



THE
BRITTONS
ACADEMY

Exams Guide for Students & Parents

Public exams can be a complicated and stressful time for all those involved and it helps if everyone is as well informed as possible.

This guide has been designed to inform you about exam procedures, to answer some of the most frequently asked questions, and to guide students and parents through the exam process.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact the Exams Office on:

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Telephone | 01708 630002 ext 144 |
| Examinations Officer | Mrs M Purton |
| Examinations Administrator | Ms J Jones |

On exam days it is best to contact the main school Reception on 01708 630002 and leave a message since the main priority will be starting exam sessions on time.

Who is responsible for the exams?

The school Examinations Officer is responsible for administering all public exams and for oversight of students during exams, under direct responsibility from the Principal. A team of invigilators are present during the exams and are trained and supervised by the Examinations Officer. The Joint Council for Qualifications (the JCQ) set down strict criteria for the conduct of exams, and the school is required to follow them precisely.

Who is entered for public exams?

Students who are being taught a subject will be entered for the most appropriate level of exam. Only by exception, after consultation with staff, students and parents, and with the consent of the Principal, will students not be entered.

Can students take holidays during term time?

Dates for exams are fixed by the Examination Boards and are subject to change until the exam season begins. The Examinations Officer cannot give actual dates for exams to parents or students wishing to book holidays in advance. Parents are reminded that they require the Principal's permission to take students out of school and they book holidays during term time at their own risk. It is strongly against good practice and school policy to take holidays during term time.

Coursework/Controlled Assessments

Some subjects have internal assessments which must be completed and marked, and the results and work sent to the Examination Boards, before the formal exams take place. The school sets deadlines that allow time for this process and these deadlines cannot be changed. Students who do not meet the coursework or controlled assessment deadlines or requirements will not be allocated a mark for this part of their course and their overall grade will suffer. They may also not be eligible for special consideration for the formal exams should they be ill as they will not have completed all of the requirements of the course.

Sometimes a student will not agree with the internal assessment marks awarded by a teacher. If this cannot be resolved by discussion between the teacher and student concerned then the student may appeal to the Exams Officer, who will put into action the agreed appeals process. This will be the final stage in the normal process of considering and resolving disputes. It is expected that it will be used only in exceptional circumstances. The appeals procedure can be obtained by contacting the Exams Office.

Study leave

Study leave is at the discretion of the school and this will be advised to the Students nearer the examination period. However, please be aware that there may be additional scheduled revision sessions for all subjects that they are expected to attend.

Students examination entries

When the entries have been submitted and accepted by the exam board students will receive their exam pack, which will include their individual candidate timetable. This details the subjects they have been entered for. Some subjects also have tiers – Foundation or Higher – and this will be shown on their Individual Candidate Timetable.

This should be checked thoroughly, and you must inform the **Examinations Officer if there are any errors or problems with subjects/tiers or any errors regarding your personal information e.g. date of birth.**

It is helpful if parents make sure that a copy of this timetable is available to their son/daughter in a visible place with all of the exams they are sitting clearly highlighted.

Listed on the next page are the examinations that we currently run at The Brittons Academy.

| Exam Board | Qualification | Specification Code | Number of Papers | Exam Duration |
|------------|--|--------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Pearson | GCSE Art | 1FA0 | | Non exam assessment |
| Pearson | GCSE Biology | 1BI0 | 2 | 1hr 45mins per exam |
| Pearson | GCSE Chemistry | 1CH0 | 2 | 1hr 45mins per exam |
| Pearson | GCSE Citizenship | 1CS0 | 2 | 1hr 45mins per exam |
| Pearson | GCSE Combined Science | 1SC0 | 6 | 1hr 10mins per exam |
| AQA | GCSE Computer Science | 8520 | 2 | 1hr 30mins per exam |
| AQA | GCSE Design & Technology | 8552 | 1 | 2hrs |
| WJEC | GCSE Drama | C690QS | 1 | 1hr 30mins |
| AQA | GCSE English Language | 8700 | 2 | 1hr 45mins per exam |
| AQA | GCSE English Literature | 8702 | 2 | 1hr 45mins/2hrs 15mins |
| AQA | GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition | 8585 | 1 | 1hr 45mins |
| AQA | GCSE French | 8585 | 3 + speaking exam | Listening (F)35mins (H) 45mins Reading (F) 45mins (H) 1hr Writing (F) 1hr (H) 1hr 15mins |
| AQA | GCSE Geography | 8035 | 3 | 1hr 30mins per exam |
| Pearson | GCSE History | 1HI0/BN | 3 | 1hr 15mins/1hr 45mins/1hr 20mins |
| AQA | GCSE Mathematics | 8300 | 3 | 1hr 30mins per exam |
| Pearson | GCSE Physics | 1PH0 | 2 | 1hr 45mins per exam |
| Pearson | GCSE Religious Education | 1RB0/ZN | 2 | 1hr 45mins per exam |
| | | | | |
| Pearson | BTEC Music | FXD52 | 1 | 1hr |
| Pearson | BTEC Physical Education | BNHC9 | Computer based | 1hr |
| Pearson | Entry Level English 1 | CHSW9 | 2 + speaking/listening exam | 1hr per exam |
| Pearson | Entry Level English 2 | CHSX1 | 2 + speaking/listening exam | 1hr per exam |
| Pearson | Entry Level ICT | ZD328 | 1 | 1hr per exam |
| Pearson | Entry Level Mathematics 1 | CHSW4 | 2/3 | 1hr per exam |
| Pearson | Entry Level Mathematics 2 | CHSW5 | 2/3 | 1hr per exam |
| WJEC | Vocational Level 1/2 Constructing in the built environment | 60330685 | Computer based | 1hr |
| OCR | Cambridge National Child Development | J818 | 1 | 1hr 15mins |
| OCR | Cambridge National Enterprise and Marketing | J819 | 1 | 1hr |

