



CANDIDATE EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

GCSE • AS LEVEL • A LEVEL

North West Education Hub

A practical guide for private candidates before, during and after examinations.

Please keep this handbook.

You are responsible for reading the candidate information relevant to your examinations and following all instructions issued by North West Education Hub, the awarding organisation and examination invigilators.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Exams Officer	Shazia Tahir
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Important regulatory note

This handbook summarises key candidate-facing requirements. It does not replace the current JCQ Information for Candidates notices, JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations, awarding organisation rules or qualification-specific instructions. Where there is any conflict, the current regulatory or awarding organisation requirement takes precedence.

1. WELCOME AND HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

Welcome to North West Education Hub. We are an examination centre supporting private candidates with selected GCSE, AS Level and A Level qualifications.

This handbook explains the examination journey and the standards expected of every candidate. Please read it before registration is finalised and again before your first examination.

This handbook provides important information about:

- your examination entry and Statement of Entry
- timetables, arrival and identification
- what you may and may not bring into the examination room
- examination conduct and malpractice
- access arrangements and special consideration
- science practical and other additional assessment requirements
- results, certificates and post-results services
- complaints, privacy and safeguarding

Candidates under 18 should read this handbook with a parent or carer. The candidate remains responsible for following examination regulations.

2. CENTRE DETAILS AND KEY CONTACTS

North West Education Hub
The Rock
Bury
Lancashire
BL9 0JP

Telephone	0161 797 7707
Mobile	07527 675 842
General examinations email	exams@northwesteducationhub.co.uk
Head of Centre	Nazia Younis: headofcentre@northwesteducationhub.co.uk
Exams Officer	Shazia Tahir: exams@northwesteducationhub.co.uk
Safeguarding	safeguarding@northwesteducationhub.co.uk

Operational contacts such as the designated First Aider or Fire Marshal will be identified by Centre staff on the day where relevant.



3. REGISTRATION AND EXAMINATION ENTRIES

3.1 Candidate information

You must provide accurate, complete information when registering. This includes your legal name, date of birth, contact details, previous candidate identifiers where requested, qualification, specification and tier/option information.

Tell us promptly if any personal or contact details change. Your name and date of birth should match the identification you will use for verification.

3.2 Statement of Entry

Once your entry has been processed, you will receive entry information or a Statement of Entry. You must check it carefully.

- your name and date of birth
- awarding organisation and qualification
- subject, specification and entry/option code where shown
- tier of entry where applicable
- candidate number and other identifiers where shown
- examination dates, start times and any approved arrangements

Report any error immediately. Changes may be subject to awarding organisation deadlines, late fees and Centre administration charges in accordance with the current fee and refund policy.

3.3 Entry confirmation and responsibility

North West Education Hub will make entries from the information accepted during registration. You remain responsible for checking that the confirmed entry is the qualification you intend to take.

Related document

Please also read the Candidate Examination Terms and Conditions and the Examination Fees, Cancellation & Refund Policy.

4. EXAMINATION TIMETABLES AND CLASHES

4.1 Your timetable

Awarding organisations set the national examination dates. North West Education Hub will provide or confirm the timetable applicable to your entry. You must attend at the date, time and venue communicated by the Centre.

Our normal written examination session start times are 9:00am for morning sessions and 1:30pm for afternoon sessions, unless your individual timetable or Centre communication states otherwise.

4.2 Timetable clashes

Tell the Exams Officer immediately if you believe you have a timetable clash, including a clash involving an examination at another centre. Do not make your own alternative arrangements. The Centre will review the position under the applicable awarding organisation and JCQ rules.

4.3 Arrival

Candidates should arrive 30 minutes before the Centre's stated examination start time. This allows time for registration, identity checks, seating and instructions.

5. CANDIDATE IDENTIFICATION

5.1 Identity verification

As a private-candidate centre, North West Education Hub must be satisfied that the person sitting the examination is the person entered. Identity checks may take place during registration and on examination days.

5.2 Photographic identification

Bring the original photographic identification specified by the Centre. Examples normally accepted by the Centre include a current passport, photocard driving licence or another suitable government-issued photographic identity document.

If you do not have one of these documents, contact the Exams Officer well before your first examination. Do not assume an alternative document will be accepted.

