

Examinations Handbook

2026/27

CENTRE NUMBER

20716

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INTRODUCTION

At Smith's Wood Academy, we understand that sitting exams can very stressful so we aim to make the experience as straight forward as possible for each student. We try to achieve this through fairness, consistency and high levels of communication.

The awarding bodies (examinations boards) provide very prescriptive guidelines about conducting exams which all centres must follow. We expect students to comply with the information in this handbook. All students must familiarise themselves with the JCQ 'Information for Candidates' document which is available on the Academy website or hard copies are available from the exams office.

We hope that this handbook will answer a lot of the queries that students and parents/carers might have about the examination process but, if you require any further information, please email office@smithswood.fmat.co.uk

Remember – we are here to help.

GOOD LUCK!!

KEY STAFF INVOLVED IN EXAMINATIONS

Name(s)	Role
Mr Stephen Huntington	Head of centre is responsible to the awarding bodies for making sure all examinations/assessments are conducted to instructions, and the qualification specifications issued by the awarding bodies.
Mr S Friswell	Exams Senior Leader liaises with the head of centre and exams officer to ensure the smooth running of examinations. Accountable for the safe and secure conduct of controlled assessments. Ensures assessments comply with JCQ guidelines and awarding bodies' subject-specific instructions.
Sharon Thomas	Exams Officer (EO) is responsible for the administration, organisation and smooth running of external and internal examinations.
Helen Williams	SENCo fully supported by teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team, lead on the access arrangements process with the centre. Ensures access arrangements have been applied for.

CALENDAR OF KEY EVENTS

Domestic Exams – Please note that these dates are provisional and may be subject to change:

YEAR GROUP ASSESSMENTS & EXAMS	
Year 11 mock examinations (I)	Monday 2 nd November – Friday 13 th November 2026
Year 11 mock examinations (II)	Monday 8 th February – Friday 26 th February 2027

GCSE External Examinations

Year 11 GCSE examination series	Wednesday 5 th May – Friday 18 th June 2027
Contingency Date	Wednesday 23 rd June 2027

Summer Series 2026

- The awarding bodies have designated **23rd June 2027** as a 'contingency day' for examinations
- The designation of a 'contingency day' within the common examination timetable is in the event of national or local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.
- **Candidates are reminded that they must remain available until 6th July 2027 should an awarding body need to invoke its contingency plan.**

Exam Results Days

GCSE – Thursday 19th August 2027

- Year 11 09:00-11:00

BEFORE THE EXAMINATION

TIMETABLES

Students will receive an Individual Candidate Timetable which will list all of the exams they will be sitting in each series. This must be checked by the students and any concerns should be reported to the exam's office as soon as possible. If you have an exam clash and have a preference about which order you sit the papers in, you must also inform the exams officer and we will endeavour to accommodate this request.

EXAMINATION BOARDS

At Smith's Wood Academy, the following exam boards are used:

- AQA
- OCR
- Edexcel
- WJEC

CANDIDATE NAME

Candidates should check the name which appears on the Statement of Entry is their correct legal name as it will appear on certificates. Candidates must also write their legal name on all examination scripts. **Any name changes made after the GCSE's start in May could result in the previous name being printed on the certificate – any charges as a result of this will be passed onto the parent/carer.**

CANDIDATE NUMBER

Each candidate has a four-digit candidate number which will appear on the Statement of Entry and which must be written on all examination scripts.

UNIQUE CANDIDATE IDENTIFICATION (UCI)

In addition to a candidate number, each student must have a Unique Candidate Identifier (12 digits and 1 letter) which is shown on the top of each examination timetable. This number is for office use only.

ADDITIONAL EXAMINATIONS

To be registered for any additional exams, please contact the Exams Officer by the 31st January 2027 deadline for exam entries. A fee may be incurred.

FOOD AND DRINK

Food is not permitted in the examination room unless there is a medical requirement, evidence of which should be submitted to the Examinations Officer prior to the start of the exam series. Chewing gum is not permitted in school and should not be brought into an exam.

A water bottle is permitted in the examination room but **must it be in a clear bottle** with the label removed.

EQUIPMENT

You are expected to arrive with the following equipment:

- 2 Black pens – students must provide
- 2 Pencils
- Ruler
- Eraser
- Pencil sharpener
- All items of equipment, pens, pencils, mathematical instruments, etc. should be visible to the invigilators at all times. You must either use a transparent pencil case or clear plastic bag.
- Pens should be black ink or ballpoint. No erasers or correction pens are allowed.

Calculators – in any examinations in which calculators are needed. Lids must be removed.

In this section a calculator is defined as an electronic device whose primary purpose is to carry out mathematical calculations.

JCQ publish an ICE document every year with updates.

