

EXAMINATIONS GUIDEBOOK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS 2025

Awarding Bodies :

Edexcel AQA Cambridge
International

Examinations Office

- Telephone Number: 04 360 4866 ext. 205
- Mobile Number: 050 212 9740 (Emergency use only during exams season)



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INTRODUCTION

This guidebook is for students and parents of students who will be taking GCSE/IGCSE or GCE examinations this year. It is the aim of DESS COLLEGE to make the examination experience as stress-free and successful as possible. Hopefully, this booklet will prove informative and helpful for you and your parents. Please read it carefully so you are aware of the examination regulations and the procedures to follow in the event of any problems occurring.

At DESS COLLEGE we offer both GCSE, International GCSE and GCE examinations. GCSE stands for General Certificate of Secondary Education and students generally prepare for GCSE examinations over Years 10 and 11. GCSEs are linear in structure and students will be required to sit all their examinations at the end of the course. For most subjects, that means at the end of Year 11. It is important that students complete all the requisite units as marks will contribute towards their final grade at GCSE.

GCE stands for General Certificate of Education and is commonly referred to as the "A levels". The GCEs or A levels are made up of AS (Advanced Subsidiary) and ADV (Advanced) units. Many of the AS levels are standalone qualifications and do not contribute to A levels. The standalone AS is a distinct and separate qualification to the full A level. Students may choose to sit some of their AS examinations at the end of Y12, but they will still be required to sit the full A level (ADV) examinations at the end of Y13.

The awarding bodies (examination boards) set the examinations and have strict criteria which must be followed for the conduct of examinations and DESS COLLEGE is required to follow them precisely. Students, from now on referred to as "candidates", should, therefore, pay particular attention to the Information to Candidates that is printed on the following page.

Some of the questions you may have been answered at the back of this booklet. If there is anything you do not understand or any question that has not been addressed, please ask.

Information on Examinations is posted on our website, www.dessc.sch.ae, under Examinations. Current timetables, results collection information, revision tips, Examinations Guidebook and the Exams Office contact information can all be found on the Examinations page.

If you or your parents have any queries or need help or advice at any time before, during or after the examinations please contact:

The Examinations Officer – **Mrs. Niki Stannard** (J Block, JG1)

Telephone number: **360 4866 ext. 205**

Mobile number: **050 212 9740** (*for emergencies during examinations series*)



BEFORE THE EXAMINATIONS

CANDIDATE ENTRY REPORT

- All candidates receive a candidate entry report indicating the subjects they are being entered for and the levels of entry, where applicable. Please check that the entries are correct. Some subjects only have one tier of entry, and some have Foundation or Higher tier.
- You must check everything on your entry report very carefully, particularly check that all personal details (date of birth, spelling of names) are accurate as these will appear on certificates, and it is costly to change them once certificates are awarded. You must use your legal name rather than “known as” name as this will help to prevent issues later when you may need to verify that you are the person named on the certificate.

EXAMINATION ENTRY FEES

- Exam entry fees are set by the awarding bodies. Entry fees are charged for each unit exam or subject entry. These fees vary per subject.
- Invoices, listing all examinations entered for the candidate, are issued to parents once candidate entry reports have been issued and corrections have been made. Invoices must be paid to the Accounts Office by the indicated deadline. Candidates will not be entered for examinations if *any* school fees are outstanding.
- **No refunds** will be issued for withdrawal from examinations once entries have been submitted to the awarding bodies. You will be informed of the relevant deadlines on the candidate entry report.
- Any late requests for examination entries will incur late fees as set by the awarding bodies.

AWARDING BODIES

- The school uses the following awarding bodies: Edexcel, AQA and Cambridge International

CANDIDATE NAME

- Candidates are entered for examinations under the name format of Surname: Forename + additional names (optional), e.g., SMITH: MICHAEL.

CANDIDATE NUMBER

- Each candidate has a four-digit candidate number. Candidate number lists are posted outside of both auditoriums and can be provided to you by the Exams Office. This is the number you will enter on examination papers. **Please memorise your number.** This number will remain the same for the duration of your time at DESS COLLEGE. **Candidate numbers are also available on your Go4schools profile.**
- Candidate ID cards will be placed on each desk in the examination room. This card displays both your candidate number and your school photo. Candidates will be seated in candidate number order.

