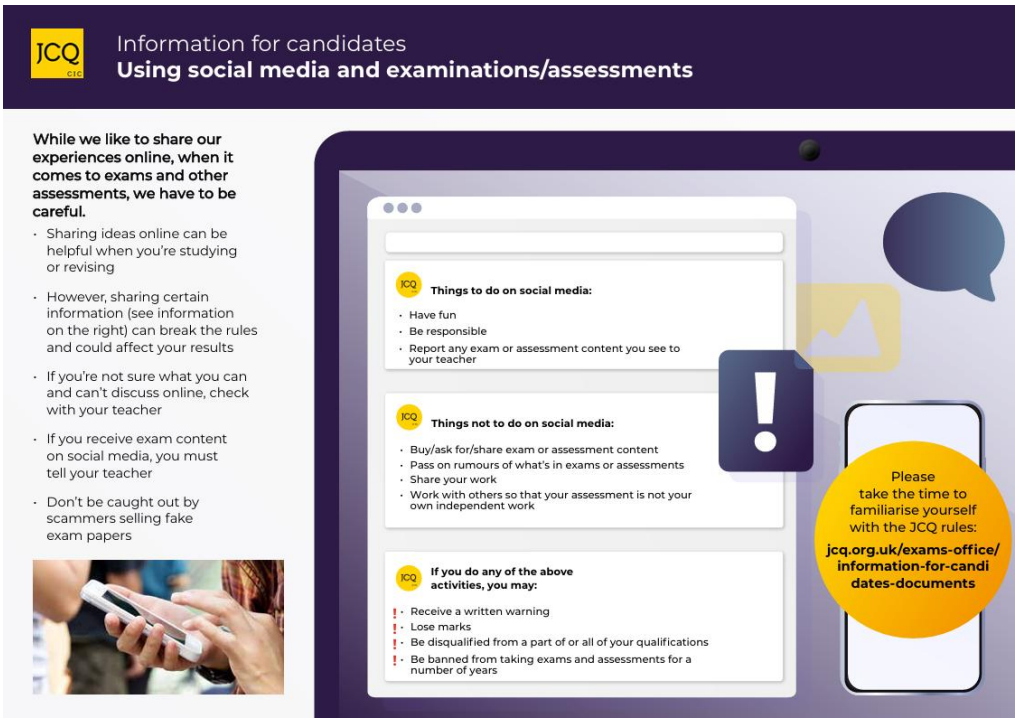
Candidates should be directed to the relevant awarding body's privacy notice if they require further information about how their Student Materials may be used by the awarding body.

- Pearson Edexcel: Privacy Policy | Pearson Qualifications
- AQA: Student Privacy Notice | AQA
- OCR: Candidate Privacy Policy
- ASDAN: ASDAN Website | Privacy statement
- JCQ: Privacy policy – Joint Council for Qualifications

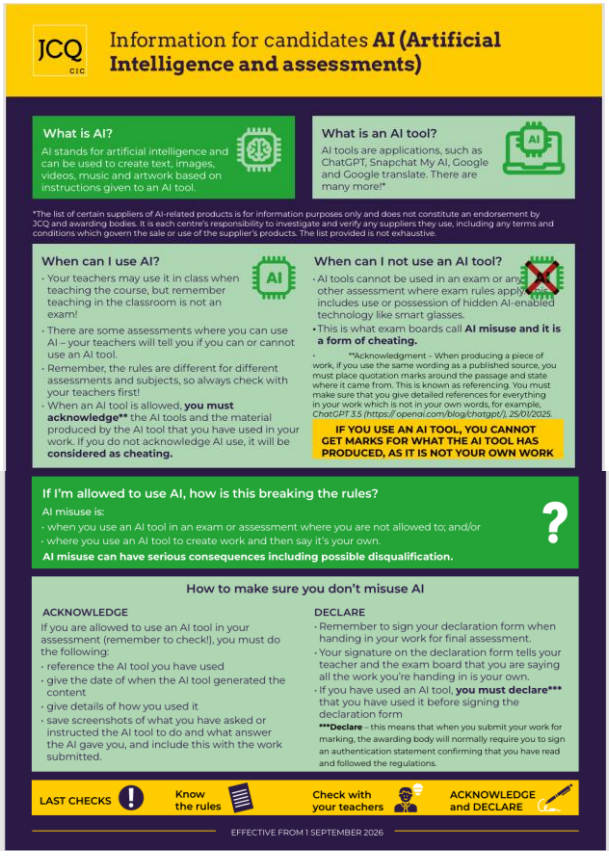
Where a candidate and/or Parent/Carer has any questions/concerns they should contact the school.