Below are the updates for calculators 2026/27:

- 10.3 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.
- 10.4 Where the use of a calculator is allowed, candidates are responsible for making sure that their calculators meet the awarding bodies' regulations.
- 10.5 Candidates must be told these regulations beforehand and be familiar with the Information for candidates documents.
- 10.6 During an examination a calculator must not be able to offer any of these facilities: a) language translators; b) symbolic algebra manipulation; c) symbolic differentiation or integration; d) communication with other machines or the internet;
- 10.7 During an examination a calculator must not give access to pre-stored information. This includes: a) databanks; b) dictionaries; c) mathematical formulae; d) text.
- 10.8 A calculator must not be borrowed from another candidate during an examination.
- 10.9 Some calculators have an 'exam mode'. This is acceptable in examinations where the exam mode is activated and the exam mode results in the calculator becoming compliant with the above requirements.
- 10.10 An invigilator may give a candidate a replacement calculator.
- 10.11 Where access is permitted to a calculator for part of an examination, it is acceptable for candidates to place their calculators on the floor under their desks in sight of the invigilator(s) for the non-calculator portion of the examination.
- 10.12 A series of FAQs on the use of calculators in examinations may be found at:
<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/>

Unauthorised materials

Arrangements for unauthorised materials taken into the exam room

"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 exam/qualification"

- Mobile phones, watches including smart watches, iPod, MP3/4 players and any other electrical device, candidates are asked to hand to invigilators before they enter the exam room
- Invigilators collect unauthorised items which are placed in a plastic see-through bag, candidates are given a green card with a number matching the plastic bag
- In each exam room there will be a designated area for candidates to put their personal belongings, invigilators will instruct candidates when entering the exam room where to place them
- When the exam has finished candidates on producing the green card to the invigilator will receive their unauthorised items

EXAMINATION REGULATIONS

Copies of the following JCQ notices can be found on the Academy website

- Information for Candidates - Coursework
- Information for Candidates - Non-Examination Assessment
- Information for Candidates – On Screen-Tests
- Information for Candidates – Privacy Notice
- Information for Candidates – Social Media
- Information for Candidates - Written Examinations
- Warning to Candidates
- No Mobile Phones poster

Hard copies are available on request.

It is important that parents, carers and students read and understand the regulations as any breach of these rules could result in a student being disqualified from examinations. Smith's Wood Academy must report every breach of the regulations to the examination boards involved. Full details of malpractice and sanctions can be found at www.jcq.org.uk/exam-office/malpractice.

The **'Warning to Candidates'** and **'No Mobile Phones Poster'** are displayed outside each examination venue. For good practice we also display inside each exams room.

DURING THE EXAMINATION

START TIME OF EXAMINATIONS

- Morning – 09:00
- Afternoon – 13:00

The standard time of examinations is as above. However, if a student has a clash or access arrangements please refer to individual examination timetables for confirmation of timings.

CANDIDATES WHO ARRIVE LATE

A candidate who arrives after the start of the examination may be allowed to enter the exam room and sit the exam. This is entirely at the discretion of the centre and Head of Academy.

A candidate will be considered very late if he/she arrives:

- More than one hour after the awarding body's published starting time for an exam which lasts one hour or more, i.e. after 10.00am for a morning exam or after 2.30pm for an afternoon exam.

Where a candidate arrives very late for an exam centre must

- Send the script to the awarding body in the normal way.
- A report on candidate admitted very late to the exam room must be submitted to the awarding body.

FINISH TIME OF EXAMINATIONS

The finish times of examinations will vary depending upon the length of the examination; this information can be found on exam timetables. Please note that examinations may finish outside of the school day. Students must remain in the examination room until the end of the exam, unless authorisation has been given by Senior Leader prior to the examination starting.

Students who have been granted additional time by the SEN department are expected to stay for the full duration of the exam.

ATTENDANCE AT EXAMINATIONS

Students are responsible for checking their own timetables and arriving at school on the correct day and time. Morning exams students must arrive in the Academy at 8.40am and for afternoon exams 12.40pm, in full school uniform. If students are consistently late to exams, parents/carers will be called in to school to discuss the issue. If students are late they may be unable to sit the examination. During mock exams if the afternoon exam finishes before 3pm students will be dismissed and escorted off site. If you do not wish your child to leave the Academy before 3pm please let us know prior the exams starting.

INVIGILATORS

Smith's Wood Academy employs external invigilators to conduct the examinations and ensures that they are trained to a high standard. All students are expected to behave in a respectful manner towards invigilators and follow their instructions at all times.

*If your child has a TA they **will not** be allowed into the exam room with them as an invigilator.*

Invigilators are in the examination rooms to supervise the conduct of the examination. Their responsibilities involve:

- Ensuring all students enter and leave the exam room under examination conditions
- Distributing and collecting the examination papers
- Informing students when to start and finish the examination
- Handing out any additional materials that are required
- Dealing with any problems that occur during the examination, for example if a student is feeling ill

Students who are disruptive or behave in an unacceptable manner will be removed from the examination room by invigilators and may be prohibited from sitting any further examinations.

