

# Your Exams

What you need to know about National 5,  
Higher and Advanced Higher exams

School edition



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# Your Exams

Exams are designed to let you demonstrate what you have learned in your courses. We understand that you may be nervous or worried about sitting them later this year.

This booklet tells you what you need to know and gives helpful information and advice so that you can do your very best on the day of exams. It also contains rules, which are there to make sure that exams are fair for everyone. It is important that you read and understand these before your exams start.

If you are not sure about the rules, speak to your teacher. They will be able to help you and also tell you what could happen if you break the rules. You might also find it useful to share and discuss this information with your parent or carer.

Remember to prepare, stay calm and do your best.

Visit [www.sqa.org.uk/learners](http://www.sqa.org.uk/learners) for lots more helpful information.

## Important things you need to know about exams in 2024

- Exams will take place between April and May.
- The Examination Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service is available if you cannot attend your exam, or your performance on the day of the exam is disrupted or affected, because of specific circumstances. Please see page 18 for further information.
- Your school will provide an estimated grade for each of your courses before the exams start. You can talk to your teachers about your progress and estimated grades before your school sends them to us. This will help you understand how your estimated grade relates to your performance in the assessments you have completed this year.
- You will get your results by post on Tuesday 6 August. If you sign up for MySQA at [www.mysqa.org.uk](http://www.mysqa.org.uk) you can also get your results by text or email from 8am on Results Day.
- There is a free appeals service that you can access directly or through your school. More information on appeals will be provided by Results Day.



## Support during exams

'Assessment arrangements' allow learners who are disabled or need additional support to use different ways to complete an exam. Assessment arrangements in exams will usually be similar to the support you receive during normal teaching and assessments in school.

There are different types of assessment arrangements that can be made to give you an equal chance to show what you know and what you can do. Arrangements may vary according to subject, level of qualification, and learners' needs. They include adapted question papers, changes to where a learner sits the exam, and extra time.

If you need additional support while sitting your exams or you have any questions, speak to your school. If you are eligible for additional support, they will make the arrangements for you.

To find out more about assessment arrangements, read our guide at [www.sqa.org.uk/learnerassessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/learnerassessmentarrangements) or speak to your teacher.



# Preparing for your exams

## Timetable

Visit [www.sqa.org.uk/timetable](http://www.sqa.org.uk/timetable) to see the current version of the exam timetable. This shows the dates and times of your exams.

Always double-check the times of your exams with your teachers because schools can change the start times slightly.

Make sure you know what exams you're taking, when they are, and where they are.

Ask your school which teacher will be in charge of SQA exams on the day. You need to know who this is so you can report to them if you arrive late.



## SQA apps

There are free apps to support you at exam time.

The **MyExams** app lets you create and view your personal timetable, add notes, and add your personal timetable to other calendars.

The **MyStudyPlan** app helps you to organise your revision by creating a personal study plan. Once you have created your plan, visit [www.sqa.org.uk/studyplan](http://www.sqa.org.uk/studyplan) for tips to help you study.

You can also create your own personal exam timetable using the online **Personal Timetable Builder**.

Visit [www.sqa.org.uk/timetable](http://www.sqa.org.uk/timetable) to download the apps or use the online Personal Timetable Builder.





## Past papers

Practising with previous exam papers can help you prepare for exams.

Visit [www.sqa.org.uk/pastpapers](http://www.sqa.org.uk/pastpapers) to find past papers and instructions for marking them.

## Your Scottish Candidate Number

Your Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) is your personal identification number. We use your SCN to record and track all of your achievements.

Your school will be able to tell you what your SCN is. Make sure you know it as you will need to write it clearly on your exam answer booklets.

To remind you of your SCN, you can tear off the card at the back of this booklet and fill in your details. You can take this card into the exam room as long as you don't write anything else on it.

If you write anything else on the card, your exam entry could be cancelled. This may mean that you do not receive any results.

If you need to print off another card, visit [www.sqa.org.uk/yourexams](http://www.sqa.org.uk/yourexams) to download a copy of this booklet.







## Make sure your details are correct

One of the most common reasons a learner doesn't receive their results certificate is that we have not been told about a change of address. To make sure you receive your certificate on Results Day, check that your school has the correct details for you, including your full name and address.

You can sign up for a MySQA account at [www.mysqa.org.uk](http://www.mysqa.org.uk) and then log in to check your personal details.

If any of your personal details change, or are going to change over the summer, you must tell your school before you finish for the summer holidays.

