



Exams Handbook

2023/2024

Centre Name: EOTAS Swindon
Centre Number: 66542

Instructions & Information

for

Students and Parents

Introduction

It is the aim of EOTAS Swindon to make the exam experience as stress-free and successful as possible for all students.

This document aims to be informative and helpful for students and parents. Please read it carefully so that you are aware of the exam regulations and the procedures to follow in the event of any problems occurring.

The awarding bodies (or exam boards) set down strict rules which must be followed for the conduct of exams and EOTAS Swindon is required to follow them precisely. Particular attention should be paid to the notices and warnings to candidates which are issued by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). It is the candidate's responsibility to read and understand the JCQ notices listed below:

- Information for Candidates – Written Examinations
- No Mobile Phones Poster
- Warning to Candidates Poster
- Information for Candidates – Using Social Media
- Information for Candidates – Non-Examination Assessments
- Information for Candidates – Privacy Notice

These notices can be found in the Appendices at the back of this handbook.

Some of the questions you have may be answered in the section Frequently Asked Questions on pages 11 to 15. If there is anything you do not understand, or you need our advice at any time before, during or after the exams, please contact -

the Exams Officer: Michelle Jennings
on telephone number – 01793 618406
E-mail: exams@eotas.swindon.sch.uk

Remember – we are here to help.

GOOD LUCK!

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Before The Exams

STATEMENT OF ENTRY:

All candidates receive a statement of entry from school indicating the subjects they are being entered for and the levels of entry, where applicable.

Please check that these are correct.

Some subjects only have one tier of entry; some have Foundation & Higher tiers.

Candidates must check everything on their statements of entry very carefully. Particularly check that all personal details (date of birth, spelling of names which must be their **LEGAL** forename and surname) are accurate as these will appear on certificates and it may be difficult to change them once certificates are awarded.

EXAM BOARDS:

The school uses the following exam boards: AQA, Pearson and OCR.

CANDIDATE NAME:

Candidates are entered under the name format of Legal Forename, Middle name(s), Legal Surname e.g. ROBERT JOHN SMITH.

CANDIDATE NUMBER:

Each candidate has a four-digit candidate number. This is the number students will enter on exam papers. It will appear next to their name on seating plans and exam registers.

For each exam there will be a candidate ID card in front of them on their exam desk which shows their legal name and candidate number.

Candidates will also have a separate registration number for BTEC exams. This is the number that students will enter on their BTEC exam papers. Students will be given this number before BTEC exams and are not expected to remember it.

UNIQUE CANDIDATE IDENTIFIER (UCI):

In addition to a candidate number, each candidate must have a Unique Candidate Identifier (12 digits and 1 letter) which is shown on the top of statements of entry. This number will usually begin with the centre number (66542) unless the student has transferred from another school that had already issued their UCI. The UCI is used for administration purposes and it is not necessary for students to remember it.

UNIQUE LEARNER NUMBER (ULN):

The Unique Learner Number (ULN) is a 10 digit reference number which is used to access the Personal Learning Record (PLR) of anyone over the age of 14 involved in UK education or training. Learners will retain the same number for accessing their PLR throughout their lives. Each ULN is issued and held by the Learning Records Service Organisational Portal. The LRS Organisational Portal uses the number to index each learner's identity details, education and training qualifications within the PLR. Learners will need to use their number each time they want to see or confirm the details held about them on their PLR. The ULN also means information within the PLR is secure and cannot be shared with other organisations (including statutory bodies), without the prior consent of the learner.

TIMETABLES:

Prior to each exam series, students will receive an individual timetable with their own specific exams detailing dates, times and duration of exams, as well as where their exam will take place. **Check this carefully.** If students think something is wrong they need to see the Exams Officer immediately.

Subject staff will inform students of dates of practical exams/language speaking tests when dates are confirmed.

For any student who has a clash where two subjects are timetabled at the same time, the school will make special timetable arrangements. Students must check their individual timetable and see the Exams Officer if they are unsure of what to do. If they think there is a clash on their timetable that has not been resolved, they also need to see the Exams Officer immediately.

Students must make sure that they know exactly when their exams are, especially whether they are morning or afternoon.

Students should ensure that they allow enough time to get to school so if they are delayed for any reason e.g. traffic, they will still arrive in good time.

