



## **EXAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

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*NOTE: Copies of the Joint Council for Qualifications documents regarding exams can be found on the TDA website (TDA Home / TDA Seniors / Examinations / Information for Candidates)*

### My child is unwell before or during the exam, what can be done?

A [Special Consideration](#) request can be made to the awarding body as long as the illness can be verified; this is required within 7 days of the exam. Parents will need to provide evidence. Please contact the Exams office for further information.

Please ring the Exams Office on 426042 before the start of the exam to notify us of an absence or to seek advice if your child is unwell but feels able to attend the exam.

### My child is experiences difficulties at home leading up to or during the exam period, what can be done?

If a student is experiencing a personal trauma or a family bereavement during the time leading up to or during the exams, the Exams Office should be notified as soon as possible before the exam on 426042. Depending on the circumstances a [Special Consideration](#) request can be made to the necessary awarding bodies, evidence will be required.

### What is Special Consideration?

Special consideration is given to a candidate who has temporarily experienced illness, injury or some other event outside of their control at the time of the assessment e.g. bereavement, domestic crisis. It is applied when the issue or event has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment.

Special consideration can go some way to assist a candidate affected by a potentially wide range of difficulties, emotional or physical, which may influence performance in their examinations. It cannot remove the difficulty faced by the candidate and only minor adjustments can be made to the mark awarded.

Up to an additional 5% of the marks can be awarded for exceptional cases such as terminal illness of the student or parent/guardian/carer, death of a member of the immediate family within 2 months of the exams taking place or a serious and disruptive crisis leading to acute anxiety about the family.

An additional 4% allowance can be awarded in cases of very serious problems such as life threatening illness, major surgery and very recent death of a member of the family within 1 month of the exams taking place.

An additional 3% allowance is a more common category and includes recent traumatic experience or illness, flare up of existing condition or recently broken limbs.

An additional 2% allowance is the most common category and includes circumstances such as illness at time of exam/assessment, extreme distress on the date of an exam (not exam related stress).

A 1% allowance is reserved for more minor problems such as illness of another student in the exam room which leads to disruption, stress or anxiety for which medication has been prescribed

Where the request fails to meet the criteria, it will be rejected. The appropriate awarding body makes the decision on what constitutes special consideration and what level of allowance is applied.

Special consideration will not be applied for in instances such as;

- Missing an exam through oversleeping, missing the bus, mistaking the exam date or start time.

- Long term illness or other difficulties during the course affecting revision time unless the illness/circumstances exacerbate what would otherwise be a minor issue at the time of the exam.
- Domestic inconvenience such as moving house, taking holidays
- The consequences of disobeying the centre's internal regulations

### **My child missed the exam; can they retake it at another time?**

The dates and times of written exams are set by the awarding body and cannot be changed; therefore, if a student misses the exam they will be marked as absent and will receive no marks for the paper. (For an internal Academy set exams, it may be possible to re-arrange a missed exam with the subject teacher who has set the exam).

If a student misses an exam in the summer of Year 11 or Year 13 it may be possible to apply for [special consideration](#), as long as the awarding body's criteria has been met and there is evidence to support the application.

### **My child is late for the exam; will they be allowed to sit the exam?**

If a student arrives within 1 hour of the published start time of the exam, the Thomas Deacon Academy will allow the student to sit the exam only if the exam has not already finished and students have not left the exam room. The student will be given the full exam time allowance if staffing and room availability allows.

If a student arrives after one hour of the start time, entry to the exam room will not be permitted. The student will be marked as absent and no marks will be awarded for that particular paper or assessment. In the summer of Year 11 or Year 13, this will affect the overall GCSE, A Level grade awarded. It may be possible to apply for [special consideration](#), as long as the awarding body's criteria has been met and there is evidence to support the application.

### **When are the exam periods?**

The main External written exam periods during the academic year are:

November – GCSE Maths and English Retakes

January/February – Vocational subject exams

May/June – All GCSE, A-Level and Vocational subject exams

A student may also be entered for on-line exams that are conducted on a computer. These exams can be set at various times during the year and the subject teacher should advise you of these dates and times.

An "Exam Dates" document can be found on the Academy's website, from the home page - TDA Senior/Examinations. This is a list of dates the written exam sessions, both Internal and External, during the academic year. The exams office is unable to tell in advance when an individual student has examinations. Therefore, if you are trying to book a holiday the office can only advise, as a guide, the session dates. Every effort is made to publish individual timetables to students as soon as possible after the subject entries have been finalised.

### **What equipment is needed for exams?**

The basic exam equipment is the student's ID card, black pen\*, pencil, rubber and ruler.

Additional equipment will be needed for subject specific exams such as calculators/protractors/compass for Maths exams, coloured pencils for DT exams. Subject teachers will be able to advise students for specific exam papers.