5.3 Failure to verify identity

If your identity cannot be satisfactorily verified, admission may be delayed or refused and the matter may be referred to the awarding organisation where required. False identification or impersonation may constitute malpractice.

6. ARRIVAL, LATE ARRIVAL AND ABSENCE

6.1 On arrival

- report to the designated registration/waiting area
- present the required identification
- follow Centre staff instructions
- remain in the designated area until invited into the examination room

6.2 Late arrival

If you arrive after the Centre's stated start time, report to staff immediately. Do not enter an examination room without permission. Whether your work can be accepted will depend on the circumstances and the applicable JCQ/awarding organisation rules. A very late arrival may have to be reported to the awarding organisation.



6.3 Absence

If illness or an emergency prevents attendance, contact the Centre as soon as possible. Absence does not automatically create a right to a refund, reschedule or special consideration. The current Examination Fees, Cancellation & Refund Policy applies.

Where the circumstances may be eligible for special consideration, supporting evidence and strict deadlines may apply.

7. WHAT TO BRING

7.1 Essential equipment

You should bring the following equipment, where required for your examination:

- original photographic identification required by the Centre
- black ink pens
- pencils, eraser and ruler where required
- mathematical instruments required for the paper
- a permitted calculator where the paper allows one

Candidates are responsible for bringing suitable working equipment unless the Centre has expressly confirmed otherwise.

7.2 Calculators

A calculator may only be used where permitted. It must comply with the current examination rules and any qualification-specific restrictions. The candidate is responsible for ensuring that prohibited data, programs or functions are not accessible and for placing the calculator in the required examination mode where applicable.

Calculator cases, instruction leaflets or other material must not be brought to the desk unless specifically permitted.

7.3 Pencil cases and water

Any pencil case taken into the examination room must be see-through. Water may be permitted in a clear bottle with labels removed, subject to invigilator instructions.

7.4 Medication

If you need medication during an examination, tell the Centre in advance where possible. Arrangements must preserve candidate welfare and examination security.

8. UNAUTHORISED ITEMS

8.1 Items you must not have in the examination room

Do not take unauthorised material into the examination room. This includes:

- notes, revision material, unauthorised books or papers
- mobile phones
- earphones or earbuds, including AirPods
- MP3/MP4 players or similar devices
- smart glasses
- tablets or other communication devices
- watches of any kind

Important

Possession of unauthorised material is a breach of examination rules even if you did not intend to use it.

8.2 Personal belongings

Follow the Centre's instructions for storing bags, coats, electronic devices and other belongings. Candidates are strongly advised not to bring valuables. The Centre's responsibility for personal property is subject to its published terms and applicable law.

9. INSIDE THE EXAMINATION ROOM

9.1 Before the examination starts

Before the examination starts, you must:

- enter quietly and maintain examination conditions
- sit only in the seat allocated to you
- listen to the invigilator's instructions
- check that you have the correct question paper and permitted materials
- do not open the question paper or begin writing until instructed

9.2 During the examination

During the examination, you must:

- work independently
- raise your hand if you need assistance
- remain under examination conditions until released by the invigilator
- do not communicate with another candidate
- do not seek or give unauthorised assistance
- do not remove question papers, scripts or other secure examination material unless expressly permitted

9.3 Rough work and additional sheets

Use only authorised examination stationery. Put your candidate details on additional answer sheets as instructed. Rough work that forms part of your response should be completed on the permitted stationery and handed in as instructed.

9.4 Toilet breaks

Raise your hand and wait for permission. Any break must be managed in a way that maintains examination security. Additional time is not automatically awarded for a toilet break.

10. MALPRACTICE AND CANDIDATE CONDUCT

All candidates must act honestly and follow invigilator instructions. Suspected malpractice is handled under the applicable awarding organisation and JCQ procedures.

Examples include:

- cheating or attempting to gain an unfair advantage
- possessing or accessing unauthorised material or devices
- communicating with another candidate
- impersonation or false identification
- copying or assisting another candidate
- disruptive, abusive or threatening behaviour
- failing to follow reasonable examination instructions

Possible sanctions are determined under awarding organisation rules and can include loss of marks or disqualification. The Centre may also take proportionate action to protect candidates, staff and the integrity of the examination.