Where will the exams be held?

The main location for written papers is the School Hall. Students are asked to be there 30 minutes before the advertised start time to enable seating procedures to be carried out efficiently. They are asked to wait quietly in the canteen until they are permitted to enter the exam hall. The students will sit in candidate number order, which appears on their individual candidate timetable. A seating plan is always available on the Exams noticeboard in the foyer of the school reception so that students can check where they are sitting before they enter the exam.

How do I know the dates when the exams take place?

The Summer period for exams is from the start of May until the end of June, but some oral exams and practical exams will take place earlier. Some ICT/ART/BTEC and Technology exams or external assessments might be held throughout the year – students will be notified as these dates are made available.

There is an additional day that has been added to the exam calendar which is classed as a '**contingency day**' and has come about due to events that have occurred in the past e.g. Manchester bombing. This means that all students must be available to sit an exam upto and including that day "***in the event of widespread, sustained national or local disruption to examinations this date will be used during the examination series.***"

Students will be advised of this date and if this will be actioned.

At what time of day do the exam sessions begin?

The Examination Boards dictate the start times for exams – exams are scheduled to begin at 8.30am and 1.00pm, unless indicated otherwise. Students must arrive 30 minutes before the advertised start time of the exam. The length of the exam papers varies and every effort is made to ensure that they finish by the end of the school day.

Students will not be allowed out of an exam early for any reason.

Some students may also receive an allowance of extra time for the exams and so their finishing times will be later – students and parents should be aware of this and make appropriate arrangements for getting home.

It is the students' responsibility to be aware of the start time of each exam, but parents should be aware that sometimes students confuse am and pm sessions. Please ensure that your son/daughter checks their exams for each day on the previous evening.

What happens if a student has more than one exam at the same time?

If a student is timetabled to sit two or more exams at the same time, this is a 'clash'. If the exams exceed three hours (including breaks) in a morning or afternoon session then the school will endeavour to move the starting time (to another time on the same day) to allow for a longer break between exams. Students must be under supervision by staff until the scheduled time of the exam is complete. Regardless, students sitting two or more exams in one session will have a minimum of a 15 minute supervised break between exams.

In very rare cases, more than five and a half hours of exams will be scheduled on one day and it may be necessary for a paper to be taken the next day. In this case, there is a requirement that the student is supervised overnight. This is essential to avoid compromising the integrity of the exam and needs to be organised well in advance.

If an exam is delayed from a morning to an afternoon session (or vice versa), then the student will be supervised over lunch. They should bring some revision or reading material and their lunch and a drink. They will not have any access to electronic media (mobile phones, etc). Even attempting to communicate with other students (who are not under the same supervision) will invariably result in disqualification from that paper.

How are students supervised during exams?

Adult external invigilators will supervise students under the direct management of the Examinations Officer. Once students enter the exam room they must be supervised and follow the invigilators instructions at all times. The invigilators are experienced in exams procedures and are subject to strict regulations, references and police checks. Papers will be on exam desks - these must not be looked at until students are advised to do so.

What happens if a student cannot find his/her place in the exam room?