\* Awarding Bodies scan student's exam scripts so they can be marked online by the examiners. Pencil, coloured ink and gel pens do not get picked up effectively on the scan. It is therefore essential that student write in a black ball point pen only, erasable pens are strictly prohibited.

### **My child doesn't have their school ID card; can they still sit the exam?**

**It is extremely important, and an awarding body requirement, that exam staff can identify students to ensure the correct students are sitting the correct exam paper and to aid in identifying absences.**

If a student forgets to bring in their ID card, as a **temporary** measure they must go to their Year Administrator, before the exam, for a printout from the school IT system that shows their name and photograph. The 'Proof of Age' card, for students aged 16+, or a driving licence is also an acceptable means of ID.

### **What information is shown on the exam timetable?**

The timetable shows the date, start time\* and length of each exam, the exam name, the venue where the exam will be held and the student's own seat number.

\* Students are requested to be at the exam room 15 minutes prior to the start time on their timetable to allow for attendance, handing out exam papers etc so the exam starts at the time stated.

### **Where can I find my child's exam timetable?**

Students will be emailed with a copy of their exam timetable. Additional copies can be requested from the Exams office.

### **My child doesn't have an exam timetable, what does this mean?**

If a student does not have a timetable for an exam season it is either because they have not been entered for any exams or they have been entered only for a [NEA](#) (non-exam assessment) exam. If you are in any doubt, please contact the exams office for confirmation.

### **What are the start times for exams?**

The start times for the GCSE/A Level written exams are generally 9am for morning exams and 1.30pm for afternoon exams. Internal exams set by the TDA will vary depending on the subject and duration to fit in with the timings of lessons.

Students must be at the exam venue at least 15 minutes before the start time on their timetable to ensure a prompt start to the exams.

### **When does my child receive their exam results?**

External exam results dates are set by the awarding bodies. As a guide they are generally published as follows:

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| November exams:         | January  |
| January/February exams: | March/April  |
| May/June exams:         | August (GCSE's are usually the Thursday before the August bank holiday, A Level results the second Thursday before the bank holiday weekend) |



### Who pays for exams?

The Academy will pay for exam entries in Years 7 – 11. For Years 12 and 13, the Academy will pay for the first exam entry; any subsequent retake entries will be paid for by the student/parent. University Admission Tests are paid for by the individual student.

If a student fails to sit an exam or meet the necessary coursework requirements, reimbursement may be sought from the student/parent.

### My child has more than one exam scheduled at the same time on the same day?

Exam Clashes are quite common. If the total exam time for a morning or afternoon session is 3.5 hours or less, your child will sit the exams, one after the other, in the same session.

If the total exam time exceeds 3.5 hours, one of the exam papers will be moved to another exam session within the same day i.e. morning to afternoon or vice versa. The student will be informed individually of how the clash will be resolved by email and their exam timetable will show the revised timings. The student will be supervised between exams until both papers have been completed to maintain exam security.

In the event a student has three exams on one day, if the total time exceeds 5 ½ hours for GCSE or more than 6 hours for A Level, an application for [special consideration](#) will be made

### My child needs to carry medication

Students who need to carry long term medication such as epi-pens, diabetic insulin/glucose tablets and inhalers can take these into the exam room and put it on or under the desk. No other belongings are allowed.

For medication such as antibiotics tablets, these should be left in the medical room.

### What is a Non-Examination Assessment?

These are part of the subject course and are a more secure way for students to produce coursework. Control levels are set at each stage of the assessment process by the awarding bodies which the Academy must adhere to. In some subjects, work will either be marked by an awarding body examiner or internally by the teacher and verified by the awarding body. In all cases the marks contribute towards the overall subject grade awarded at the end of the course.

Assessments can take place throughout the course and will be conducted during lesson time by the teacher. It is essential that students attend every lesson to ensure that they are fully prepared and can gain the best possible marks.

### What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism involves taking someone else's words, thoughts or ideas and trying to pass them off as your own. **It is a form of cheating which is taken very seriously by the Academy and the awarding bodies.**

There are many ways to detect plagiarism. Teachers and examiners can spot changes in the style of writing and use of language and they are very familiar with work on the topic concerned. Internet search engines and specialised computer software are often used to match phrases or pieces of text with original sources and to detect changes in the grammar and style of writing or punctuation.

The penalties for plagiarism are very severe. If detected before the declaration forms have been signed, the Academy may withdraw the student from that particular exam or unit or from the subject as a whole.

Once the declaration forms have been signed, the awarding body must be notified. In this instance or if detected by the examiner, the awarding body may

- award zero marks for the work concerned
- disqualify the student from that unit for the examination series in question;
- disqualify the student from the whole subject for that examination series;
- disqualify a student from all subjects and barred from entering again for a period of time.

The level of these sanctions will be decided by the awarding body.

If you have any queries that are not answered here, please contact the Exams office for advice.

[exams@tda.education](mailto:exams@tda.education)

Telephone 01733 426042