CASTLE DONINGTON COLLEGE

CANDIDATE EXAM HANDBOOK

2026/27

This handbook is reviewed and updated annually

Produced/reviewed by	
Miss Shaw- Examinations Officer	
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Contents

Introduction 3
Purpose of this handbook 3
Malpractice 3
Personal data 4
Copyright 4
Coursework assessments/non-examination assessments 4
Written timetabled exams 4
Contingency sessions - Summer 2027 5
Timetable clash 5
Where you will take your exams 5
What time your exams will start and finish 5
Supervision during your exams 6
Exam room conditions 6
Where you will sit in the exam room 7
How your identity is confirmed in the exam room 7
What equipment you need to bring to your exams 7
Using calculators 7
What you MUST NOT bring into the exam room 7
Food and drink in exam rooms 8
What you should wear for your exams 8
Where your personal belongings will be stored during your exam 8
What to do if you arrive late for your exam 8
What to do if you are unwell on the day of your exam 8
What happens if you have an unauthorised absence from your exam 9
What happens in the event of an emergency in the exam room 9
Candidates with access arrangements/reasonable adjustments 9
Results 9
Post-results services 10
Certificates 10
Internal appeals procedure 10
Complaints policy 11

Introduction

Castle Donington College is committed to ensuring that candidates are fully briefed on the examination and assessment process in place in the centre and are made aware of the required JCQ/awarding body instructions and information for candidates.

You are required to read and understand
the contents of this handbook AND the documents
on the College website - Examinations/Information for Candidates

Purpose of this handbook

This booklet has been produced to give you guidance on the rules and regulations that you, as a candidate, are expected to follow and is correct as of the date printed.

Castle Donington College conducts examinations and assessments in accordance with the regulations set out by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and the Awarding Bodies.

Failure to read this booklet and the information for candidates on the College website, will not be accepted as an excuse for breaking exam rules, not attending exams or failing to comply with any rules and regulations set down by Castle Donington College, the JCQ or the Awarding Body.

The four Awarding Bodies that we work with are:

AQA – www.aqa.org.uk

Edexcel – www.edexcel.org.uk

OCR – www.ocr.org.uk

WJEC – www.wjec.co.uk

For more information on the awarding bodies, please refer to their websites.

Malpractice

To maintain the integrity of qualifications, strict Regulations are in place. Malpractice means any act or practice which is in breach of the Regulations. Any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice will be investigated and reported to the relevant awarding body/bodies

JCQ provides information regarding what constitutes malpractice:

- Introduction of unauthorised material into the examination room
- Breaches of examination conditions
- Exchanging, obtaining, receiving, or passing on information which could be examination related (or the attempt to)
- Offences relating to the content of candidates' work
- Undermining the integrity of examinations/assessments

The following are standard sanctions:

- warning;
- loss of marks;
- loss of all marks gained in a component;
- loss of all marks gained for a unit;
- disqualification from the unit;
- disqualification from all units in one or more qualifications taken in the series;
- disqualification from the whole qualification;
- disqualification from all qualifications taken in that series;
- barred from entering for examinations for a set period of time

Personal data

The awarding bodies collect information about exam candidates.

To understand what information is collected and how it is used, you must read the JCQ Information for candidates – Privacy Notice (See College website - Examinations/Information for Candidates).

Copyright

The copyright of any work created by a candidate that is submitted to an awarding body for assessment (referred to as Assessment Materials) belongs to the candidate.

By submitting this work, a candidate is granting the awarding body a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to use their assessment materials (referred to as Assessment Licence).

If a candidate wishes to terminate the awarding body's rights for anything other than assessing his/her work, the awarding body must be notified by the centre and it is at the discretion of the awarding body whether or not to terminate such rights.

Coursework assessments/non-examination assessments

There are a range of assessment methods at GCSE Level:

Examination – this is a written exam paper under supervised conditions where the date and time has been decided by the Awarding Bodies nationally.

Non-exam assessments (NEA)/Coursework – the College decides when the class is ready to take the assessment which will be conducted under controlled/supervised conditions throughout the course.