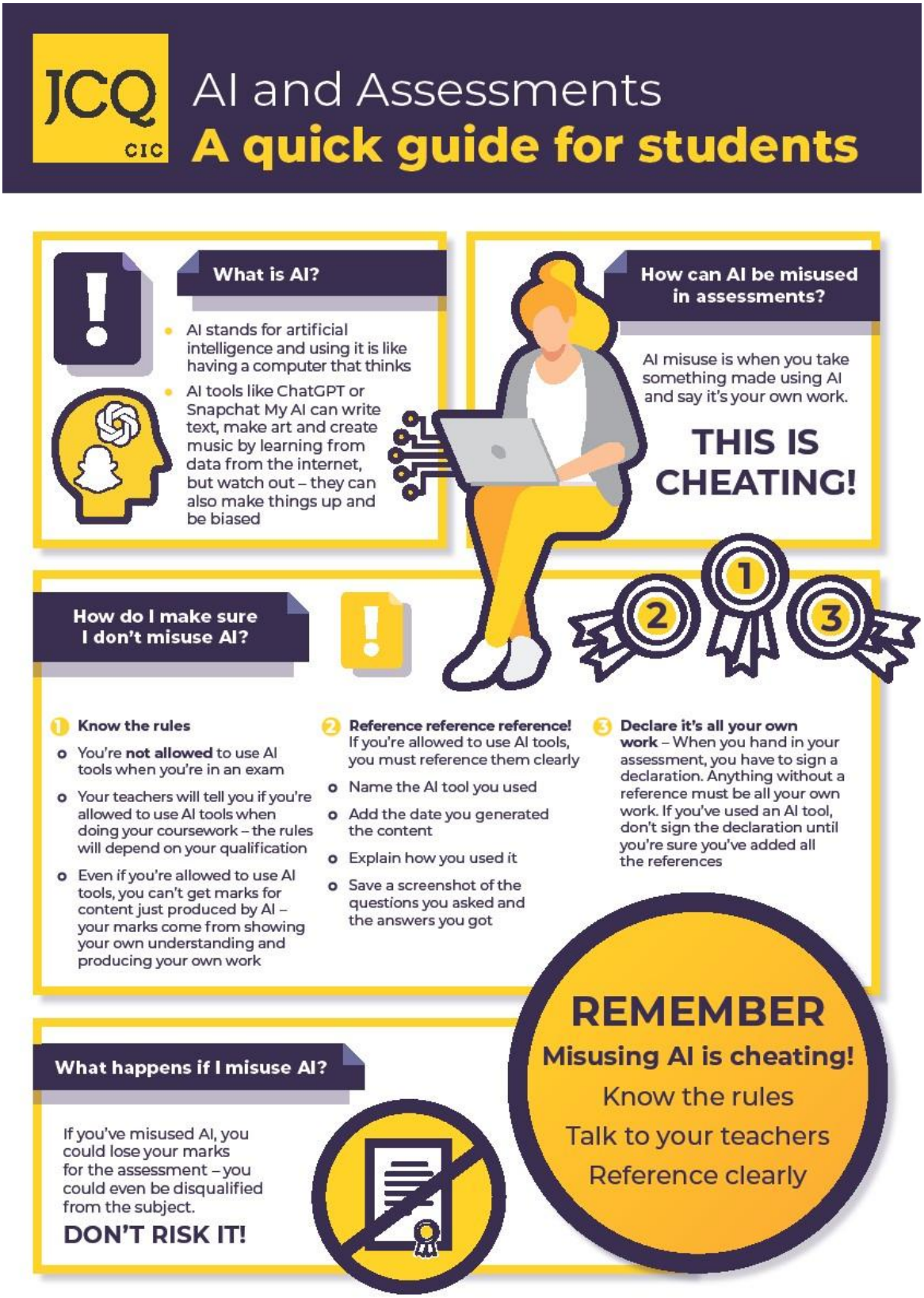
Appendix 1: Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Information & Posters