UCI

- Each candidate will also be assigned a Unique Candidate Identifier (12 numbers and 1 letter) which is shown on the top of the statement of entry. Your UCI is used for administration purposes. You do not need to memorise it. This number will remain the same for the duration of your secondary schooling.

TIMETABLES

- Once your examination entries are confirmed, your individual timetable will be available for view on the Student Portal. The timetable will show your own specific examinations with details of date, time, duration of exam and venue. Check it carefully. If you think something is wrong, see Mrs. Stannard in the Exams Office immediately.



- Some candidates may have a clash where two or more subjects are timetabled at the same time. The school will make special timetable arrangements for these candidates only. You must check your individual timetable and see Mrs. Stannard if you are unsure what to do. If you think there is a clash on your timetable that has not been resolved, please see Mrs. Stannard immediately.
- A master timetable will be posted in each of the blocks as well as on the Parent Portal and the website. This is a *general* timetable. Your individual timetable may differ (e.g., clash candidates, venue) so please ensure you reference your *own* specific timetable and know when and where your exams are. If in doubt, check with Mrs. Stannard.

STUDY LEAVE

Examinations are timetabled as either Morning or Afternoon sessions. Morning session examinations are timetabled to start before 1 p.m. Afternoon session examinations are timetabled to start after 1 pm. If an exam is scheduled in an Afternoon session, then the day of the exam is authorized study leave. If a student chooses to come into school when they have an afternoon examination, they must attend their lessons as normal but will be given permission to revise for their examination.

- For Morning examinations, students can either come to school at the normal time and attend lessons as usual (they will be permitted to revise during those lessons), or they can arrive at school no later than 30mins before the scheduled start time. This will give them enough time to sign in at reception and make their way to the exam room. They must be at the exam room for all exams at least 15mins before the scheduled start time. A Study Leave letter will be sent home prior to the start of the exam season with further details.

EQUIPMENT

- Make sure you have all the correct equipment before your examinations.
- Candidates are encouraged to assemble an Exam Pack prior to the start of the examination period and designate it for exams use only. This Exam Pack should be a clear pencil case or clear plastic bag (e.g., Ziploc bag) which will contain everything you will need for all your exams. Suggested contents of the Exam Pack are as follows:
 - two black ink or ballpoint pens (no blue pens please)
 - two 2B pencils
 - eraser
 - pencil sharpener
 - approved calculator – **(CASIO) FX-991EX / FX – 991CW**
 - 30 cm ruler (marked with cm and mm)
 - Compass
 - Protractor
 - Highlighters (*for use in question papers only*)
- Maths sets can be taken into the exam room, but you will be required to remove the instruments from the case and place the case on the floor beneath the desk
- You are responsible for providing your own equipment for examinations. You must not attempt to borrow equipment from another candidate during the examination.
- Exam packs can be purchased (with or without a calculator) from Reprographics in H block.

DURING THE EXAMINATIONS

EXAMINATION REGULATIONS

- A copy of the Information to Candidates, which is issued jointly by all the awarding bodies, is printed on p.4 of this booklet. All candidates must read this carefully and note that to break any of the examination rules or regulations could lead to disqualification from all subjects. The school must report any breach of regulations to the relevant awarding body.



ATTENDANCE AT EXAMINATIONS

- Candidates are responsible for checking their own timetables and arriving at school on the correct day and time, properly dressed and equipped. Candidates must present to the exam room **15 minutes** prior to the start time of their examination and wait quietly outside until invited to enter by the invigilators.
- Candidates who arrive late for an examination may still be admitted but may not receive any additional time. If special consideration applies, then you must speak to the Exams Officer (see ABSENCE FROM EXAMINATIONS).
- Full school uniform must be worn by all candidates attending school for examinations (including Fridays).
- All items of equipment, pens, pencils, mathematical instruments, etc., should be always visible to the invigilators. You must use either a transparent pencil case or clear plastic bag.
- Pens should be black ink. Use of correction pens, highlighters or pale-coloured gel pens is not permitted in the answer booklet.
- Watches will not be permitted in the exam room. Large clocks are visible throughout the exam room for candidates to check the time.
- Examination regulations are very strict regarding items that may be taken into the examination room (see FAQs at the end of this booklet). If you break these rules, you will be disqualified from the examination.
- Mobile telephones **MUST BE SWITCHED OFF (NOT PUT ON SILENT) AND TURNED IN TO AN INVIGILATOR UPON ENTRANCE TO THE EXAMINATION ROOM.** If a mobile phone (or any other type of electronic communication or storage device) is found in your possession during an examination (even if it is turned off) it will be taken from you and a report made to the appropriate awarding body without exception.
- No food or drink is allowed in the examination rooms apart from water in a clear bottle. All labelling on bottles must be removed.
- Do not draw graffiti or write offensive comments on examination papers – if you do, the awarding body may refuse to accept your paper, or you may lose marks.