Published TIMINGS for EXTERNAL EXAMS

Be at your designated exam room at the following times

Morning exams 9.30am Afternoon exams 1.30pm

EQUIPMENT:

Students will be provided with **ALL** relevant items for each exam, e.g. compasses for a Maths exam. Students will be provided with black pens, pencils, eraser and a ruler in a **CLEAR** (not coloured or tinted) pencil case or plastic bag. This must be handed in at the end of the exam **DO NOT USE CORRECTING PENS, FLUID OR TAPE, ERASABLE PENS, HIGHLIGHTERS OR GEL PENS IN YOUR ANSWERS.**

Where calculators are allowed for the exam these will also be provided and will be free of lids, cases and covers in line with the Instruction for Conducting Exams (ICE). Students should check the regulations in the 'Notices to Candidates' which are on the JCQ website and are also listed in the appendices at the end of this handbook.

During The Exams

EXAM REGULATIONS:

Notices to candidates which are issued jointly by all the examining boards are available to view on the JCQ website; they are also in the appendices at the end of this handbook. **All candidates must read them carefully** and note that to break any of the exam rules or regulations will be reported to the appropriate Exam Board, which could lead to disqualification from some or all subjects. The school must report any breach of regulations to the exams board.

ATTENDANCE AT EXAMS:

Candidates are responsible for checking their own timetable and arriving at school on the correct day and time, properly dressed in school uniform and with the correct equipment. Candidates must arrive at the specified venue at least **15 minutes** prior to the start time of their exam. They should wait quietly outside the exam venue until instructed to enter.

Candidates who arrive late for an exam may still be admitted and will be given the full allocated time for the exam. If special consideration applies then you must speak to the Exams Officer (see the section ABSENCE FROM EXAMS on page 8).

Full school uniform must be worn by all students attending school for exams.

Candidates must wait quietly outside the exam room for the invigilator to call their name and seat them in the correct seat. Once inside the room, exam board rules state that candidates **MUST** be silent. If there is any communication between any candidates it will be reported to the Exam Board who will make a decision about the consequence, from no further action to disqualification from all exams. Candidates must not talk until they have left the exam room.

All items of equipment, pens, pencils, mathematical instruments, etc. should be visible to the invigilators at all times. Either a transparent pencil case or a clear plastic bag (without any writing) must be used.

Pens should be **BLACK** ink or ballpoint. No correction pens, erasable pens or correcting tape/fluid are allowed.

For the Maths and Science exams, candidates should make sure their calculators conform to the exam regulations. If in doubt, they should check with their teacher. Remove any covers or instructions and make sure batteries are new. Candidates must also ensure that they have cleared anything stored in the calculator before using it for exams. Please make sure that any alarms are turned off.

Do not attempt to communicate with or distract other candidates.

Exam regulations are very strict regarding items that may be taken into the exam room (see the section FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS on pages 11-15). If candidates break these rules they may be disqualified from the exam, this decision remains with the Exam Board.

CANDIDATES ARE NOT PERMITTED POTENTIAL TECHNOLOGICAL/WEB ENABLED SOURCES OF INFORMATION SUCH AS IPODS, MOBILE PHONES, MP3/4 PLAYERS or SMART WATCHES/ANALOGUE WATCHES IN THE EXAM ROOM.

If a mobile phone (or any other type of electronic communication or storage device) is found in their possession during an exam (even if it is turned off) it will be taken from the candidate and a report made to the appropriate exam board. No exceptions can be made. Mobile phones **must not** be brought into the exam room. Mobile phones brought into the exam room will be confiscated but there is no safe storage and the school cannot be held responsible for accidental damage.

It is school policy that watches of any kind **must not** be brought into the exam room.

Food is not permitted in the exam room although water is allowed provided it is in a small, clear (not coloured or tinted) plastic bottle with the label removed. Filter and infusion bottles are not allowed.

Under no circumstances are bags or coats allowed into the exam room. Before going to their exam room, candidates should leave them in their locker. Please note that we cannot accept responsibility for personal belongings and would recommend that valuables are not brought into school.

Candidates must listen carefully to instructions and notices read out by the invigilators – there may be amendments to the exam paper that they need to know about.

Candidates must check they have the correct question paper – check the subject, paper and tier of entry. Candidates **must not** start writing until told to do so by the invigilator.

All instructions should be carefully read and answers numbered clearly.

Candidates will not be allowed to leave an exam early. If they have finished the paper they are advised to use the remaining time to check over their answers and ensure they have completed their details correctly. Candidates **must** check that they have completed the front of their answer books (and any supplementary sheets) with their candidate number, legal forename and legal surname.