1a: Social Media [JCQ Social Media Infographic v4]



1b: AI (Artificial Intelligence and assessments) [IFC-AI-Asessments-2026.pdf]





JCQ-AI-and-Assessments-Poster-A-quick-guide-for-students-effective-from-Sept-26.pdf

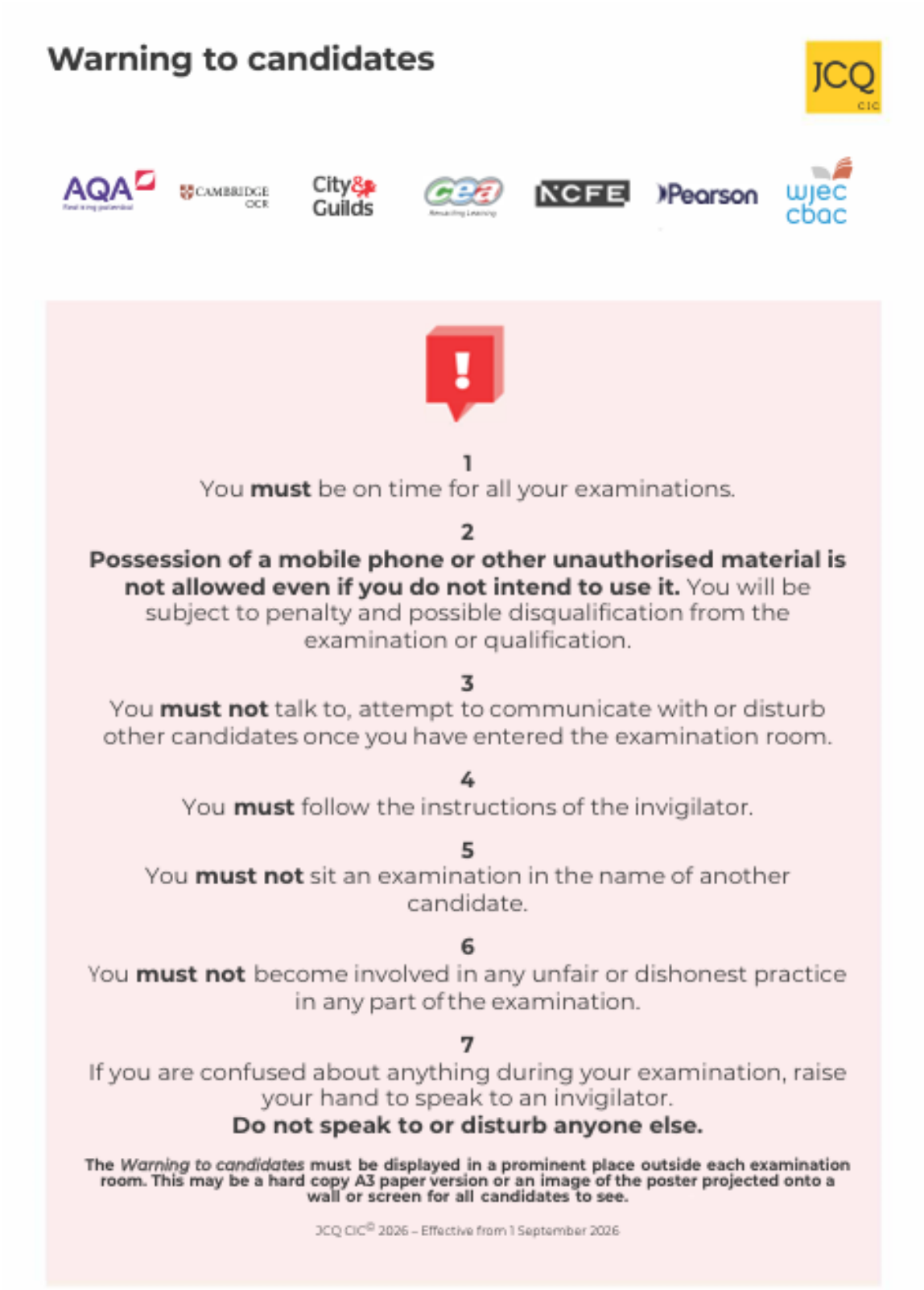
1c: Unauthorised Items Poster [2026 Unauthorised-Items-poster v3]