JCQ candidate information

Before your examinations, read the current JCQ Information for Candidates documents relevant to your assessments, including the notice for written examinations.

11. ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

11.1 What access arrangements are

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are agreed before examinations to remove or reduce barriers for eligible candidates without changing the assessment demands.

11.2 Private candidates

If you require access arrangements, tell North West Education Hub as early as possible and by any Centre deadline stated during registration. Private-candidate applications must be reviewed in line with current JCQ requirements. Previous arrangements do not automatically transfer to a new centre.

11.3 Evidence and assessment

The Centre may need evidence, information about your normal way of working and/or an assessment by an appropriately qualified person. You must cooperate with the process and attend any required appointment.



Examples of arrangements can include extra time, supervised rest breaks, a word processor, a reader or computer reader, a scribe, a prompter, modified papers or other approved adjustments. Eligibility depends on the individual candidate and the assessment.

11.4 On the day

If you believe an approved arrangement has not been implemented correctly, tell an invigilator immediately so the Centre can address the issue where possible.

12. SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment that may be available in limited circumstances where a candidate was temporarily affected by illness, injury or another adverse event at or close to the time of an assessment.

It is not a substitute for access arrangements and is not guaranteed. The awarding organisation decides whether an application is accepted and what adjustment, if any, is made.

Contact the Exams Officer immediately if an event may have affected your examination. Evidence and short application deadlines may apply.

13. SCIENCE PRACTICALS AND OTHER ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENTS

13.1 GCSE Sciences

GCSE science qualifications assess practical knowledge and skills through the written examinations. AQA and OCR specifications include practical activities that candidates are expected to have undertaken as part of their course of study. Private candidates must provide the information requested by North West Education Hub so that the Centre can determine whether the required practical provision and declarations can be met.

Candidates taking a GCSE Science qualification for the first time may therefore need practical provision in addition to the written examination entry. Resit candidates should identify themselves as resit candidates at registration so their circumstances can be reviewed.

13.2 A Level Biology, Chemistry and Physics

A Level Biology, Chemistry and Physics include a separately reported Practical Endorsement. Where you require the Practical Endorsement, the standard written examination entry fee does not include the cost of practical provision unless expressly stated.

Practical provision may be delivered through an approved arrangement with a suitable external laboratory, school, college or specialist provider. Availability, dates and additional fees must be confirmed before the Centre accepts the relevant arrangement.

13.3 Previously achieved Practical Endorsement

If you believe a previous Practical Endorsement result can be carried forward, tell the Centre at registration and provide the information/evidence requested. Carry-forward is subject to the relevant awarding organisation rules and must not be assumed.

Science candidates

You may be asked to complete the Centre's Science Practical Requirements Declaration before an entry is confirmed.

14. EMERGENCIES, EVACUATION AND ILLNESS DURING AN EXAMINATION

14.1 Emergency evacuation

If an alarm or emergency occurs, stop writing when instructed and follow the invigilator. Leave examination materials on your desk unless told otherwise. You must remain under examination conditions and must not discuss the paper, use a phone or access notes.

14.2 Illness during an examination

Raise your hand immediately and tell an invigilator. Do not leave the room without permission. The Centre will prioritise welfare while maintaining examination security and will record relevant circumstances where required.

14.3 Disruption

The Centre maintains examination contingency arrangements. Where an examination is disrupted, North West Education Hub will follow the current awarding organisation and JCQ instructions and communicate any necessary next steps.

15. RESULTS

Results are released on the nationally published results dates set for the relevant qualification. North West Education Hub will tell candidates how results will be made available.

The Centre cannot influence marks or grades. If a result is missing, incomplete or appears incorrect, contact the Exams Officer promptly so the appropriate awarding organisation process can be considered.

Do not share secure login details or ask another person to impersonate you when accessing results.

16. POST-RESULTS SERVICES AND APPEALS

16.1 Available services

Depending on the qualification and awarding organisation, post-results services can include a clerical re-check, a review of marking, a priority review of marking where available, and access to examination scripts.



16.2 Candidate consent

For a clerical re-check or review of marking, written candidate consent must be obtained after results have been published because the mark and grade can go down, stay the same or go up.