If more than one answer book or loose sheets of paper have been used, candidates must clearly write their centre number, candidate number, legal forename and legal surname **on the top of every sheet/answer book**. They must also clearly list the question number they are answering. It is very important that candidate details are listed on **ALL** work to be handed in, as exam boards are no longer allowing treasury tags to be used or any form of fixing loose sheets to the main answer booklet.

All loose additional answer sheets must then be inserted inside the answer booklet in the order the candidate answered the questions.

At the end of the exam all work must be handed in. Any rough work should be neatly ruled through with a single line.

Invigilators will collect the question papers, answer books, identity cards and other exam related material before candidates leave the room. Absolute silence must be maintained

during this time.

Candidates are responsible for checking that their candidate number, legal surname and legal forename have been completed on the front of all their exam answer books. Candidates are to remain seated in silence until told to leave the exam room. Leaving the room should be carried out in silence and consideration shown for other candidates who may still be working, or students attending lessons in nearby rooms. **Remember candidates are still under exam conditions until they have left the room.**

Question papers, answer documents and additional paper must **NOT** be taken from the exam room.

If the fire alarm sounds during an exam, the invigilators will tell candidates what to do. They should not panic. If the room has to be evacuated candidates will be asked to leave in silence in the order instructed. Everything must be left on the desk. During this period of evacuation, exam regulations still apply and candidates must not communicate with other candidates or any other person. They will be escorted to a designated assembly point. On return to the exam room candidates must not start writing until the invigilator tells them to. Candidates will be allowed the full working time for the exam and a report will be sent to the exam board detailing the incident.

INVIGILATORS:

Invigilators are in the exam rooms to supervise the conduct of the exam in accordance with the regulations. They will also distribute and collect the exam papers, tell candidates when to start and finish the exam, hand out extra writing paper if required and deal with any problems that occur during the exam, for example if a candidate is feeling ill.

If a candidate has a problem during an exam, they should raise their hand to attract an invigilator's attention.

Please note that invigilators cannot discuss the exam paper with candidates or explain the questions.

Candidates who are disruptive or behave in an unacceptable manner will be removed from the exam by invigilators.

ABSENCE FROM EXAMS:

If difficulties are experienced during the exam period (e.g. illness, injury, and personal problems) please inform the school at the earliest possible point so we can help or advise.

Only in exceptional circumstances are candidates allowed special consideration for absence from any part of an exam. It is essential that medical or other appropriate evidence is obtained and given to the Exams Officer without delay in all cases where an application is to be made for special consideration. A self-certification form (JCQ/ME Form 14) can be obtained from the Exams Officer.

Parents are asked to refrain from arranging family holidays when exams are taking place and if absence permission for this purpose is sought, authorisation will not be given. **No holidays should be booked until after the last contingency day 26 June 2024.**

After The Exams

NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS SUMMER 2023 EXAMS

Results will be available for collection on Thursday 22nd August 2023 between 11am and noon for all pupils, Please come to your registered site.

If a candidate wishes any other person (including family members) to collect their results on their behalf, they must give their written authorisation to the school before results day. **Exam results will not be issued without the appropriate signed written consent of the candidate.**

Candidates requiring their results to be posted must provide an A5 sized envelope, bearing their name and the address to which the results are to be posted, stamped to the value of a letter. Results will be posted on the above date and not before.

Uncollected/unposted results will be available for collection from the Exams Officer when school re-opens in September.

Please note that results cannot be given out on the telephone or via email under any circumstances.

We strongly advise that results are either collected by the candidate themselves or by another person as we cannot be held responsible for the postal system.

ENQUIRIES ABOUT RESULTS / COURSEWORK MARKS:

If a student feels that their external exam results or internal coursework marks do not reflect their performance and are significantly different from what was expected, then they may launch an enquiry requesting their work is reviewed.

All enquiries must be directed through EOTAS Swindon. Candidates are not permitted to enquire directly to the exam boards.

As a result of a review the candidate's mark may be confirmed, raised or lowered. Careful thought must be given before making a request and candidates must sign a consent form stating that they understand what could happen to their marks. Forms will be available on results day.

CERTIFICATES:

Exam certificates arrive in school at the beginning of November and students will be able to collect them in person. Further details of timings for collection will be sent once all certificates have been received.

Certificates will not be given to **anyone** other than the candidate without the candidate's **written authorisation**.