Listen carefully to instructions and notices read out by the invigilators. There may be amendments to the exam paper that you need to know about.

- Candidates must stay in the examination room for at least **one hour after the published start time of the exam** (or for the duration of the exam if it is less than one hour). You will not be allowed to leave an examination room early.
- For all AQA and Edexcel examinations taking place in Dubai, candidates cannot be released from the exam room until 1 p.m. for morning exams and 5:30 p.m. for afternoon exams, at the earliest. Some examinations will go beyond these times due to their length. Cambridge International exams are based on start times with morning exams generally starting at 9 a.m. and afternoon exams starting at 1 p.m. Schools are unable to release candidates from these examinations until one hour after the starting times.
- At the end of the examination all work must be handed in. Question papers, answer booklets and additional paper must NOT be taken from the exam room.
- Invigilators will collect your exam papers before you leave the room. Absolute silence must be maintained during this time. Remember you are still under examination conditions until you have left the room.
- Candidates are asked to leave the room in silence and to show consideration for other candidates who may still be working.



- If the **fire alarm** sounds during an examination the invigilators will tell you what to do. If we must evacuate the room, you will be asked to leave **in silence** in the order in which you are seated. You will return to the exam room after the alarm has been resolved and will be allowed the full working time for the examination.

INVIGILATORS

- The school employs invigilators to conduct the examinations. Candidates are expected to behave in a respectful manner towards all invigilators and always follow their instructions.
- Invigilators are in the examination rooms to supervise the conduct of the examination. They will distribute/ collect the examination papers, tell candidates when to start/finish the examination and deal with any problems that occur during the examination, for example if a candidate is feeling ill. Invigilators cannot discuss the examination paper with you or explain the questions.
- Candidates who are disruptive or behave in an unacceptable manner will be removed from the examination room by invigilators.

ABSENCE FROM EXAMINATIONS

- If you experience difficulties during the examination series (e.g., illness, injury) please inform Mrs. Stannard at the earliest possible point so she can help or advise you. If you need to contact Mrs. Stannard on the day of the exam, and it is outside of normal school hours, please call the *mobile number* listed on the front cover.
- Only in 'exceptional circumstances' are candidates allowed special consideration for absence from any part of an examination. It is essential that medical or other appropriate evidence is obtained on the day by the candidate/parent and given to the Mrs. Stannard without delay in all cases where an application is to be made for special consideration.
- Candidates who decide to withdraw from an exam **must** inform Mrs. Stannard at the earliest possible point.
- Parents and candidates are reminded that no refund will be issued should a candidate withdraw or fail to attend an examination. Failure to pay exam fees will result in non-entry for examinations.

Please note that misreading the timetable will not be accepted as a satisfactory explanation of absence.

AFTER THE EXAMINATIONS

BOOK RETURN

- All textbooks must be returned to the subject teacher during the summer examinations series. Candidates finishing a qualification must return all textbooks after the final exam for each subject.

NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

- Results are released as follows:
 - GCE – Thursday 14 August
 - GCSE – Thursday 20 August
 - *AS & A level & IGCSE - Cambridge International exams – Tuesday 12 August via CIE website*
- Accessing Exam Results:
 - Online via the Pupil Portal from 11.00 am. (UAE) – detailed instructions will be provided to candidates

POST RESULTS

- Senior Staff will be in school on Results Day in August to advise on all issues relating to results.



- Enquiries About Results (EAR): Clerical Check and Review of Marking Services are available up to 4 weeks following the issue of results. Please pay attention to posted deadlines as there are no exceptions.

