

Instructions for the conduct of Onscreen/Online Examinations

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Head of a School, Principal of a College or the Chief Officer of an institution approved by the Awarding Body as a Centre for its examinations is defined for the purposes of this document as the Head of Centre. The Head of Centre is responsible to the Awarding Body, for the proper conduct of the external examinations by observance of these Instructions. If a situation arises which is not covered by these Instructions the advice of the Awarding Body should be sought.

Each centre must have a designated manager responsible for system security, the quality of provision and resources within the centre.

(Further guidance on the best practice for operation and management of computer based assessment can be found in the *BS Standard 7988*.)

2. Preparation for the Examinations

2.1 Safe Custody of Examination Materials

- 2.1.1 Examination materials must be stored securely at all times so that no unauthorised person has access to them. No attempt must be made to access the examinations prior to the time lock being released or the start of the examination.
- 2.1.2 The centre must be able to demonstrate that appropriate security systems are in place to prevent unauthorised access to examinations on the computer system. These must include:
- Only examination administrators having access to passwords, which give access to the onscreen examinations
 - Computers will be set up so as to prevent access to any software not allowed by the examination regulations whilst the examination is in progress
- 2.1.3 Centres must have the available expertise to administer and access examinations using secure uploading and downloading. They should also have the appropriate level of expertise to deal with complications and “computer crashes” during examination situations.
- 2.1.4 **Centres must make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of the examination.**
- 2.1.5 There should be appropriate security facilities if assessment content, correct responses, candidate responses or candidate details are held at the assessment centre before or after the assessment session.
- 2.1.6 Assessment content should be protected from unauthorised access until immediately before the examination and also after the examination.
- 2.1.7 You must tell Edexcel immediately if the security of the examination material is put at risk or has been breached (for example, by fire, theft, damage or through malpractice).

2.2 Start times for Examinations

- 2.2.1 Am or pm sessions are specified on the Edexcel timetable for General Qualifications.
- 2.2.2 Where centres have large numbers of candidates entered for the examinations, it is permissible to timetable the examinations for different groups of candidates back to back on the same day within the period of the examination window. Centres should also inform each candidate of the starting time of the session when their examination is to be held.
- 2.2.3 Candidates who have taken the examination must not be permitted to mix with those that have yet to sit the examination.

2.3 Resources for Examinations

- 2.3.1 Students must not have access to any materials including books, calculators, dictionaries and unauthorised software, unless specified, whilst they are sitting the examination.

2.3.3 Candidates may be provided with pen and paper to do rough workings. Candidates must not take these out of the examination room.

2.3.2 Candidates should be warned that the possession of any unauthorised resource will be considered as an infringement of regulations in the same way as the possession of any other unauthorised items. If unauthorised items are present in an examination (whether they intend to use it or not), this may constitute Malpractice. As a result, they could be subject to sanctions and penalties in accordance with relevant JCQ Malpractice Guidelines.

3. Accommodation

3.1 General environment / layout

3.1.1 To ensure an appropriate assessment environment, centres should take note of the Guidance provided by the BS 7988 standards. In particular centres should ensure that:

- a) The accommodation is suitable for use as a examination room;
- b) The area is quiet and free from external disturbances, including, for example, others using mobile phones;
- c) There is nearby accommodation where candidates can wait before the examination commences and can use after the examination has been completed;
- d) Due attention has been paid to such matters as heating, lighting and ventilation.

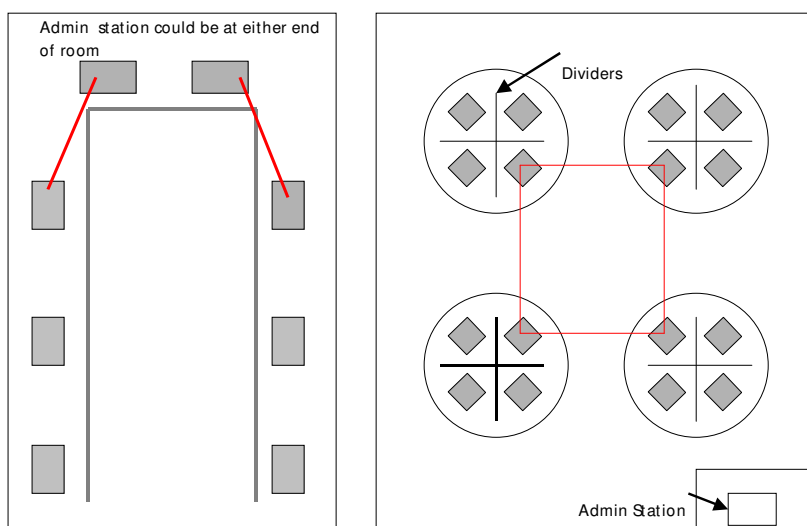
3.1.2 The workspace provided for the candidate should enable them to access the equipment and be able to use pen and paper to do rough workings.