16.3 Deadlines and fees

Post-results deadlines are strict. North West Education Hub may set an earlier internal deadline so that requests can be checked, paid for and submitted on time. Awarding organisation and Centre charges may apply.

16.4 Private candidates

Private candidates may have additional routes available directly through an awarding organisation for certain post-results services. Contact the Exams Officer first so that the correct route for your qualification can be confirmed.

16.5 Centre decisions and appeals

Where applicable, candidates may use the Centre's Internal Appeals Procedure in relation to a Centre decision concerning post-results services. Awarding organisation appeal routes are governed by their own procedures.

17. CERTIFICATES

Certificates are issued after results and are important records of achievement. North West Education Hub will notify candidates when certificates are available and explain the collection or delivery arrangements.

You are responsible for keeping your contact details current and for collecting or receiving certificates within the arrangements communicated by the Centre. Replacement evidence from awarding organisations can be costly and may not be identical to the original certificate.

18. FEES, CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

Examination entry fees, late fees, additional assessment charges, cancellation arrangements and refunds are governed by the current North West Education Hub Examination Fees, Cancellation & Refund Policy and the fee schedule applicable to the relevant series.

Awarding organisation charges and other costs may become non-recoverable once an entry or service has been processed. Non-attendance does not automatically entitle a candidate to a refund.

Check before paying

Read the current fee schedule, Terms and Conditions and Examination Fees, Cancellation & Refund Policy before confirming your booking.

19. COMPLAINTS



North West Education Hub aims to provide a professional, fair and efficient examination service. Raise a concern with the Exams Officer promptly where possible so that it can be considered while the facts are current.

If the issue cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint may be submitted under the Centre Complaints Procedure. Complaints about matters controlled by an awarding organisation may need to follow the awarding organisation's process.

20. DATA PROTECTION AND PRIVACY

North West Education Hub processes personal information required to register candidates, administer examinations, verify identity, support access arrangements, communicate results and certificates, meet safeguarding obligations and comply with regulatory requirements.

Information may be shared where necessary with awarding organisations, JCQ member bodies, regulators, service providers acting on the Centre's behalf and other organisations where required or permitted by law.

Personal information is handled in accordance with UK data protection law and the Centre's current privacy/data protection documentation. Candidates may exercise applicable data rights by contacting the Centre.

21. SAFEGUARDING AND CANDIDATE WELFARE

North West Education Hub is committed to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk. If you have a safeguarding concern while attending the Centre, speak to a member of staff or contact the safeguarding team.

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Shazia Tahir
Safeguarding email	safeguarding@northwesteducationhub.co.uk

22. CANDIDATE CHECKLIST

Before attending your first examination, make sure that:

- I have checked my Statement of Entry and reported any error.
- I know the date, start time and venue for every examination.
- I know which original photographic identification I must bring.
- I will arrive 30 minutes before the Centre's stated start time.
- I understand that watches, phones, earbuds and other unauthorised items must not be in the examination room.
- I have checked the calculator and equipment rules for my papers.
- I have read the current JCQ Information for Candidates notices relevant to my assessments.
- I have told the Centre about any access arrangement needs by the required deadline.
- If I am taking Science, I have completed any practical-requirement checks requested by the Centre.
- I know how to contact the Exams Officer if illness, an emergency or a timetable problem occurs.

23. RELATED CANDIDATE DOCUMENTS

Candidates may be required to read, accept or complete the following documents as applicable:

- Candidate Examination Terms and Conditions
- Examination Fees, Cancellation & Refund Policy
- Candidate Privacy / Data Protection information
- Access Arrangements documentation
- Science Practical Requirements Declaration
- JCQ Information for Candidates notices
- Post-Results Services information and candidate consent
- Centre Complaints Procedure and Internal Appeals Procedure

The latest version of Centre documents should always be used. Where a document is updated after this handbook is issued, the updated document takes precedence for the matter it covers.

Candidate acknowledgement

As part of registration, North West Education Hub may ask you to confirm that you have received or had access to this handbook and the relevant examination rules. Your acknowledgement does not remove the Centre's responsibility to administer examinations correctly, nor does it replace the current awarding organisation or JCQ requirements.