



Tonbridge Grammar School GCSE Examination Frequently Asked Questions

**Academic Year
September 2020 to August 2021**

What is the process for mock examinations?

Mock examinations give students a formal opportunity to prepare for a public examination experience, observing Awarding Body (exam board) regulations. During the examinations, students should ensure they arrive at least 30 mins before the start of the examination and must bring with them all the equipment needed and ensure their pencil case is transparent. See further information on what to bring for examinations below.

During the mocks, students are on study leave when they do not have a scheduled exam so when they are not sitting an exam, they can be at home revising. If a student wishes to be in school for revision time, they can use their form room. Bags are to be left in form rooms and are not allowed in the exam room. Students must ensure they are in school at least 30 minutes before the start of any exam.

We encourage our students to recognise this as an important assessment opportunity and to prepare and revise accordingly.

I have a diagnosed additional need – is this taken into account?

The School supports students with special educational needs or disabilities and if appropriate will have made an application to the examination boards, on a student's behalf, to arrange for 'Access Arrangements'. Access Arrangements may include access to a word processor, coloured exam papers or possibly additional time. Access Arrangements will only have been requested if they constitute a student's **usual way of working at school** and there is a **specialist assessment of additional need**. The SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) will have applied to the examination boards on the student's behalf. The SENCO/School are not the authorising authority.

Access Arrangements are usually in place by the end of Year 10 examinations and cannot be requested after the mock GCSE examinations at school. The SENCO will confirm to individual students in writing any Access Arrangements that have been approved by the examination boards. There is also provision for the School to support students in an emergency situation, who have had an accident or have to be hospitalised. The School will always endeavour to enable students to complete their examinations if possible.

If an Access Arrangement has been agreed for you and during any examination this arrangement is not in place, **you must query it at the time**. For example, if you are entitled to extra time and the invigilator suggests you should stop before your extra allocation of time has been complete, politely query it **straight away**.

When looking at the Summer GCSE exam timetable, I have two exams at the same time?

Where there are exam clashes we will rearrange one of the exams (usually for another time that day). Students will receive an individual timetable and will need to check this carefully and contact the Examinations Officer immediately if they have any concerns.

In some circumstances, before/after clashing exams, candidates will have to remain under 'supervision'. During this time there will be no access to mobile phones/internet and contact cannot be made with other students (unless they are also in the same supervision session). A packed lunch will be required if supervision is over lunch time. Students can use this time to prepare for later exams.

If candidates have 'multiple' exams (three or more examinations timetabled for the same day with a total duration of more than 5 hours and 30 minutes) an exam may be carried to the next day. This is seen as a last resort and only applied in rare and exceptional circumstances. Where this is agreed (by the Awarding Body), students would be supervised overnight by a parent/guardian. The student would need to be collected promptly by their parent/guardian at the end of the day's last exam and delivered to school the next morning in time for the rescheduled exam. There must be no contact with other candidates and no access to mobile phones/internet. A form is signed by the parent/guardian beforehand, so they are aware of their responsibilities.

If, in the above circumstances, it is decided to sit all the exams in one day, a request for 'special consideration' for the final paper will be submitted to the Awarding Body (see below for further information on 'special considerations').

During the GCSE exams, when and where should I arrive?

Please arrive at school early and line up outside **at least 20 minutes before the start** time of the exam. Please arrive **25 mins** before if you are a computer user or have extra time.

We will start the exams **exactly on time**. The start time for all morning exams is **9am** and the start time of afternoon exams is **1.30 pm**. Timings may alter where there are exam clashes, these will be detailed on individual timetables.

What should be brought to the examination?

Please bring the following every day:

- A **see-through** pencil case containing – pens, pencils, eraser, pencil sharpener, long & short ruler, protractor, compass.
- **Calculator** – check before that it works/has new batteries and remove any cases that have printed instructions or formulas. **Ensure you clear anything stored in the calculator's memory beforehand.** Calculators must not have retrievable information stored in them.
- **Water** must be in a clear plastic bottle with all the labels removed.

It is important **not** to bring **phones** or **watches** into the exam hall. **Possession of unauthorised items, such as a mobile phone, is a serious offence and could result in disqualification from your examination and your overall qualification.** If you do bring a phone to school, this will need to be switched off and placed in a box at front of hall.

Please do not bring other items e.g. glasses cases, geometry set cases, revision notes etc. Bring any stationery you require in your clear pencil case.

Full school uniform must be worn by all students attending school for examinations.

What pens/pencils can be used?

Please use a **black pen only**. No gel pens, erasable pens, correcting pens, correction fluid/tape, highlighters or blotting paper can be used.

Highlighter pens may not be used in answers, although may be used to highlight questions, words or phrases within the question paper or the question sections of combined question/answer booklets. You may also use a highlighter pen to highlight extracts in any resource material provided.

Pencils, coloured pencils or inks may be used for diagrams, maps, charts etc unless the instructions printed on the front of the exam state otherwise. For example, in maths, pencils are recommended for drawing graphs, however if the instructions do not allow this – you would then need to go over it in pen.