CONDUCT IN THE EXAM

Once the student enters the exam room they are expected to follow exams conditions which are clearly set out by the exam awarding body JCQ:

- No talking to fellow students
- Hand in any unauthorised equipment to invigilator
- Place bag at the back of the hall
- Once seated face the front of the room
- Turning around, using facial gestures or smiling to fellow students will be seen as communication and could result in disqualification from the examination they are sitting and all further examinations taken by that exam board
- No looking at the students paper next to you
- No electronic equipment, air pods, ear buds, phones, MP3/4 players, watches etc. are allowed.

ABSENCE FROM EXAMINATIONS

If a student is unable to attend an exam, the Attendance Officer must be informed as soon as possible. Smith's Wood Academy will invoice parents/carers if a student fails to attend an exam without appropriate medical documentation. The fee is **£45 per exam**. Please note that misreading the timetable is not a valid reason for absence or lateness.

In very exceptional circumstances, special consideration can be applied for absence from an exam due to a medical reason. Evidence (e.g. a note from hospital/discharge certificate) must be provided to the Exams Officer as soon as possible in order for the application to be made. Students must have completed at least **40%** of the total course in order for special consideration is to be considered by the exam board. This includes coursework units.

AFTER THE EXAMINATION

NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

GCSE results will be available for collection from school on **Thursday 19th August 2027** between 09:00 and 11:00. Staff will be available to help with Post 16 plans.

Students who are unable to collect their results in person should bring in a stamped addressed envelope before the end of the summer term to the Exams Officer, who will arrange for exam results to be posted out on the day. Alternatively, a letter may be submitted prior to results day nominating somebody to collect the results on the student's behalf, the person nominated will need to show photo ID.

POST RESULTS SERVICES

Post results services give candidates the opportunity to request a copy of an exam script back (Access to Scripts) or to request a review of marking (Review of Results).

Students need to be aware that, if they decide to progress with a review of results, there are three possible outcomes:

- The original mark is lowered, so the final grade may be lower than the original grade received.
- The original mark is confirmed as correct, and there is no change to the grade.
- The original mark is raised, so the final grade may be higher than the original grade received.

In order for school to request post results services, the relevant form must be completed. This is available on the school website. Please note there are strict deadlines to submit these applications to the examination boards. A fee will be charged for this service which will be refunded if the grade for the unit improves.

To appeal against the outcome of a review of marking, please read the school's internal appeals procedure, available on the website under the Exams tab.

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES

Certificates are issued by the examination boards to school in November. Students can collect their certificates from December onwards from Reception. Please note that any examination certificates not collected within 12 months will be destroyed. Check the website for the date certificates will be available from.

APPENDIX A: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT DO I DO IF I THINK I HAVE THE WRONG PAPER?

It is your responsibility to check that you have the correct paper before the examination starts. If you think you have the wrong paper or tier, put your hand up immediately and advise the invigilator. You will be reminded of this in the announcement before each exam.

WHAT IS AN APPEAL FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION?

Special Consideration is an appeal to the examination board for an adjustment to marks if a candidate is disadvantaged at the time of their examination because of illness, bereavement or other similar distressing occurrences. If the candidate is ill, a current medical note is required.

If you feel that you have been disadvantaged during an exam, please inform an invigilator as a record must be kept of the incident.

IF I AM LATE, CAN I STILL SIT THE EXAMINATION?

Students will be permitted to sit the examination at the discretion of the school. However, if the student is more than one hour late then this is considered very late and it is possible that the exam board may decide not to accept their work. Please refer to JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations for further details with regards to this policy.

IF I MISS AN EXAMINATION, CAN I TAKE IT ON ANOTHER DAY?

No. Timetables are regulated by the examination boards and you must attend on the specified date and time.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I TAKE A MOBILE PHONE, WATCH, IPOD OR EARPHONES/EAR BUDS INTO THE EXAMINATION ROOM?

At the beginning of an examination, the invigilators will ask you to hand in any unauthorised items. If you are found to have a mobile phone, IPOD, MP3/4 players or watch in your possession even if they have been turned off, the school has no choice but to report the incident to the examination board. Without exception, student will be disqualified from the examination paper and the exam board may choose to apply this to other exams.

WHAT DO I DO IF THE FIRE ALARM SOUNDS?

The invigilators will tell you what to do. If you have to evacuate the room, leave everything on your desk and leave the room in silence. You must not attempt to communicate with any other students during the evacuation. If this does happen, the examination board will be contacted and special consideration will be applied for.

CAN I GO TO THE TOILET DURING THE EXAMINATION?

Only if it is absolutely necessary. You will be escorted by an invigilator but will not be allowed any extra time. Toilet breaks are not permitted in the last 15 minutes of an examination unless you have a medical need. Evidence should be submitted to the Exams Officer prior to the examination series.

WHAT TO DO IF I WANT TO APPEAL AN INTERNALLY ASSESSED GRADE?

See Internal Appeals Procedure policy on the Academy website.