# On exam day

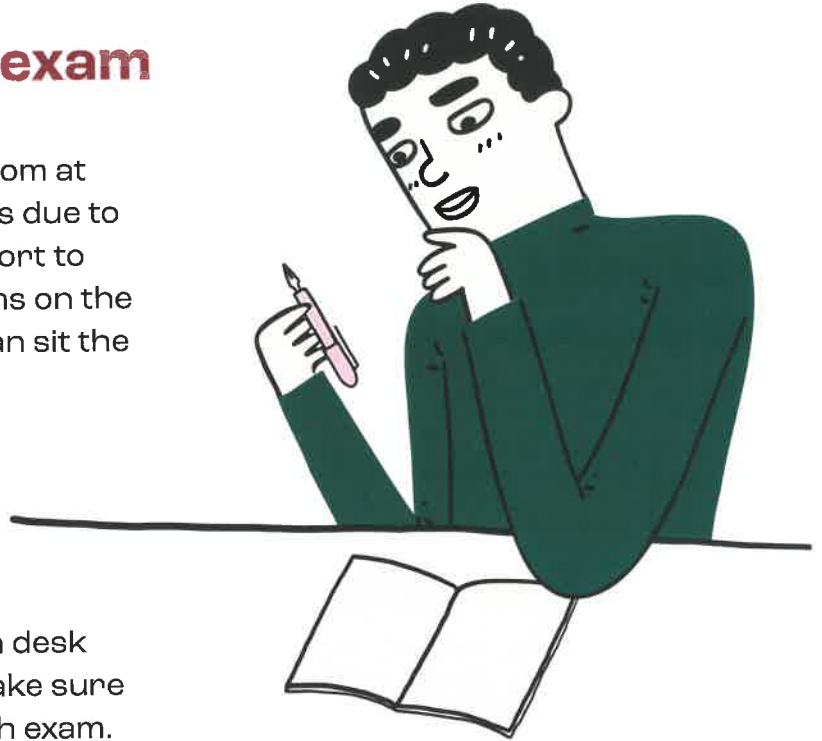
Being ready and prepared for an exam is important. Here is some important information to keep in mind.

## Arriving for your exam

You should be outside the exam room at least 10 minutes before the exam is due to start. If you are late, you must report to the teacher in charge of SQA exams on the day. They will let you know if you can sit the exam.

## Desks

In most schools, you will be given a desk or seat number for each exam. Make sure you know this number before each exam.



## Invigilators

The people who supervise exams are called 'invigilators'. Their job is to make sure your exams take place according to the rules and that the rules are applied fairly. You must listen to and follow any instructions the invigilators give you.

If anything unexpected happens to you during an exam, such as feeling unwell, you should tell the invigilator immediately.



# Prohibited items

Prohibited items are things that you must not have with you at your allocated seat or desk in the exam room, unless they have been approved by us as part of an assessment arrangement for the exam you are sitting.

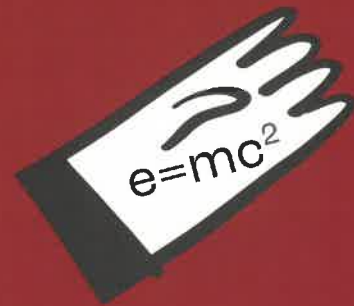
Prohibited items include the following.



Mobile phones



Electronic devices such as tablets, earbuds, smartwatches or any other device that stores information or can connect to the internet



Extra information — books, notes, sketches on paper, and anything written on your clothes or body



Extra information — unauthorised information written on your SCN card



Pencil cases or calculator cases



Dictionaries, except for exams where dictionaries are allowed



Calculators, except for exams where calculators are allowed

Before you go to your seat in the exam room, check your bags and pockets carefully to make sure you do not have any of these things with you. You must not take any prohibited item to your seat — plan ahead and leave them in a safe place. If you take a prohibited item to your seat in the exam hall, your exam entry could be cancelled and you won't receive a result.

When specific items are allowed in an exam, you must make sure that they meet SQA regulations. Your teacher will be able to give you more information. You must make sure that the items do not give you access to information that you are not allowed to have in the exam.

You are not allowed to share any equipment during an exam.

# Question papers and answer booklets

It is important that you read the instructions on the front of your question paper and check the subject and level are correct.

You will get **either**:

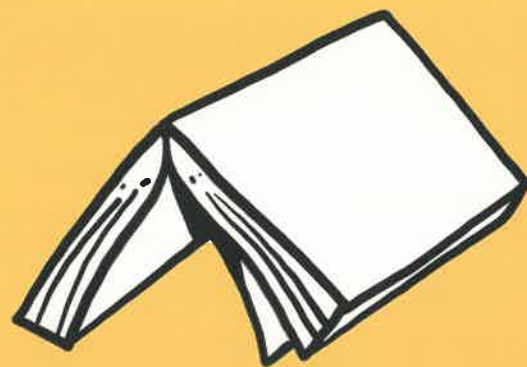
- a combined question paper and answer booklet (you must fill in your details clearly on the front page of the booklet, in the boxes provided), **or**
- a separate question paper and answer booklet (you must fill in your details clearly on the front page of the answer booklet, in the boxes provided).