The Awarding Bodies (i.e. examination boards) require the school to remind all candidates that they are responsible for producing legible writing.

What should I do with my bag?

Bags are not allowed in the exam room. Please leave your bag in the designated area (as per the mock examinations). Please remain silent if you are collecting your bag near the exam hall as students may still be working.

If you have diabetes and need a bag in the examination room, this will need to be checked before you enter the hall each time. Use of a clear bag would help.

What do I need to be aware of in the examination hall/room?

Entering the examination hall:

- A seating plan with your name/seat number on it will be available to look at outside the exam hall (your seat number and Candidate Number are also on the individual exam timetable you are given before the exams).
- There will be a card on your desk with your name and Candidate Number on it.
- Please enter the hall in **silence**. Exam conditions begin as soon as you enter the hall.
- **Please do not communicate with other students in any way – no looking around/behind** etc.

Taking the exam

- Check you have the correct question paper – check the subject and level of paper.
- **Listen carefully to instructions and notices read out by the invigilators** – there may also be amendments to the exam paper that you need to know about.
- Before the exam - read the instructions carefully and fill in the details required at the front of the paper when you are told to do so – **not before**.
- **Put your hand up if you need assistance from an invigilator** e.g. if you need paper, are unsure what to do, are unwell, cannot hear, think you have the wrong paper etc.
- The invigilators cannot answer any questions regarding the examination paper content.
- If you drop something on the floor, put your hand up and an invigilator will pick it up for you.
- Do any rough work on the proper exam stationery (and cross through it clearly as instructed).
- Write your answers in the designated sections of the answer booklet.
- Do not write on the desks.
- You can go to the toilet if it is absolutely necessary. You will be escorted to and from the toilet by an Invigilator.

Leaving the hall/room

- **Candidates must stay in the examination room for the duration of the exam.** If you have finished early: check you have answered every question; read over your answers and check all papers are named.
- **Do not remove anything** from the exam room e.g. question papers or spare answer sheets.
- Do not leave until you are told to do so – you are still under examination conditions until you leave the room.
- Please be **silent as you leave** the hall as other students will still be completing their exams. It is important that students are well away from the hall before talking. Please also note the exams do take place in various rooms around the school so please be conscious of noise levels.

What is our Centre Number?

Our Centre Number is **61677**.

Will I be able to have extra paper in the exam?

If you need extra paper to complete questions, put up your hand and an invigilator will bring you some. Please ensure that any loose additional answer sheets are **named**, have the correct question number next to the answer and placed in order.

The GCSE Awarding Bodies do not allow use of scrap paper so rough work must be completed on the proper exam stationery. Before handing it in, neatly cross through it – but do not make it totally illegible.

What happens if there is a fire alarm when the exam is running?

The Lead Invigilator will explain clearly what to do. They will stop the clock for the exam and you will need to stop writing. Extra time will be added to the end of the exam to account for any time lost.

If the alarm is intermittent then students will remain in the exam room; if it becomes constant, then the hall will be evacuated. If this is the case, students will remain under exam conditions, leave everything on their desk, maintain silence and not communicate with fellow students in any way. The Examinations Officer will liaise with the Awarding Body (the exam board) to ensure they are aware that the exam was interrupted.

No practice fire alarms are planned during the exam season.

What should I do if I am late?

Please plan ahead and arrange to arrive at the school in plenty of time.

If, for reasons beyond your control, you are running late, please advise the school immediately by calling **01732 365125**.

When you arrive, please report to the lead invigilator in the examination room.

Dependent on the time you arrive, the lead invigilator will start your exam and advise you of your revised finish time. You will be allowed the full time for the examination, provided that adequate supervision arrangements are in place. This is at the discretion of the school.

If you are very late (over an hour), the Awarding Body may not accept your script. This will depend on a number of factors. Work of very late candidates is unlikely to be accepted unless they have been supervised from the time the actual exam started. Your Examination Officer will liaise with the Awarding Body.

We suggest keeping the school telephone number (01732 365125) handy just in case you need to call at short notice).

What should I do if I am ill/have a problem on the day?

If you are ill during an examination:

- At the time, ensure you talk to an invigilator in the examination room who will advise you what to do.
- After the exam, ensure you let the Examinations Officer know if you were ill or had a problem affecting that exam.
- Afterwards, visit the Doctor and obtain a letter from them so that we have medical evidence to submit to the awarding body. The Examinations Officer will apply for a 'special consideration' on your behalf.

If you are feeling unwell, but still feel able to sit the examination, come to the exam and let the Examinations Officer or Invigilator know. Again, medical evidence will be required so that the Examinations Office can apply to the Awarding Body for a 'special consideration'.