3.1.3 The arrangement of the workstations and the position of the invigilator's desk should facilitate detection of any unauthorised activity by candidates, for example communication with others or use of unauthorised reference material.

3.1.4 Each workstation must be isolated by at least a space of four feet / 1.25m, or separated by a partition - see diagrams for examples of appropriate layout.

Computer Suite set up in test centres

People in — areas could do different tests or workstations might not be used



3.1.5 The level of a centre's technical specification will determine how many candidates are able to sit a examination at one time, but spare PCs and hardware should always be available.

3.1.6 The seating arrangements must be laid out in accordance with these onscreen/on-line invigilation instructions. Candidates should normally be seated in candidate number order, and a seating plan must be kept for each session. (Any candidate suffering from an infectious or contagious

disease must take the examination in a separate room in which all regulations can be applied.)

No display material (e.g. diagrams, wall charts) that might be helpful to candidates must be visible in the examination room.

- 3.1.7 A reliable clock must be visible to each candidate in the examination room.
- 3.1.8 The *Warning to Candidates* and *Mobile Phone* poster issued by the Joint Council for General Qualifications must be displayed both inside and outside the examination room.
- 3.1.9 The poster version (A3 size) of the *Notice to Candidates* issued by the Joint Council for General Qualifications must be displayed in a public place outside the examination room.
- 3.1.10 Any other examination may be held in the examination room at the same time, provided that no disturbance is caused thereby.
- 3.1.10 The centre should ensure that students are not interrupted whilst taking an examination. The centre needs to manage this.

3.2 Workstations

- 3.2.1 Each workstation must be tested before the beginning of the examination and again after the examination loaded onto the PC. The workstation should be labelled with the candidate's details to ensure that the candidate uses the correct PC.

3.3 Hardware and software

- 3.3.1 There should be adequate back-up provision in case of equipment failure. Provision can include:
 - a) Spare workstations (of the required specification)
 - b) Spares of easily replaced items (e.g. mouse, screen)
 - c) There should be sufficient hard disk space on the individual candidate machines.
- 3.3.2 Hardware should be maintained to minimise the likelihood of failure during an assessment.
- 3.3.3 Up-to-date virus protection measures should be in place.

4. Conducting the Examination

4.1 Invigilation Arrangements

- 4.1.1 The Head of Centre must ensure that suitably qualified and experienced adults carry out invigilation. Whilst the Head of Centre has discretion to decide who is suitably qualified and experienced, any relative of a candidate in the examination room is specifically not eligible to serve as the sole invigilator.
- 4.1.2 The invigilator is the person in the examination room responsible for the conduct of a particular examination session in the presence of the candidates. Invigilators must give their whole attention to the proper conduct of the examination. Invigilators are not to perform any additional task (e.g. marking) in the examination room.
- 4.1.3 Sufficient invigilators must be appointed to ensure that the examination is conducted in accordance with the following requirements:
 - At least one invigilator must be present for every 15 candidates or part thereof. Invigilators may be changed, provided that the number present in the examination room does not fall below the number prescribed.
 - When one invigilator is present, he/she must be able to summon assistance easily, without leaving the examination room and without disturbing the candidates.

- A teacher who has prepared the candidates for the subject of the examination must not be the sole invigilator at any time during an examination in that subject.
 - Arrangements must be such that an invigilator can observe every candidate in the examination room at all times (see 5.3).
- 4.1.4 These Instructions must be available to each invigilator in the examination room and the invigilators must be familiar with the *Notice to Candidates*, the *Warning to Candidates* and any specific regulations relating to the subjects being examined. Invigilators must also be familiar with the procedures for dealing with incidences of suspected malpractice.
- 4.1.5 Centres must keep signed records of the seating and invigilation arrangements for each examination session. It must be possible to generate a seating plan from this record. The Awarding Body may require the seating and invigilation record at any time up to the publication of results.
- 4.1.6 It is essential that an IT technician is available at the start of the examination. They do not need to be in the room thereafter but they must be in the vicinity of the examination room and must be contactable by phone or pager in order to deal with any technical difficulties that may arise.
- 4.1.7 Either an IT technician or dedicated Administrator must be familiar with the software 'User Guide'. They must understand the procedures for logging on, uploading candidate results, exiting and pausing the examinations as necessary.
- 4.1.8 It is a condition of accreditation to offer onscreen examinations that suitable technical support is being provided.

4.2 Identification of Candidates

- 4.2.1 The invigilators must be satisfied as to the identity of every candidate attending each examination. The Head of Centre must ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to enable all invigilators to carry out adequate checks on the identity of all candidates.
- 4.2.2 Candidates who are not known to the Assessment centre authorities must be required to present documentary evidence that they are the same persons who were entered for the examination each time they attend an examination session.
- 4.2.3 Completing the Attendance Register
- The invigilator must complete the Attendance Register form at the examination, in accordance with the instructions issued by Edexcel
 - If a candidate has been entered but is not present for the examination, he/she must be marked as "Abs" (Absent) on the Attendance Register.