If you need extra paper, raise your hand and ask the invigilator. In some subjects, you will find extra pages or graph paper at the end of the answer booklet.

If you use extra sheets of paper, you must write your name, SCN and school name on each sheet and put these inside your answer booklet.

Work through your question paper until you see the statement 'END OF QUESTION PAPER'. There will be nothing else you need to answer after this.

In a question paper, pages that don't have any questions or instructions will say 'BLANK PAGE' on them. No page should be completely blank. If you find a completely blank page before the 'END OF QUESTION PAPER' statement, tell the invigilator.





## Writing your answers

**You must use a pen with black or blue ink.**

Your paper may be scanned and it is important that markers can read your writing. They will do their best to read your work, but they might not be able to award marks if your writing is difficult to read. Do not use gel pens or pencils as these can fade.

When writing on unlined pages, try to leave a space of about one centimetre between lines.

In some subjects, poor spelling and punctuation could also result in marks not being awarded. If you have any concerns about this, or about your handwriting, speak to your teacher.

Please cross out any rough work in your answer booklet, and any unwanted answers (if you make more than one attempt at a question). You are not allowed to use correction pens, tape or fluid in any exam.



### Remember

- Take your time.
- Read all questions carefully.
- Answer the exact questions being asked.
- Double-check your answers if you finish early.
- Stay calm and do your best.



## Leaving the exam room

If you finish early, or you have done as much of the exam as you can, and you want to leave the exam room, raise your hand and ask the invigilator for permission to leave. If the exam is longer than one hour, the invigilator may allow you to leave after 30 minutes. If the exam is less than one hour, you must stay in the exam room until the end of the exam.

Before you leave, you must give the invigilator all your exam papers, including any answer booklets, extra sheets, question papers and data booklets. You could lose all marks for the paper concerned if you don't give your exam papers to the invigilator before leaving the exam room.

## Fairness

Everyone should have a fair chance to do their best during exams. Cheating and causing a disturbance during an exam are unfair to other candidates. Examples of cheating and unfair behaviour (candidate malpractice) include the following.

- **Having prohibited items** with you at your seat in the exam room.
- **Pretending to be someone else** or getting someone else to take an exam for you.
- **Disruptive behaviour** in the exam room.
- **Using rude, abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or images** in your answers. (Remember that all pages from your exam will be collected and reviewed by markers.)
- **Copying** from another person.
- **Collusion** – working with other candidates on an individual task that must be your own work.
- **Plagiarism** – failing to reference sources properly or presenting someone else's work as your own, which includes using artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT to create responses.

Any cheating or unfair behaviour can have serious consequences for your results. This could include losing marks, getting a lower grade or your exam entry being cancelled, so you won't receive a result. Your school can explain more about this.

# Dos and Don'ts



Do arrive in good time – at least 10 minutes before the exam starts.

Do bring the right equipment – including black or blue ink pens.

Do check that you don't have any prohibited items with you at your seat.

Do check you have been given the correct exam paper.

Do put your name, SCN and the name of your school on every piece of work you hand in (including separate answer booklets and answer sheets).

Do write legibly so that the markers can read your answers.

Do read all instructions and listen carefully for any announcements from the invigilator.

Do cross out any rough work that is not part of your answer.

Do stay in the room until the exam is finished. You can only leave early with permission from the invigilator.

Do give the invigilator all your exam papers, including any answer booklets, extra sheets, question papers and data booklets, before you leave the exam room.



Don't take any prohibited items to your seat.

Don't use any rude, abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or images in your answers.

Don't get someone else to sit your exam for you or pretend to be someone else.