If you are too ill to come to school:

- Please call the school and inform them immediately.
- Speak to the Examination Officer as soon as possible.
- Parents or Carers will be asked to write a letter to the Examinations Office giving details of the reasons for examination absence with relevant dates. **A medical note will also be required, detailing the reason for non-attendance.**

If you have been absent from an exam for acceptable reasons, were fully prepared for the examination and the school is prepared to support an application to the Awarding Body for 'special consideration', an adjustment may be made to the final grade. This will only be the case if you have completed **25% or more** of the total assessment in a given subject. Students are **not** awarded their predicted grade – the Awarding Bodies estimate the missing mark based on performance in units completed.

If I was ill during an exam or had other problems affecting my exam performance – will the Awarding Body take this into account when finalising my grade?

'*Special consideration*' is a post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary illness, temporary injury or some other event outside of the candidate's control **at the time of the assessment**, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had a material effect on a candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate their normal level of attainment in an assessment.

The student must have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course.

Examples of circumstances where 'special consideration' can be applied for include:

- temporary illness or accident/injury **at the time of the assessment**.
- bereavement **at the time of the assessment**.
- domestic crisis arising **at the time of the assessment**.

Special consideration will normally be given by applying an allowance of marks to each exam component affected. The size of the allowance depends on the timing, nature and extent of the illness or misfortune and is completely at the discretion of the Awarding Body. Only minor adjustments are made to the total raw marks available in the component concerned. The allowance given ranges from a maximum of 5% (for the most exceptional cases such as very recent death of an immediate member of the family) to 1% (for headache; or stress/anxiety which is not exam related and for which medication has been prescribed).

The Examination Officer at school will apply for special consideration and will need to provide evidence to the Awarding Body to support the application e.g. a letter provided by the doctor. Applications are submitted within 7 days of the last examination in the series for each subject.

It is therefore very important to inform the Examinations Officer immediately if there are any factors which may be affecting exam performance.

What is the process for Controlled Assessments and Non-Exam Assessments?

During the year, Controlled Assessments and Non-Exam Assessments are carried out and marks/samples are sent to the relevant Awarding Bodies. Tonbridge Grammar School is committed to ensuring that where staff assess students' work for external qualifications, this is done consistently and in accordance with the regulations and awarding body's specification and subject specific associated documents. Further details are provided in the School's **Controlled Assessment and Non-Exam Assessment Policies**, available in the Examination Support section of the Portal. The School also has an **Internal Appeals Procedure** to deal with any concerns regarding internal assessment decisions or enquiries about results - please contact your Examinations Officer or visit the Portal should you require a copy.

Please note that candidates must keep their own work secure at all times and not share completed or partially completed work on-line, on social media or through any other means.

When will I receive my exam results?

Results for Summer 2021 GCSE examinations will be announced once Ofqual have completed their consultation.

When will I receive my certificate?

Certificates are presented at the annual Prizegiving ceremony. Details will be available in the Autumn.

If you are unable to attend Prizegiving, certificates will be available for collection from School Reception the day after the ceremony. Certificates can be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, however we need your written authority and they need to bring this, along with suitable identification. Please note that certificates cannot be posted out.

Can I have a review of marking?

The school is able to apply to the Awarding Bodies for the following 'post results services':

- 'Enquiries about Results' – the school can apply on your behalf for a review of marking. This has three possible outcomes: the mark can rise, be re-confirmed as correct or fall.
- 'Access to Scripts' - the school can apply to the Awarding Body to have a script returned.

The Awarding Bodies charge a fee for these services. A letter including information regarding reviews of marking, deadlines and fees will be provided on results day. Decisions regarding application for these services are made in conjunction with Subject Leaders at the start of the new term. Reviews of marking only usually take place when marks are close to grade boundaries. Requests for these services are then made via The School Examination Office - a Consent Form is completed by the student and the fee is paid via ParentPay.

There is also a procedure in place for should you wish to appeal against an internal assessment decision e.g. for a non-examination assessment mark. Please refer to the Internal Appeals Procedure available on the Portal (Examinations Support). Please be aware that, as with the Awarding Body reviews, there is a fee for this service and marks can rise, be confirmed, or fall. Reviews should be completed before the Awarding Body deadline for mark submission. In addition, the Awarding Bodies have a moderation process which may lead to mark changes after marks have been submitted (and is outside the control of the school). Please liaise with the TGS Examination Officer for further information.

Please ensure you read the following before the examinations:

- GCSE – Warning to Candidates
- Information for Candidates – Written Exams
- Information for Candidates - Privacy Notice
- Information for Candidates – Social Media
- Information for Candidates – Controlled Assessments
- Information for Candidates – Non-examination Assessments
- GCSE – No Mobile Phone

All available at: <http://www.tgs.kent.sch.uk/examination-support>

All candidates must read these 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 Awarding Body.*

Did you know! Dispelling Common Myths...

In order to obtain a grade you must sit 25% of the examination.

‘Special Consideration’ is for issues at the time of the exams so does not apply to long term illness.

Any anxiety which is exam related is not considered as a ‘Special Consideration’ by the Awarding Bodies as exams are a worrying time for everyone.