EOTAS Swindon is only obliged to keep certificates for a period of **12 months after the date of issue**. After this time exam board regulations state that certificates should be confidentially destroyed.

If students do not collect their certificates within this time (or if they lose their certificates) they can only be replaced, or a certifying statement of results issued, by direct application to the appropriate exam boards. This will require proof of identify (such as a birth certificate) and a substantial fee (from £43) per exam board.

Students are therefore urged to collect their certificates and to keep them safe.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What do I do if there's a clash on my external exam timetable?

The school will re-schedule papers internally (on the same day) where there is a clash of subjects. Candidates will normally sit one paper then have a break, during which time they will be supervised and must not have any communication with other candidates. They will then sit the second subject paper. Correct times should be on your individual candidate timetable. It may be necessary for you to bring a packed lunch if you have exams in the morning and afternoon as you will have to remain supervised until both exams are completed. If in doubt, consult the Exams Officer.

Q. What do I do if I think I have the wrong paper?

Invigilators will ask you to check before the exam starts. If you think something is wrong, put your hand up and tell the invigilator immediately.

Q. What do I do if I forget my candidate number?

Candidate numbers are issued in advance of the exams. On your exam desk for each exam will be your Candidate ID card, which states your name and candidate number. If unsure the invigilator can assist if you put your hand up and wait for them to come to you.

Q. What do I do if I forget the school centre number?

The centre number is 66542. On your exam desk for each exam will be your Candidate ID card, which states the school centre number, the information will also be on the whiteboard for each exam – centre number, exam title, time, date and component code.

Q. What do I do if I have an accident or I am ill before the exam?

Inform the school at the earliest possible point so we can help or advise you. In the case of an accident that means you are unable to write it may be possible to provide you with a scribe to write your answers. You may need to obtain medical evidence (from your GP or hospital) if you wish the school to make an Appeal for Special Consideration on your behalf (see below).

Q. What is an Appeal for Special Consideration?

Special Consideration is a post-exam adjustment to the marks or grades of a candidate who is eligible for consideration.

The allowance for Special Consideration is from 0% (consideration given but addition of marks considered inappropriate) to 5% (reserved for exceptional cases). Parents should be aware that any adjustment is likely to be small and no feedback is ever provided.

Candidates will only be eligible for Special Consideration if they have been fully prepared and covered the whole course but performance in the exam or in the production of coursework is affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control.

Examples of such circumstances may be illness (affecting performance on the day of the exam), accident, injury, bereavement or domestic crisis.

The Exams Officer must be informed immediately, so that the necessary paperwork can be completed (within 7 days of the last exam session for each subject) and the candidate will be required to provide evidence to support such an application.

Q. What do I do if I feel ill during the exam?

Put your hand up and an invigilator will assist you. You should inform an invigilator if you feel ill before or during an exam and you feel this may have affected your performance.

Q. If I'm late can I still sit the exam?

Provided you are **not more than one hour** late, it may still be **possible** for you to sit the exam. You should get to school as quickly as possible. A member of staff will escort you to the exam room. You must not enter an exam room without permission after an exam has begun.

If you are **more than one hour** late after the published start time for the exam, the school must inform the exam board and it is possible that they may decide not to accept your work.

As soon as you realise you will be more than one hour late for an exam, it is important that you are kept under parental/carer supervision (where possible) until you are handed over to a member of school staff.

In such circumstances, you and your parent/carer will then sign a statement to confirm the supervision arrangements which were put in place. Your parent/carer will sign to confirm that you **DID NOT** have access to any potential technological/web enabled sources of information, principally a mobile phone or computer. This is to ensure there is no opportunity for malpractice once the exam has started at school and they are important as the awarding body will consider your case individually in light of these statements and the supervision arrangements that were put in place.

IDEALLY, please ensure that you allow enough time to get to school so that if you are delayed (e.g. through transport problems) you will still arrive on time.

Q. If I miss the exam can I take it on another day?

No, not in the current exam series. It may be possible to re-take in a future exam series i.e. the following November/June.

Q. Do I have to wear school uniform?

Yes. Normal school regulations apply to uniform.

Q. What equipment should I bring for my exams?

We will provide you with all the equipment you need for your exam.

You are not authorised to bring any food or drink into the exam room, all items will need to be placed in your locker before entering the exam room.

You must not attempt to borrow equipment from another candidate during the exam, always put your hand up and wait for an invigilator to come to you.