Speaking Assessments – where students are required to do a speaking assessment as part of their course, they will be notified via their teacher as to when these will take place.

This is not a complete list but includes those assessments relevant to Castle Donington College. All assessments carry a weight towards your final GCSE grade/Cambridge National grade.

Written timetabled exams

General exam dates and exam timetables will be made available to you via the Examinations section of our website. These are also available below:

Summer 2027 Exams

GCSE Summer 2027 exams run from 10th May – 18th June 2027

Each Candidate will be given their individual Examinations Timetable for the Summer exams in the Spring Term. Your timetable will include the following:

- The subjects you are entered for
- The date of your exams
- The time of your exams
- Your **legal** surname and forename
- Your candidate number – you will need this number to use for all your exams
- The room where you will sit each exam
- Your seat number

Check your timetable carefully and make sure:

All the subjects that you are meant to be taking appear on the list.

That you are entered for the **correct** tier (Higher/Foundation).

That your personal details (your legal name and date of birth) are correct. These are what will appear on your certificates.

Please note ONLY legal names are used in the exam process and your legal name will be printed on certificates.

You need to check the names on your timetable and if there are any errors or you are unsure about anything on your exam timetable, see Miss Shaw immediately.

Contingency sessions - Summer 2027

Students must be available for the following Contingency dates:

Wednesday 23rd June.

These are set by the Awarding Body and it is a requirement you are available for these dates in the event of disruption to exams.

Timetable clash

What to do if you identify you have two or more exam papers timetabled at the same time (a timetable clash)

If for any reason you have two or more exams timetabled for the same time, then the Examinations Officer will arrange for you to sit your exams one after the other. The times will be reflected on your exam timetable. In these circumstances you will have to be supervised until you have finished all of the exams in question and remain under supervised conditions **at all times** until you have completed all of the exams concerned.

You will receive prior notice of any timetable clashes and information will be sent home closer to the time.

Where you will take your exams

All exams will be taken at Castle Donington College.

What time your exams will start and finish

You must attend school as normal during exams, which means arriving by 8:45am every day. During the exam period, the timings of the school day will change to a 2:1:2 format.

All exams start at the following times:

Morning Exams - 9:15am

Afternoon Exams - 1:15pm

For *morning* exams, you must go to Registration and then go straight to the Dining Hall and line up according to your allocated row and seat number.

For *afternoon* exams, you must line up in the Dining Hall at 1:00pm according to your allocated row and seat number.

Make sure you know the dates and times of your exams to ensure you line up at least 15 minutes before the start time; these details will appear on your individual exam timetable. Daily seating plans will be displayed in the English area and the Hall.

If you are late for an exam, you will need to see a member of the Senior Leadership. SLT and the Examinations Officer will decide what action needs to be taken. A candidate will be considered very late if they arrive more than 30 minutes after the start time, i.e. 9:45am for morning exams and 1:45pm for afternoon exams. Where a candidate is very late, the Awarding Body will be notified.

Please note: it is at the discretion of the Awarding Body whether they choose to accept the entered work or not.

Supervision during your exams

Exams are supervised by a team of external invigilators and will be identifiable by their ID badge and lanyard, worn at all times. Invigilators must follow strict rules and regulations when conducting exams as directed by JCQ awarding bodies. Therefore, you MUST follow the instructions given or this may be considered malpractice.

Exam room conditions

Candidates are expected to arrive on time and with the correct equipment for each exam. A member of SLT will call a row at a time to enter the exam room.

If you have still have your mobile phone, smart watch, watch or any other electronic devices, then you must hand them in before you enter the exam room. You will get your devices back when the exam has finished. Ensure you know your seat number.

Always listen to and follow the instructions of the Invigilator. The Invigilator will go through regulations and give any important information that is relevant for your exam.

Check that you have the right paper and answer booklet in front of you

When the Invigilator instructs you to, complete all the details on the front of your answer booklet. If you use any additional paper during the exam, make sure these details are on each sheet.

Candidates **must not open** the question paper until **TOLD BY THE INVIGILATOR** and the examination begins.