4.3 Persons Present

- 4.3.1 Only candidates taking the examination(s) and persons authorised by the Head of Centre are to be allowed in the examination room.
- 4.3.2 Edexcel, QCA and the JCQ Joint Inspection Service reserve the right to visit Centres during the period of the examinations to inspect the arrangements made for the security of confidential examination material and for the conduct of the examinations.

4.4 Starting the Examination

NB Possession of unauthorised items is an infringement of the regulations and could result in disqualification from the current examination series. Centres are advised that unauthorised materials, and mobile phones in particular whether or not switched on or within reach, should not be in candidates' possession.

- 4.4.1 A examination is deemed to be in progress from the time the candidates enter the room until all the examinations have been locked down.
- 4.4.2 The invigilator must not offer any advice or comment on the work of the candidate.
- 4.4.3 Before candidates are permitted to start work the invigilator must:
- ensure that candidates are seated in accordance with the prescribed seating arrangements
 - inform the candidates that they are now subject to the regulations of the examination and read out the relevant notices and warnings
 - warn candidates that any unauthorised material must be handed in (this should also include any food or drinks, which may only be allowed at the express discretion of the Head of Centre)
 - check that candidates have all the necessary material to enable them to complete the examination
 - ensure that candidates start the examination in accordance with the specific instructions provided for electronic examinations
 - draw to the candidates' attention the instructions on the screen at the beginning of the examination and ask them to check that they have been provided with the correct examination for the correct subject and level
 - instruct candidates to enter the required information on their screen
 - instruct the candidates in regard to the instruction screens that will appear prior to the start of the examination

advise the candidates that any rough work must be completed on the paper provided by the centre and handed into the invigilator at the end of the examination

- remind candidates that they are forbidden to communicate in any way with, seek assistance from, or give assistance to, another candidate whilst they are in the examination room.

4.4.5 Candidates must start the examinations simultaneously under the instruction of the invigilator.

5. During the examination

5.1 Supervision of the Candidates

5.1.1 Invigilators must supervise the candidates throughout the whole time the examination is in progress and give complete attention at all times to this duty.

5.2 Technical Problems

5.2.1 **Power failure.** In the event of power failure the onscreen examination should be abandoned and a further set of onscreen examinations scheduled when the fault has been rectified and the system examined.

5.2.2 **Technical failure.** If during the examination there are difficulties with individual PCs or the whole centre system then, if the failure cannot be rectified within 30 minutes, the onscreen examination should be abandoned and a further set of onscreen examinations scheduled when the fault has been rectified and the system examined.

5.2.3 **Set up.** If the system is not up and running successfully at the scheduled start time the examination should be delayed by no more than 30 minutes for the problem to be resolved. After this time, the onscreen examination should be rescheduled when the fault has been rectified and the system examined.

5.3 Emergencies

5.3.1 In the event of an emergency such as a fire alarm or bomb alert, the invigilator must take the following action:

- Evacuate the examination room in accordance with the instructions given by the appropriate authority
- Lock/pause the examinations in accordance with the User Guide
- Ensure that the candidates are supervised as closely as possible whilst they are out of the examination room so as to ensure there is no discussion of the examination
- After the candidates have returned to the examination room and before the examination is resumed note the point and time at which the interruption occurred
- Note the time and duration of the interruption
- Allow the candidates the full working time prescribed for the examination
- Make a full report of the incident and of the action taken for direct submission to Edexcel.

5.4 Malpractice

5.4.1. Wherever possible, the invigilator should remove and retain any unauthorised material that a candidate may have in the examination.

5.4.2. It is the duty of the Head of Centre to ensure that all cases of suspected or actual malpractice in connection with the examination are reported to Edexcel as soon as possible. The Head of Centre is empowered to expel a candidate from the examination room, but such action should only be taken when it is considered as essential or when the continued presence of a candidate would cause disruption to other candidates.

5.4.3. Any infringement of the regulations must be reported in accordance with the JCQ Booklet 'Guidelines for dealing with instances of suspected Malpractice in examinations'. The sanctions or penalties imposed will rest with Edexcel and may lead to disqualification.

6. At the end of the Examination

6.1 Finishing the Examination

6.1.1 The examination will automatically close down when the allocated time has been used.

6.2 Leaving the Examination Room

6.2.1 Candidates who have completed the examination may leave the room at the discretion of the invigilator, subject to ensuring that no disturbance is caused to other candidates and that the invigilator turns off the screens to ensure others cannot see them. Candidates should not be allowed to leave during the last 10 minutes of the examination.

6.3 Attendance Register and Seating Plans

6.3.1 Attendance registers and seating plans should be kept and filed away in your centre until the end of the Enquiries about Results period, unless otherwise instructed by Edexcel.

7. Other Documentation

Guidelines for dealing with instances of suspected Malpractice in examinations, JCQ April 2005. (<http://www.jcq.org.uk/common/search.cfm?searchtext=malpractice>)

BS Standard 7988 (www.bsi-global.com)