Regulations state:

<p>Calculators must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 formulas. <p>The candidate is responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the calculator's power supply;• the calculator's working condition;• clearing anything stored in the calculator.	<p>Calculators must not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• databanks;• dictionaries;• mathematical formulas;• text.
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Q. What items are not allowed into the exam room?

Only material that is listed on question papers are permitted in the exam room and students who are found to have any material with them that is not allowed will be reported to the appropriate exam board. In such circumstances, a student may be disqualified from the paper or the subject concerned, this decision is up to the Exam Board.

Bags and coats and any other items not permitted under exam regulations must be left in the designated area. Do not bring any valuables into school with you when you attend an exam.

Food and drink are not allowed in the exam room (other than a small bottle of water in a clear plastic bottle with the label removed – no coloured, tinted, filter or infusion bottles).

If you have a mobile telephone (or any other electronic communication device e.g. iPod or headphones) it must not be brought into the exam room.

Watches of any kind must not be brought into the exam room.

No Headphones, ear pods or listening equipment are authorised in the exam room – these are prohibited items

Q. Why can't I bring my mobile telephone into the exam room?

Being in possession of a mobile phone (or any other electronic communication device e.g. iPod, iWatch, headphones) is regarded as cheating (malpractice) and is subject to a severe penalty from the exam boards, we must report all malpractice to the exam board.

For full details on JCQ regulations regarding malpractice and breaches to exam conditions, please go to www.jcq.org.uk and search for 'malpractice'. There is also a poster and further information in your pack as appendices.

Q. How do I know how long the exam is?

The length of the exam is shown on your individual timetable under the heading 'duration'. Invigilators will tell you when to start and finish the exam. Timings will be on the whiteboard or a poster in the exam room(s). If you are eligible for extra time, this will also be on the board as 25%ET, invigilators will be aware of candidates with Access Arrangements.

Q. Can I leave the exam early?

It is a requirement of the exam boards that you must stay in the exam room for at least one hour after the published start time of the exam (or for the duration of the exam from the published start time if it is less than one hour).

It is school policy not to allow candidates to leave the exam room early as this is disruptive to other candidates. A candidate may not leave the exam room without the permission of the invigilators. If you have finished the paper use any time remaining to check over your answers and also make sure that you have completed your details correctly.

Q. What do I do if the fire alarm sounds?

The invigilators will tell you what to do. If you have to evacuate the room, close your paper, leave everything on your desk and leave the room in silence in the order instructed. You must not attempt to communicate with any other candidates during the evacuation and are reminded that exam rules apply throughout the period of evacuation. You will be told when it is safe to return and on entering the exam room should return to your seat and wait for the invigilators to formally re-start the exam. The finish time will be amended to ensure the prescribed length of exam is given. An application for Special Consideration will be submitted if necessary to the exam board when an evacuation has been necessary.

Q. Can I go to the toilet during an exam?

Only if it is absolutely necessary. Raise your hand to get the attention of the invigilator, you will be escorted by an invigilator and you should close your exam paper before leaving the exam room. You will remain in exam conditions and cannot communicate with anyone during this break.

Q. Why do I need to check the details on the Statement of Entry?

The details on your Statement of Entry will be used when certificates are printed. If the name or date of birth on your certificates does not match your birth certificate it could cause you problems if you are asked to show your certificates to a potential employer or for college/university at some time in the future. You should also check that the subjects and tiers of entry you are entered for are correct and that no subjects are missing.

Q. I am entitled to extra time – how will this affect the way I take my exams?

Some students receive an allowance of 25% extra time for some of their exams. Where possible, such candidates will be seated together to minimise disturbance from other candidates who finish earlier. The invigilators are made aware of such candidates.

Q. What do I do if I don't get the grades I need?

Tutors and SLT will be available to advise you on results day. If you feel strongly that it is necessary to make an enquiry about your result you should first contact your tutor to obtain advice as to the advisability of requesting a review.

You should be aware that your result could go down as well as up or stay the same.

Review requests must be submitted to the Exams Officer as soon as possible, the deadline for these requests is **Saturday 28th September 2024**.

Q. How will I know when I can collect my certificates and project work?

Art work can be collected after that date that all marks are confirmed and appeals have ended, this is normally at the end of October.

Candidates will be contacted via a letter to parents to let them know when and how they can collect exam certificated, they must be collected in person by the candidate or the candidate must give written consent naming the person collecting on their behalf and that person collecting must have photo ID to prove identity.

Please email any review requests to exams@eotas.swindon.sch.uk

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