Occasionally a student's number card is not where they think it should be. There are a number of possible reasons for this and students will be asked to wait for a few moments whilst the Examinations Officer investigates any problems. Every effort is made to keep these problems to a minimum and they will not prejudice any student's chance of taking an exam for which he/she has been entered. Students who have been officially withdrawn from an exam will not be permitted to sit the paper. Students should have a copy of their Individual Candidate Timetable with them for all exams.

What happens if a student is late?

If parents are aware that their son/daughter has got the timing of an exam wrong and has missed the starting time, they should call the school immediately and get a message to the Examinations Officer. Depending on how long the exam has been in progress, it may be possible for the student to be admitted. However, we are bound by Examination Board regulations on this matter. Normally there is a genuine reason and those who come straight to school may be admitted within the first 30 minutes of the start time, but it may not be possible to allow extra time for the minutes missed. If they are more than 30 minutes late the Board will decide whether to accept any paper sat. Students who arrive more than one hour after the starting time, or after the end of an exam will not be admitted.

What happens if a student does not turn up for an exam?

A student who absents themselves from any exam without presenting a doctor's note or a satisfactory reason for a request for special consideration, will receive a grade based only on those elements of the exams which have been marked.

What should students bring to the exams?

Students should bring to *every* exam:

- Two black pens
- A pencil
- A ruler
- A rubber
- Coloured pencils (if they are sitting an exam for a Technology subject)
- Calculator
- Maths equipment (protractor and compass)

All of this equipment should be kept in a clear pencil case. Pencil cases and basic equipment are available from the school library for a small charge.

Students are responsible for ensuring that they bring everything they need to the exam.

What are the regulations governing the use of calculators?

Some subject papers, especially Maths, explicitly prohibit the use of calculators. Students must not have on them, or attempt to use, any form of calculator for these. If an exam requires a calculator then these can be provided during the exam by the Exams Office.

The use, or attempted use, of any calculators (unless specifically listed as 'equipment required' in the exam instructions) will be regarded as malpractice.

What should students NOT bring with them?

Some items are ***strictly banned*** from exam rooms and should not be brought into the exam room under any circumstances. The Examination Boards consider possession of these items in an exam as malpractice, and the most likely outcome would be disqualification from that paper.

- Mobile phones
- Personal CD/MP3/Ipod/Airpods/Any other earphones
- Wrist-watch with a data storage device

The regulations state that mobile phones and wrist-watches with a data storage device are not to be brought into exam rooms under any circumstances.

This applies to all public and school/mock exams. Mobile phones cause disturbance to other students if they ring, these items present opportunities for cheating. Any student found to have a phone or wrist-watch with a data storage device in the exam room will be reported to the appropriate Examination Board. Should this happen, they will be disqualified from that paper and possibly from their other GCSEs.

It is a very serious offence and our advice is that watches or phones should not be brought into the exams. The School can take no responsibility for their security.

The following items are prohibited and must be handed in before the start of an exam in addition to any mobile or data storage devices. The school cannot be responsible for the security of these while the exam is in progress.

- The use of Tippex or correction pens is not permitted. Students should cross through work they do not wish to be marked.
- Notes, papers and textbooks, etc. are only allowed in certain exams (students will be informed by the subject teachers in advance, if this is the case).
- Students should not bring lucky mascots, etc. into the exam room.
- No drinks, food items or chewing gum are allowed.

What is meant by 'Malpractice'?

Malpractice is the term that the JCQ use for *any* irregularity or breach of the regulations. The Examinations Officer is required to, and will, report all infringements to the appropriate body and they will decide on what action to take based on the nature of the infringement. Some infringements carry automatic loss of marks as a minimum penalty. The JCQ take the integrity of exams very seriously and it is important that students listen carefully to the Examinations Officer's instructions.

Behaviour expected during exams

All students are given a copy of a 'Notice to Candidates', which is produced by the national examinations body (the JCQ), with their timetable. This gives general guidelines for conduct which must be observed.

The school, the JCQ and the Examination Boards take breaches of regulations very seriously. Parents should impress on their son/daughter the importance of good behaviour in an exam.

Any activity that may distract, disturb or upset other students will not be tolerated.

The Examinations Officer and Invigilators have the power to remove disruptive students.

Students are asked to wait quietly outside the exam venue, and to enter and leave in silence. This avoids disturbance to other students and helps to maintain a calm atmosphere for those students who are nervous about their exams.

Students who try to communicate with other students inside the venue, or who create a disturbance in the exam room will be asked to leave, and will be reported to the Examination Board. This may result in the student being disqualified from that paper.

Can students bring a drink?

