

Exams Key Terms

JCQ - Joint Council for Qualifications

JCQ in discussion with exam boards agree and publish the regulations for sitting exams in the UK. Every exam in every school is subject to these rules. The procedures we ask students to follow in exams ensures that these rules are followed at all times. JCQ inspect the school every year, unannounced, to ensure we are following the rules.

You can find out more about JCQ here: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/about-us/>

Malpractice - Breaking the rules

Malpractice occurs when the JCQ regulations are broken by a student. All instances of malpractice must be reported, even if the rules were broken by accident. The penalty for malpractice is decided by the exam board, and the judgement cannot be influenced by the school in any way.

Exam Boards - Responsible for setting and awarding exams

The exam boards set the questions on papers, and are responsible for marking and grading them. The boards we currently use are as follows:

AQA - <https://www.aqa.org.uk/about-us>

Pearson Edexcel - <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/about-us.html>

OCR - <https://www.ocr.org.uk/about/>

WJEC - <https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/about-us/>

LIBF (KS5 Only) - <https://www.libf.ac.uk/about-us>

DfE - Department for Education

The Department for Education is responsible for children's services and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England. DfE is a ministerial department, supported by 18 agencies and public bodies.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

Ofqual - The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England. (Ofqual is a non-ministerial department.)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual>

'Live' or 'External' Exam - The real deal

Exams which are not mock exams or classroom assessments are referred to as 'live' or 'external' exams. These exams are those officially set by exam boards, and are not seen by staff or students before the exam begins. JCQ instructions must be followed. Exams are sent away to the exam boards for marking.

Live/external exams cannot be sat at another time if they are missed.

Tier - Higher or Foundation

A level of entry (Foundation or Higher) at GCSE offered in certain subjects only, that offers results restricted to a certain range of grades. Not all subjects have tiers available.

Candidate Number - 4 digit code

A four-digit identifier allocated to students, generated by the school. Students will need to write their candidate number on every exam answer booklet they use. The school will ensure that every student has access to their candidate number on their desk in every exam.

Review of Marking

On occasions where students are within a few marks of achieving the next grade up, a review of marking may be requested by the school. During this process, the exam board will appoint a second examiner to review the paper(s) to identify any genuine marking errors or unreasonable marking. The marks will also be totalled again to ensure everything has been counted correctly.

Marks can go down as well as up as a result of this process. Because of this, we must have written permission from the student in order to apply.

Coursework

Written or practical work done by a student over a period of time, which counts towards their final grade. Coursework may be continually revised and improved until it is submitted to the exam board. The teacher assesses the work, and informs the exam board of the grade awarded. The exam boards request a sample of work from random students to moderate and ensure the marking is accurate.

Controlled/Internal Assessment

Units of a qualification that are marked (assessed) by teachers in school, then marks and a sample of students' work are sent to the exam board so that the standard of marking can be checked. These assessments are as important as live exams, and do contribute to the final grade. Controlled assessments are not coursework, and must be completed within a certain timeframe (usually a few hours over one or two timetabled sessions).