CERTIFICATES

- For candidates who have completed a qualification, certificates from the appropriate awarding body will be issued and are available for collection from the Exams Office in early November.
- Your certificate is a valuable document and should be kept in a safe place. Employers and admissions officers at colleges and universities may ask to see your certificates to prove which awards you have achieved.
- DESS COLLEGE is only obliged to keep certificates for a period of one year after issue. The awarding bodies advise that all uncollected certificates should be destroyed. If you do not collect your certificates within this time (or if you lose your certificates), they can only be replaced by direct application to the appropriate awarding body and at significant cost to you. The replacement will be in the form of a Certifying Statement of Results (not a certificate). A Certifying Statement of Results is an official copy of the examination results held by the awarding body. The awarding body cannot issue a replacement certificate. You are therefore urged to collect your certificates as soon as possible and to keep them in a safe place.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What do I do if there's a clash on my timetable?

- The school will re-schedule exams internally (on the same day) where there is a clash of subjects. Candidates will normally sit one paper followed by a break during which they will be supervised and must not have any communication with other candidates. They will then sit the second subject paper. Revised timings will be on your individual candidate timetable. It may be necessary for you to bring a packed lunch if you have exams in the morning and afternoon as you will have to remain in isolation until both examinations are completed. If in doubt, consult the Exams Officer.

Q. What do I do if I think I have the wrong paper?

- Invigilators will ask you to check before the exam starts. If you think something is wrong, put your hand up and tell the invigilator immediately.

Q. What do I do if I forget my Candidate Number?

- A list of candidate numbers is posted outside both auditoriums. You can also check with the Exams Office before going into the exam room. Alternatively, invigilators will be able to help you find your number if need be. However, please try to remember your candidate number as it will take up valuable time in the exam room if we must look it up for you.

Q. What do I do if I have an accident or fall ill before the exam?

- Inform Mrs. Stannard at the earliest possible point so she can help or advise you. In the case of an accident which prevents you from writing, it may be possible to provide you with a scribe to write your answers, but we will need as much prior notice as possible. You may need to obtain medical evidence if you wish the school to make an appeal for Special Consideration on your behalf.

Q. What is an Appeal for Special Consideration?

- Special Consideration is an adjustment to the marks or grades of a candidate who is eligible for consideration. The allowance for Special Consideration is from 0% (consideration given but addition of marks considered inappropriate) to 5% (reserved for exceptional cases). Parents should be aware that any adjustment is likely to be small and no feedback on percentage awarded is ever provided. Candidates will only be eligible for Special Consideration if they have been fully prepared and covered the whole course but performance in the examination or in the production of coursework is affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. Examples of such circumstances may be illness, accident or injury, bereavement, domestic crisis. The Exams Officer must be informed immediately so that the necessary paperwork can be completed (within 7 days of the last examination) and the candidate will be required to provide evidence to support such an application.

Q. What do I do if I feel ill during the exam?

- You should inform an invigilator **before** the exam if you feel ill so special arrangements can be considered (e.g., you may be re-located to a smaller room). Put up your hand if you feel ill during an exam and an invigilator will assist you.

Q. If I'm late can I still sit the examination?



- Provided you are not more than 1 hour late, and arrive before the examination is finished, it is still possible for you to sit the examination. You must contact Mrs. Stannard on her mobile as soon as possible if you know you will be late for an exam. You should get to the school as quickly as possible and report to Mrs. Stannard who will escort you to the exam room. You must not enter an examination room without permission after an examination has begun. It may not be possible to allow you any extra time if you start the examination late.
- You should also be aware that if you start the exam more than 1 hour after the starting time, the school must inform the awarding body. It is very possible that the awarding body will not accept your work. Please ensure that you allow enough time to get to school so that if you are delayed by traffic, you will still arrive on time. You should aim to be at school at least 30 minutes prior to the exam.

Q. If I miss the examination can I take it on another day?

- No. Timetables are regulated by the awarding bodies. You must attend on the given date and time.

Q. Do I have to wear school uniform?

- Yes. Normal school regulations apply to uniform, hair, jewellery, make-up, etc.

Q. What equipment should I bring for my exams?

- You are responsible for providing your own equipment for examinations. You must not attempt to borrow equipment from another candidate during the examination.
- You should bring your clear Exam Pack to every examination. You are encouraged to assemble your Exam Pack well before your first exam and designate it for exams use only. Do not come to an exam with just a pen! Make sure your pens have ink (buy new if need be) and your calculator has sufficient battery. The Exams Office has some supplies that can be loaned out, but not enough for everyone.