Students may not bring a drink with them into the exam room due to the risk of spillage. Also, drinking too much may cause a problem since students may not be allowed to use toilet facilities during short exams due to issues of supervision.

If a drink is required (medical reasons or coughing, etc) then the invigilator will bring the student a cup of water. This will not be left on the desk.

Students should ensure that they have something to eat and drink before each exam, and that they have been to the toilet.

How are exams started?

The Examinations Officer will announce the exam formally, and students will be cautioned that they are subject to the regulations. Any instructions or changes to papers will be read out and students asked to complete their details on the answer papers.

What should students wear for exams?

Exams are a school activity and students must wear normal uniform. All students know the uniform rules and it is their responsibility to ensure they observe them. Students not dressed properly will not be permitted to sit exams. Coats and bags must be left outside the exam room.

What should I do if my son/daughter is unwell at the time of one of the exams?

You must have certified evidence of illness from a doctor. The doctor will advise as to whether your son/daughter is fit to sit the exam. If the student takes the paper despite being unwell, your doctor should give you a letter, which the school can forward to the Examination Board asking for special consideration on the grounds of illness.

If the student is unable, through illness, to sit a paper, the Examination Board *may*, after examining the doctor's letter and any evidence of performance on other papers, decide to award a grade. It is essential that you see your doctor on the day of the exam or previously. Retrospective information is not accepted and any doctors' letters must be forwarded to the Examinations Officer without delay, as there is a tight deadline.

Please telephone the school immediately if your son/daughter will not be attending an exam or if he/she will be present, but is unwell.

Any illness, or family circumstance, which may affect exam performance, arising shortly before or during the exams, should be notified as soon as possible to the Examinations Officer so that special consideration can be applied for. Parents should be aware that any adjustment is minimal and that no feedback is ever provided.

What if my son/daughter has a minor injury at the time of one of the exams?

Any injury which may affect exam performance, arising shortly before or during the exams, should be notified as soon as possible to the Examinations Officer so that special consideration can be applied for. Parents should be aware that any adjustment is minimal and that no feedback is ever provided.

If a student suffers an injury that affects their ability to write then they must inform the Examinations Officer immediately. The school will then arrange for the student to be moved to an alternative room and a scribe will be provided.

What do students do if they finish early?

Students should use all of the available time on their exam and spend any time at the end checking their answers. In any event they are not permitted to leave before the duration of the exam. They must sit in silence at their desk so as not to disturb other students.

Below are the procedures to follow in the event of a fire or a lockdown

Fire procedure

- Students will be told to stop writing and close their paper
- Invigilators will advise of next course of action
- If it is a false alarm, once the bell has stopped ringing the exam will resume and the lost minutes added to the end of the exam
- If it is a real fire the students will be escorted out of the exam hall in silence and taken to a safe area at the front of the school
- Once it is deemed safe to return to the exam hall the students will be escorted back in
- The exam will restart and the time missed will be added to the end of the exam

Lockdown procedure

- Students will be told to stop writing and close their paper
- Invigilators will advise of next course of action
- If it is a false alarm, once the bell has stopped ringing the exam will resume and the lost minutes added to the end of the exam
- If it is a real 'lockdown' students will be asked to go under their desks and the examinations officer and invigilators will lock all doors and close any windows and curtains.
- At all times students must be silent
- Once it is deemed safe, students will sit back at their desk and the exam will resume and any missed time will be added to the end of the exam.

When do students collect their results?

Students may collect their statement of exam results from the school on the day that they are issued. The GCSE information pack letter from the school will have the exact dates and times provided.

What can I do if results are substantially different from what is anticipated?

It must be remembered that exams can only measure performance on the day and that students can do better or worse than anticipated for a variety of reasons.

If there are serious grounds for concern about a result then the school can initiate an enquiry with the appropriate Board. Details of the procedures and the fees involved are available from the Examinations Officer and the process should be started as soon as possible after consultation with the Head of Department concerned. The final date for submission to the Examination Board is within three weeks after results are issued.

The Careers Co-ordinator will be available on results day if students wish to discuss their results and possible college places.

When do students receive certificates?

The Examination Boards issue certificates well after the exams have taken place (usually at the end of October for summer exams). Students are required either to collect in person, or a family member may collect them - but only bearing a letter of request signed by the student and some form of ID.

A student who has enquired about their GCSE grade will not receive a certificate until the enquiry process is completed.

On the following pages are the candidate information sheets from JCQ that you and your child need to read and understand so that they will comply with all the current examination regulations, any breach of these can be classed as malpractice.