This poster will be displayed outside each exam room. You **mus**t note that "Possession of unauthorised items, such as a mobile phone or any watch, is a serious offence and could result in ***DISQUALIFICATION*** *from your examination and your overall qualification."*



1d: Warning to Candidates Poster JCQ-Warning-to-candidates-2026_FINAL.pdf

This poster will be displayed outside each exam room. You **must** note all the warnings.



Warning to candidates

JCQ CIC

AQA · Cambridge OCR · City & Guilds · ceq · NCFE · Pearson · wjec cbac

1
You **must** be on time for all your examinations.

2
Possession of a mobile phone or other unauthorised material is not allowed even if you do not intend to use it. You will be subject to penalty and possible disqualification from the examination or qualification.

3
You **must not** talk to, attempt to communicate with or disturb other candidates once you have entered the examination room.

4
You **must** follow the instructions of the invigilator.

5
You **must not** sit an examination in the name of another candidate.

6
You **must not** become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice in any part of the examination.

7
If you are confused about anything during your examination, raise your hand to speak to an invigilator.
Do not speak to or disturb anyone else.

The *Warning to candidates* must be displayed in a prominent place outside each examination room. This may be a hard copy A3 paper version or an image of the poster projected onto a wall or screen for all candidates to see.

JCQ CIC© 2026 – Effective from 1 September 2026

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Appendix 2: Candidate Declaration

Candidate Declaration 2026/27

Please sign this form and return it to your Exams Officer

First Name: ……..

Last Name: ……..

Date: ……

Please read the information contained in this form. If there is anything that you do not understand, **you must ask a relevant member of OHS Wokingham staff for support** in explaining it to you.

I confirm that prior to my assessments and/or examinations taking place:

- ☐ I have/will be notified of the dates and times of my examinations/assessments
- ☐ I am aware of my responsibilities in relation to Examined and Non-Examined Assessments and know where to access the relevant material produced by the Joint Council for Qualifications.
- ☐ I am aware of what constitutes malpractice including plagiarism.
- ☐ I am aware of the guidance in relation to Social Media and the use of AI (Artificial Intelligence)
- ☐ I am aware of the content of the JCQ Unauthorised items and Warning to candidates' Posters.
- ☐ I am aware of how to located JCQ and the individual awarding bodies privacy policies

Any person completing any form of examinations/assessments where malpractice is suspected, or alleged, personal data about them will be provided to the awarding body (or bodies) whose examinations/assessments are involved.

Declaration

By signing this declaration, I am declaring I have read and understand the regulations concerning the conduct of examinations and assessments, I understand what constitutes malpractice and the consequences of committing malpractice.

Signed: …… Date : ……

Appendix 3: Candidate Access and Use of Scripts Consent Form

AQA City & Guilds CCEA NCFE OCR Pearson WJEC

Access to Scripts

Candidate consent form for access to and use of examination scripts

Centre number: **51612**	Centre name: **Odyssey House School - Wokingham**
Candidate number	Candidate name
Qualification level/subject	Component/unit code

☐ I consent to my scripts being accessed by my centre.

Tick ONE of the boxes below:

☐ If any of my scripts are used in the classroom, I do not wish anyone to know they are mine. My name and candidate number must be removed.

☐ If any of my scripts are used in the classroom, I have no objection to other people knowing they are mine.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

This form should be retained on the centre's files for at least six months.