Q. What items are not allowed into the examination room?

- Only material that is listed on question papers (e.g., black pens, calculator) is permitted in the examination room and candidates who are found to have any material with them that is not allowed will be reported to the appropriate awarding body. In such circumstances, a candidate would normally be disqualified from the paper, or the subject concerned.
- Bags and coats and any other items not permitted under examination regulations must be left outside of the examination room. Valuables should be kept in your locker.
- No food or drink is allowed in the exam room apart from water in a clear bottle with no labelling.
- Mobile telephones must be switched off and turned in upon entry into the exam room.
- Watches cannot be worn in the exam room and should be turned in upon entry into the exam room

Q. Why can't I bring my mobile telephone into the exam room?



- Being in possession of a mobile phone, watch, iPod, Smart Watch, MP3/4 players or any potential technological/web enabled sources of information is regarded as cheating and is subject to severe penalty from the awarding bodies. The minimum penalties are as follows:
- Device in candidate's possession and evidence of it being used by the candidate -- **disqualification for the entire subject award.**
- Device in candidate's possession but no evidence of being used by the candidate – loss of marks **from the specific paper** you are sitting at the time.
- Device not in candidate's possession but makes a noise in the examination room – **warning.**

Q. How do I know how long the exam is?

- The length of the examination is shown in minutes on your individual timetable. Invigilators will tell you when to start and finish the exam. The start and finish times will also be displayed at the front of the exam room. The invigilator will give you a 5-minute warning before the exam is finished and you must stop writing as soon as you are told to do so.

Q. Can I leave the exam early?

- Candidates may not leave the exam room early, even if they have finished the examination, as this is disruptive to other candidates. A candidate may not leave the examination room without the permission of the invigilators.

Q. Can I go to the toilet during the exam?

- If it is absolutely necessary, you will be escorted by an invigilator and will not be allowed any extra time.

Q. What do I do if the fire alarm goes?

- The examination invigilators will tell you what to do. If you must evacuate the room leave everything on your desk and leave the room in silence. You must not attempt to communicate with any other candidates during the evacuation.

Q. If I have more than one exam on a day can, I get lunch at school?

- Candidates who have examinations in both morning and afternoon sessions will be able to purchase food. Candidates with clashes in their timetables, and who need to be supervised over the lunch break, will not be permitted to leave the supervised area to purchase food. Those candidates are encouraged to bring a packed lunch.

Q. Why do I need to check the details on the candidate entry report?

- The details on your statement of entry will be used when certificates are printed. If the name or date of birth on your certificates does not match your birth certificate or passport it could cause you problems if you are asked to show your certificates to a potential employer or college/university at some time in the future. You should also check that the subjects and tiers of entry you are entered for are correct and that no subjects are missing.

Q. I am entitled to extra time – how will this affect the way I take my exams?

- Some candidates receive an allowance of 25% extra time as assessed by the Learning Support Department. Where possible such candidates will be seated together to minimize disturbance from other candidates who finish earlier. Such candidates will be given a desk slip in the exam room which clearly displays their finish times.



Q. What do I do if I don't get the grades I need for college/university?

- Senior staff will be available to advise you on Results Day in August. If you feel strongly that it is necessary to make an enquiry about your result, you should first consult the relevant Head of Department to obtain their advice as to the advisability of requesting a review of marking. You should be aware that your mark could go down as well as up or even stay the same. You must complete a candidate consent form and return it to the Exams Office to review it before submitting payment to Accounts. The Exams Office will require proof of payment before processing the request.

Q. Can I retake an examination?

- It is possible to retake examinations if advised to do so by your subject teacher. You will only be able to re-sit the examination in the next series in which it is offered. For most subjects, you will be required to retake the entire qualification if you wish to improve your grade in a specific subject. All examinations are available for re-sit in **summer** only, except for GCSE English Language and Maths which are offered in November.

Q. How do I access my results?

Examination results are released electronically by way of our student information system, known as the Pupil Portal. You will use your normal school login details to login to the portal and you will be able to view your results from 8 am (UK time) on the relevant Results Day. Instructions on accessing the Pupil Portal will be distributed in due course and will also be posted on the website.