Write your answers within the designated sections of the answer booklet.

All rough work must be done on the question paper or answer booklet but please ensure you put a single line through if it is rough work or if you have changed your answer.

Please ensure you read the instructions set out on the cover of your question paper. This will give you vital information as to which sections to be completed, materials you can use and if you are allowed any extra paper.

You will not be permitted to leave the exam room unless prior agreements have been made for medical reasons, or absolutely necessary. If you need to leave the exam room for anything not considered an emergency, you must not go if:

- the exam is for less than an hour

- in the first & last 15 minutes of exams over an hour.

If you leave the exam for anything that is considered a non-emergency, you will not get any extra-time unless there are extenuating circumstances.

When the exam is finished, the Invigilator will tell you to stop writing. At this point, put your pens down and await instructions from the Invigilator. Please remember that you are still under exam conditions and must not communicate with any other candidate and continue to face the front.

If you have used any loose additional answer paper, please ensure that you have your name and candidate number on all extra sheets. You must then place them in the order you answered the questions and insert them inside the answer booklet.

You are not allowed to take any question papers, additional paper or rough work out of the exam room. The Invigilators will collect all of this.

Once all the papers are collected, you will be dismissed one row at a time and are still under exam conditions.

YOU MUST NOT TALK TO ANYONE UNTIL YOU HAVE LEFT THE EXAM ROOM

REMEMBER: If there is anything that you are unsure of, if you have a query to do with the question paper, if you need any additional paper or you are not well, please raise your hand to get the attention of an Invigilator.

REMEMBER once you enter the exam room, you are not allowed to communicate with any other candidate. If you are found doing so it will be treated as malpractice (breaking exam regulations) and necessary action will need to be taken.

Where you will sit in the exam room

You will enter the exam room in row and seat order. Walk **SILENTLY** in single file to your seat with the equipment that you need for your exam, face the front, remain in silence and await instructions from the Invigilator.

How your identity is confirmed in the exam room

You will have an ID card on your desk to ensure you are correctly identified. If this is incorrect, raise your hand and inform an Invigilator immediately.

What equipment you need to bring to your exams

You must bring ALL the correct equipment for each exam either in a **clear pencil case or clear plastic wallet**.

These are the basic requirements YOU ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE:

- 2 black pens
- 2 pencils
- Sharpener
- Eraser
- Ruler
- Highlighters (**NOT** to be used in answers)
- Maths set removed from the case (which includes set square, protractor, compass)

Using calculators

Please ensure you remove your calculator lid and do not bring this into the exam room

The instructions on the question paper will say whether calculators are allowed or not. If the instructions do not include such a statement, calculators should be treated as standard equipment and may be used by candidates.

Where the use of a calculator is allowed, candidates are responsible for making sure that their calculators meet the awarding bodies' regulations

If you use a calculator:

- make sure it works properly; check that the batteries are working properly;
- clear anything stored in it;
- remove any parts such as cases, lids or covers which have printed instructions or formulae;
- do not bring into the exam room any operating instructions or prepared programs
- it must be put into exam mode

What you MUST NOT bring into the exam room

CANDIDATES ARE ADVISED TO LEAVE THEIR MOBILE PHONES AT HOME DURING THE EXAMS

You MUST NOT bring into the exam:

- Any electronic devices such as an iPod, a mobile phone, a MP3/4 player or similar device, watch (wrist watches are classed as unauthorised items), smart watch/smart glasses, air pods, earbuds or any other in ear device.
- Bags, folders etc.
- Any paper/notes/revision books
- Outside coats, hats, gloves etc.
- Correcting pens, fluids or tape

- Erasable pens or gel pens
- Calculator lids
- Tin cases
- Glasses case

Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility, and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

If you are found wearing a wristwatch, smart watch, have a phone in your pocket or any unauthorised item, once the exam is underway you will be reported to the Exam Board and may be disqualified from all exams you are entered for.

Food and drink in exam rooms

A bottle of **water** in a clear bottle with all labels removed are permitted in the exam room.

No other drinks will be permitted in the exam room

No food is allowed into the exam room.