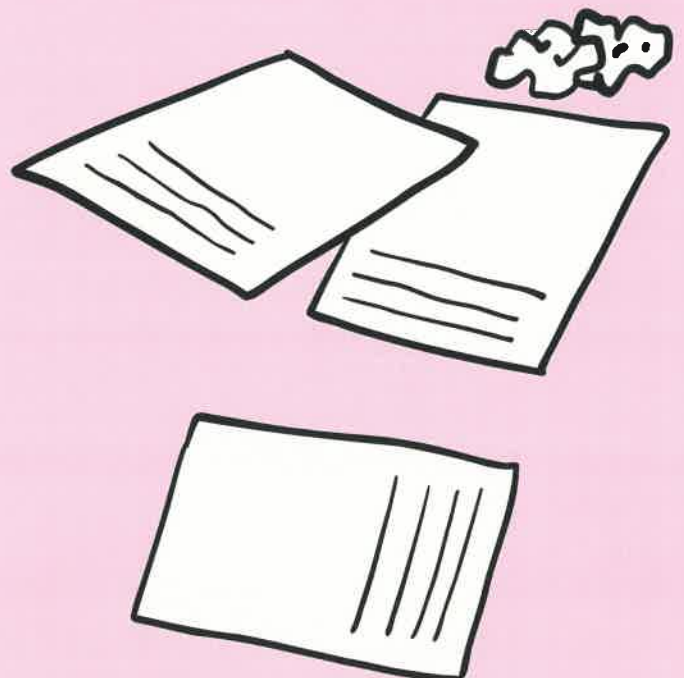
Don't behave in a disruptive way or cause a disturbance.

Don't copy from anyone else.

Don't share your work with anyone else.

Don't share equipment with anyone else.

Don't use correction pens, tape or fluid.







## **What if I cannot sit the exam or there is a serious disruption during the exam?**

You or your parent or carer should contact your school as soon as possible, explaining what has happened.

They will be able to discuss your options and whether or not you would be entitled to use the Examination Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service. If you are eligible for the service, your school would need to contact us. They must do this within 10 days after the exam, so it's really important that you speak to them as soon as possible, giving them all the information about what happened.

# Exceptional Circumstances

The Examination Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service (EECCS) will support you if:

- you have been unable to attend the exam, or were prevented from completing the exam, due to a personal circumstance beyond your control (such as a medical issue);
- you have been affected during the exam by a disruption, or other exam circumstance, reported by the chief invigilator; or
- your performance in the exam was affected by a personal circumstance, or an unplanned incident on the day, which was beyond your control.

Exam nerves, distraction or loss of concentration during an exam are not valid reasons to use this service.

In order to use the service, you must have completed all the compulsory parts of the course that are in addition to the exam, such as coursework, performances and portfolios. You must also have an estimated grade provided by your school.

If you want to use this service, you must speak to your school as soon as possible after the exam, giving them all the information about what happened to you.



If you are eligible, your school must request the service within 10 days of the date of the exam. You must give your school permission to request the service.

Your school will then need to provide alternative evidence based on the assessments you completed throughout the year. This could be prelims, class tests, class work, or recordings of performances (in some subjects).

SQA examiners will review this, and any exam and coursework materials that you completed, to decide your grade.



**If you use the EECSS, the grade you are awarded may be different from the estimated grade provided by your school. You will not be able to appeal against your grade through the appeals service.**

Visit [www.sqa.org.uk/exceptionalcircumstances](http://www.sqa.org.uk/exceptionalcircumstances) for more information on the EECSS.

# Your results

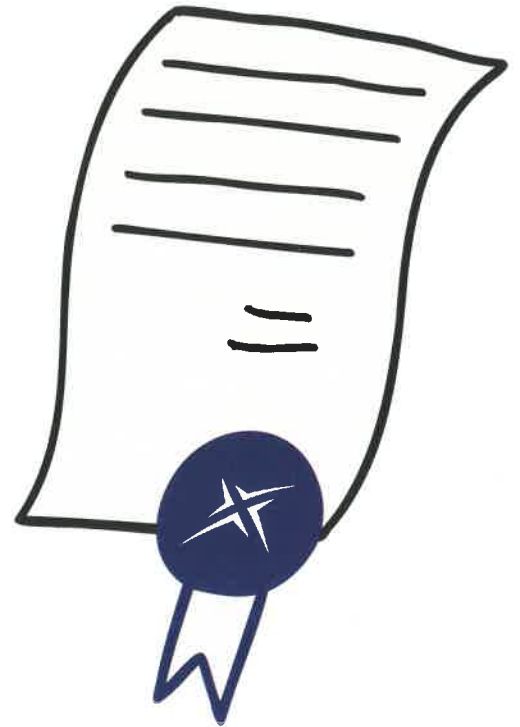
## Getting your results

You will receive your exam results by post on Tuesday 6 August.

Your school will also receive your results. If you have applied to a university or college through UCAS, they will also receive your results.

If you don't receive your certificate on Results Day, contact your school immediately. They will be able to tell you your results and will work with us to find out what has happened to your certificate.

If you think there's a mistake on your certificate, or something looks wrong, contact your school.