Information for candidates

Written examinations

With effect from 1 September 2024

Produced on behalf of:



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**This document has been written to help you.
Read it carefully and follow the instructions.**

If there is anything you do not understand, especially which calculator you may use, ask your teacher.

A. Regulations – Make sure you understand the rules

- 1 Be on time for all your exams. If you are late, your work might not be accepted.
- 2 **Do not** become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice during the exam.
- 3 If you try to cheat, or break the rules in any way, you could be disqualified from all your exams.
- 4 You **must not** take into the exam room:
 - (a) notes;
 - (b) AirPods, Earphones/Earbuds, an iPod, a mobile phone, a MP3/4 player or similar device, a watch, smart glasses or any other smart device.

Any pencil cases taken into the exam room **must** be see-through.

Remember: possession of unauthorised material is breaking the rules, even if you do not intend to use it, and you will be subject to penalty and possible disqualification.

- 5 If you have a watch, the invigilator will ask you to hand it to them.
- 6 **Do not** use correcting pens, fluid or tape, erasable pens, highlighters or gel pens in your answers.
- 7 **Do not** talk to or try to communicate with, or disturb other candidates once you have entered the exam room.
- 8 You **must not** write inappropriate, obscene or offensive material.
- 9 If you leave the exam room unaccompanied by an invigilator before the exam has finished, you **will not** be allowed to return.
- 10 **Do not** borrow anything from another candidate during the exam.



B. Information – Make sure you attend your exams and bring what you need

- 1 Know the dates and times of all your exams. Arrive at least ten minutes before the start of each exam.
- 2 If you arrive late for an exam, report to the invigilator running the exam.
- 3 If you arrive more than one hour after the published starting time for the exam, you may not be allowed to take it.
- 4 Only take into the exam room the pens, pencils, erasers and any other equipment which you need for the exam.
- 5 You **must** write clearly and in black ink. Coloured pencils or inks may only be used for diagrams, maps, charts, etc. unless the instructions printed on the front of the question paper state otherwise.



C. Calculators, dictionaries and computer spell-checkers

- 1 You may use a calculator unless you are told otherwise.
- 2 If you use a calculator:
 - (a) make sure it works properly; check that the batteries are working properly;
 - (b) clear anything stored in it;
 - (c) remove any parts such as cases, lids or covers which have printed instructions or formulae;
 - (d) **do not** bring into the exam room any operating instructions or prepared programs.
- 3 **Do not** use a dictionary or computer spell checker unless you are told otherwise.



D. Instructions during the exam

- 1 Always listen to the invigilator. Always follow their instructions.
- 2 Tell the invigilator at once if:
 - (a) you think you have not been given the right question paper or all of the materials listed on the front of the paper;
 - (b) the question paper is incomplete or badly printed.
- 3 Read carefully and follow the instructions printed on the question paper and/or on the answer booklet.
- 4 **Do not** start writing anything until the invigilator tells you to fill in all the details required on the front of the question paper and or the answer booklet. **Do not** open the question paper until you are told that the exam has begun.
- 5 Remember to write your answers within the designated sections of the answer booklet.
- 6 Do your rough work on the proper exam stationery. Cross it through and hand it in with your answers.
Make sure you add your candidate details to any additional answer sheets that you use, including those used for rough work.



E. Advice and assistance

- 1 If on the day of the exam you feel that your work may be affected by ill health or any other reason, tell the invigilator.
- 2 Put up your hand during the exam if:
 - (a) you have a problem and are not sure about what you should do;
 - (b) you do not feel well;
 - (c) you need more paper.
- 3 **You must** not ask for, and will not be given, any explanation of the questions.



F. At the end of the exam

- 1 If you have used more than one answer booklet and/or any supplementary answer sheets, place them in the correct order.

Place any loose additional answer sheets inside your answer booklet. Make sure you add your candidate details to any additional answer sheets that you use. For CCEA examinations, any loose additional answer sheets should be placed **behind** your script.

- 2 **Do not** leave the exam room until told to do so by the invigilator.
- 3 **Do not** take any stationery from the exam room. This includes the question paper, answer booklets used or unused, rough work or any other materials provided for the exam.