What you should wear for your exams

You MUST attend all exams in full College uniform.

Where your personal belongings will be stored during your exam

All belongings are to be left in the changing rooms for the entirety of an exam.

Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility, and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

What to do if you arrive late for your exam

If you are late for an exam, you will need to see a member of the Senior Leadership. SLT and the Examinations Officer will decide what action needs to be taken.

Where possible, call school to make SLT/Exams Officer aware you are running late. Ensure you do not have access to your phone, or other device that may have access to the internet, during this time and you are supervised at all times.

A candidate will be considered very late if they arrive more than 30 minutes after the start time, i.e. 9:45am for morning exams and 1:45pm for afternoon exams. Where a candidate is very late, the Awarding Body will be notified.

Please note: it is at the discretion of the Awarding Body whether they choose to accept the entered work or not.

What to do if you are unwell on the day of your exam

If you are unwell on the day of your exam, the College absence procedure should be followed as standard. A clear reason for the candidate absence should be made.

If you are unable to get through on the telephone line, an email must be sent to postroom@cdcollege.uk with an explanation of the illness.

If you are unwell but are still able to attend the exam, please make a member of staff aware of how you are feeling.

If you are unable to attend an exam because of severe illness, suffer bereavement or other trauma, or have been disturbed during an exam, then it is your responsibility to alert the College to that effect. Staff in the main office will then alert the Examinations Officer.

If a claim for special consideration is to be made, appropriate evidence will need to be provided within three days of the exam date.

What happens if you have an unauthorised absence from your exam

In the case of an unauthorised absence and you do not attend an exam, you will be asked to cover the cost of that exam unless you can provide a satisfactory reason for non-attendance together with evidence. The approximate cost of the average exam is £60.00 plus a £2.50 administration fee.

If a claim for special consideration is to be made, appropriate evidence will need to be provided within three days of the exam date.

What happens in the event of an emergency in the exam room

If the alarm sounds, listen carefully to your Invigilator and do not panic. Make sure you follow the steps below:

Maintain complete **SILENCE** at all times, you will still be under exam conditions so must not communicate with any other candidates in any way

In the event of an evacuation, you will have to leave the room in the order that you are sitting. Do not take anything with you. All papers, pens etc. must be left on your desk

You will be led to the playground and remain in rows and in your exam seating order

When you return to the Exam Room, await further instructions from the Invigilator

Instructions will be given to you in the event of a Lockdown

Candidates with access arrangements/reasonable adjustments

Our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-Ordinator (SENDCo) identifies students who require special arrangements during exams. This could consist of extra time, a scribe, use of a laptop, a separate room, coloured overlays, use of a prompt and supervised rest breaks. Evidence is required for specific arrangements and applications have to be made by the SENDCo 21st March 2027.

All access arrangements must reflect a candidate's normal way of working (NWW) and evidence is required for online and centre assessed arrangements. If you are entitled to any access arrangements, you will receive confirmation detailing what arrangements have been made for you.

You will receive information about the access arrangements you have been granted, prior to your exam.

If you have any queries in regards to Access Arrangements, please contact Miss Shaw (EO) or Mrs Fidler (SENDCo) immediately.

Results

GCSE RESULTS DAYS: THURSDAY 19th AUGUST 2027

Details on the release of results to candidates on Thursday 19th August 2027 will be provided during the summer term. Candidates will receive a provisional statement of results slip which can only be given to candidates.

If you wish for someone else to receive your results on your behalf, then you must complete the relevant form and hand this to the Examinations Officer. Results will only be posted out if a stamped addressed envelope has been provided. Results will never be given out by telephone.

Post-results services

If you have any concerns, please speak to a member of SLT, teacher or the Examinations Officer. Do not contact the Awarding Body directly with any queries.

Review of Marking (RoMs)

If you have concerns about your results after they have been published then speak to your subject teacher, Head of Department or the Examinations Officer. They will be able to explain to you what (if anything) can be done regarding your query. All queries should be raised immediately as there are tight deadlines to be met if any action needs to be taken. The final decision on whether to process a RoMs lies with the Head of Centre.