## MySQA

Sign up at [www.mysqa.org.uk](http://www.mysqa.org.uk) to get your results by text message or email.

It's important to keep your details up to date. If you change your mobile number or email address after signing up for MySQA, you will need to update your details to receive your text message or email.

On Results Day, if you cannot find your results email in your inbox, please check your spam or junk folder.

You will still receive your certificate by post.

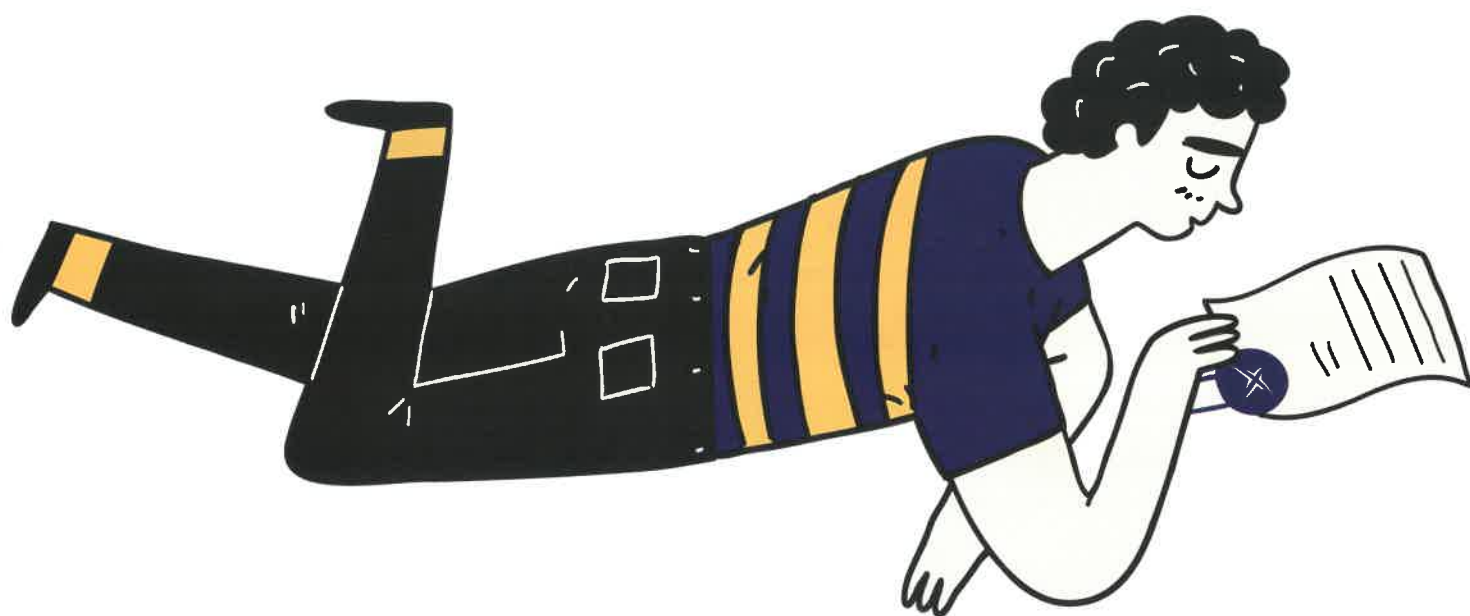




# Appeals

There will be a free appeals service that you can access directly or through your school. Information on the appeals service will be published on our website by Results Day.

Visit [www.sqa.org.uk/appeals](http://www.sqa.org.uk/appeals) for the latest updates on appeals.



## Support

Find out more about your certificate at [www.sqa.org.uk/certificate](http://www.sqa.org.uk/certificate)

You can find answers to commonly asked questions at [www.sqa.org.uk/faqs](http://www.sqa.org.uk/faqs)

You can contact us by filling in a candidate enquiry form online at [www.sqa.org.uk/candidateenquiryform](http://www.sqa.org.uk/candidateenquiryform)

If you have any other questions about your certificate, please contact our Customer Service Team. You can email [customer@sqa.org.uk](mailto:customer@sqa.org.uk) or call 0345 279 1000.







# Customer Contact Centre

0345 279 1000

[www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)



## Remember

- **Take your time.**
- **Read all questions carefully.**
- **Answer the exact questions being asked.**
- **Double-check your answers if you finish early.**
- **Stay calm and do your best.**

### Important notes:

- Write your school name, your name, date of birth and SCN on the card.
- You must not include any unauthorised information on the card.
- Tell your school immediately about any change to your home address.
- You can download this booklet at [www.sqa.org.uk/yourexams](http://www.sqa.org.uk/yourexams) to print off another card.



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