Please note if a RoMs is processed, we will need your permission and require you to complete a form providing consent as marks can either go up or down or remain the same. There will also be a cost involved that you will have to pay.

Access to Scripts (ATS)

Teachers may wish to review your scripts to be able to advise on a review of marking. Additionally, teachers may want to use your script to support teaching and learning. However if requested, your name and candidate number can be removed from the script before it is used. For both these services, we require your permission and relevant forms need to be signed.

Certificates

Certificates will be available from the end November/beginning December of the year that you sit your exams.

You can:

- Collect in person from Castle Donington College on the designated dates
- Provide a stamped addressed envelope. The envelope must be A4 size and hard backed. The postage should cover recorded delivery. The College does not accept responsibility for loss during the postal process
- Ask someone else to collect on your behalf. You will have to give **written permission** to that person detailing your name and their name. They will need to bring suitable identification

Certificates will be kept on file for 1 year. After this point, they will be confidentially destroyed.

If you lose your certificate or have not collected within the year you will need to contact the Awarding Body for a replacement 'Certifying Statement of Results'. Please note that you will be charged for this.

Internal appeals procedure

You will be given your centre-assessed marks if you do the following subjects:

Subject	Specification Code	Awarding Body
Art & Design (Fine Art)	8202	AQA
Art & Design (Graphical Communication)	8203	AQA
Art & Design (Textiles)	8204	AQA
Design & Technology	8552	AQA
Drama	1DR0	Edexcel Pearsons
Physical Education	8582	AQA
Food Preparation & Nutrition	8585	AQA

Drama	1DR0	Edexcel Pearsons
Media Studies	C680U10	WJEC Eduqas
Music	C660U30	WJEC Eduqas

If you believe that your work was not marked fairly, consistently and in accordance with the awarding body's specification and subject-specific associated documents you may make use of our Internal Appeals Procedure (available on the Examinations section of the website or come and see Miss Shaw). This must be done before the deadline for submission of marks to the Awarding Body by the Examinations Officer.

Complaints policy

See Miss Shaw, the Examinations Officer, for a copy of the College Complaints Policy.

All policies available on request.

JCQ CIC

AQA Questions matter | CAMBRIDGE OCR | City & Guilds | cea Rewarding Learning | NCFE | Pearson | wjec cbac

NO MOBILE PHONES
NO SMART GLASSES
NO WATCHES

NO STORAGE OR WEB-ENABLED DEVICES



Possession of unauthorised items is a serious offence and could result in

DISQUALIFICATION

from your examination and your overall qualification.

This poster must be displayed in a prominent place outside each examination room.

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Warning to candidates



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.

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AI and Assessments
A quick guide for students

What is AI?

- AI stands for artificial intelligence and using it is like having a computer that thinks
- AI tools like ChatGPT or Snapchat My AI can write text, make art and create music by learning from data from the internet, but watch out – they can also make things up and be biased

How can AI be misused in assessments?



AI misuse is when you take something made using AI and say it's your own work.

THIS IS CHEATING!

How do I make sure I don't misuse AI?



Know the rules

- You're **not allowed** to use AI tools when you're in an exam
- Your teachers will tell you if you're allowed to use AI tools when doing your coursework – the rules will depend on your qualification
- Even if you're allowed to use AI tools, you can't get marks for content just produced by AI – your marks come from showing your own understanding and producing your own work

Reference reference reference!
If you're allowed to use AI tools, you must reference them clearly

- Name the AI tool you used
- Add the date you generated the content
- Explain how you used it
- Save a screenshot of the questions you asked and the answers you got

Declare it's all your own work – When you hand in your assessment, you have to sign a declaration. Anything without a reference must be all your own work. If you've used an AI tool, don't sign the declaration until you're sure you've added all the references

What happens if I misuse AI?

If you've misused AI, you could lose your marks for the assessment – you could even be disqualified from the subject.

DON'T RISK IT!



REMEMBER

Misusing AI is cheating!

Know the rules

Talk to your teachers

Reference clearly