Student Vocational Course Handbook 2026-2027



Introduction

Goldington Academy is committed to ensuring that candidates are fully briefed all exam and assessment processes in place in the centre and are made aware of the required JCQ awarding body instructions and information for candidates.

This booklet aims to provide information that is helpful and informative. Please read it carefully so that you are aware of the regulations and procedures and share it with your parents or guardians so that they are also aware.

The Examination Boards (sometimes called Awarding Bodies) set down strict criteria which must be followed for the conduct of non-examined assessments (NEA) and Goldington Academy is required to follow them precisely. You should therefore pay particular attention to the JCQ notices at the end of this booklet. Failure to do so can result in disqualification from some or all of your subjects.

If there is anything that you do not understand, please ask. If you or your parents or guardians have any queries or need help or advice at any time, please contact Mrs Henderson, the Exams Manager at examoffice@goldington.beds.sch.uk

Purpose of the handbook

- To support/complement candidate briefings
- To inform candidates about malpractice in assessments
- To inform candidates about the use of their personal data and copyright
- To ensure candidates are provided with all the relevant information about their assessments in advance of any assessments being taken
- To ensure copies of relevant JCQ information for candidates documents are provided in advance of any assessments being taken
- To answer any questions candidates may have
- To signpost candidates (and where relevant parents/carers) to any assessment - related policies/procedures that they need to be aware of on the centre's website

Vocational Qualifications at Goldington Academy

At Goldington Academy we offer three different types of vocational qualifications which are covered by the guidance and regulations as set out in this handbook;

- OCR Cambridge Nationals
- WJEC Vocational Level 1/2
- BTEC Tech Award

For detailed information about the programme overview, unit details and assessment procedures, please refer to the specification on the examining board website.

These qualifications are different to GCSE's because:

- Students develop skills, knowledge and understanding in the vocational area they are studying.
- Each vocational course is made up of a number of units, allowing students to build up their qualification in stages.
- Students are assessed through non-examined assessments and an external examination.
- Students produce evidence for their key skills qualification throughout their vocational course.
- Students take responsibility for their own learning by planning their work, doing research and regularly reviewing their progress.

All vocational courses run by Goldington Academy are governed by the JCQ, you must read the following documents prior to beginning your work:

- Candidate declaration form (Appendix 2)
- Information for candidates – non-examination assessments (Appendix 3)
- Information for candidates – using social media (Appendix 4)
- JCQ Information for candidates AI (Artificial Intelligence and assessments) (Appendix 5)

Speak to your teacher if you are unsure about any of the rules.

Course Arrangements

Registration & Entry Information

- BTEC learners are registered with Pearson before November in Year 10
- OCR Cambridge Nationals and WJEC Vocational courses are entered for units in either the January or June assessment series in Years 10 & 11, depending on the unit completion date set by your teacher. The specific assessment plan will be provided by each subject teacher

For all Vocational courses, the external examination will be taken in summer 2027 (certification series).

Internal Assessment

The content of the assessment will be outlined on an Assignment Brief. For every assessment there will be a clear deadline by which the work must be submitted to your teacher. Ask your teacher if you are unsure.

Authentication of work

Before submitting your work, a declaration form (specific to the examining board) must be completed to declare that the work is your own. **A mark of zero will be recorded if a student cannot confirm the authenticity of their work.**

Marking of Internal Assessments

Your work will be marked by your teacher in accordance with the marking criteria provided by the awarding body. Following that, a sample of the assessments will be checked by another member of the teaching team to ensure the grading is fair and accurate.

Internal Appeals

Your teacher will inform you of your centre assessed mark before these are submitted to the exam board. There is an 'Internal Appeals Policy' in place for any candidate who feels that the assessment of their NEA has not been carried out fairly, consistently and in accordance with the specification for the qualification. This can be found on the 'Examinations' section of the school website.

To initiate an appeal, you may request copies of materials (generally, as a minimum, a copy of the marked assessment material (work) and the mark scheme or assessment criteria plus additional materials which may vary from subject to subject) to assist you in considering whether to request a review of the centre's marking of the assessment. **This request must be made within 3 calendar days of receiving your marks.**

There are strict deadlines to submit a written internal appeal and once the marks have been submitted to the examining board, this option will no longer be available to you. Non-examined assessments are not subject to the usual examination post-results services.

Ensure you discuss any concerns with your teacher or the exams office immediately for further guidance or support.

Moderation

Following the submission of marks to the examining board, a sample of students' work will be sent to a moderator. The purpose of moderation is to bring the marking of an internally assessed component/unit to an agreed standard in all participating centres**.** Please note that, after moderation, the centre assessed mark could go up, stay the same or go down. Your subject teacher and/or a member of SLT will be available on results days to support you should this happen.

Opportunities for resubmission of work

Every internal assessment unit contributes to the final qualification grade; therefore, it may be appropriate for your teacher to authorise resubmission of evidence to meet assessment criteria targeted by an assignment. This will only be authorised in cases where:

- it is permitted within the specification of the qualification and
- it is in the student's best interest to do so

Personal data

- Any person involved in completing examinations/assessments where malpractice is suspected, or alleged, personal data about them will be provided to the awarding body (or bodies) whose examinations/assessments are involved. Personal data about them may also be shared with other awarding bodies, the qualifications regulator or professional bodies.
- Candidates reported for suspected or actual malpractice where a joint investigation by more than one awarding organisation is to be conducted, will be informed that awarding organisations will be responsible for ensuring that any sharing of data between awarding organisations is carried out in line with their statutory obligations under data protection legislation (primarily the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR).
- The centre will provide relevant personal data including name, date of birth, gender and other information required for the administration, assessment and awarding of qualifications may be provided to the awarding body.
- that awarding bodies may be required to provide a candidate's personal data to educational agencies, such as DfE, Welsh Government, Department of Education (Northern Ireland), ESFA, regulators, HESA, UCAS, Local Authorities and the Learning Records Service (LRS)
- that their personal data may be provided to a central record of qualifications approved by the awarding bodies for statistical and policy development purposes
- of the processing that the centre undertakes, for example, that the centre will provide relevant personal data, including name, date of birth and gender, to the awarding bodies for the purpose of examining and awarding qualifications

Candidates may obtain access to their personal data, such as examination results by applying to the appropriate awarding body's data protection officer.

Candidates are also referred to the centre's privacy notice which explains:

- why Goldington Academy needs to collect personal data
- what it plans to do with it
- how long it will keep it
- whether it will be sharing it with any other organisation

Copyright

- Materials which are submitted by candidates for assessment may include any form of written work, audio and visual materials, computer programmes and data ("Student Materials"). Awarding bodies may use the Student Materials to evaluate candidates' performance in the relevant assessment. They may also use the Student Materials for other purposes as outlined in their privacy policies and in accordance with their terms. For further information links to each awarding body's privacy notice are listed in (Appendix 1).
- By submitting Student Materials for assessment, the awarding body is entitled to use those Student Materials to the extent necessary to give effect to the assessment, qualification and regulatory framework, as set out in sections 6.17-6.19 of JCQ's *General Regulations for Approved Centres* document
- Candidates are not entitled to opt-out of allowing awarding bodies to use these materials for the purposes set out in sections 6.17-6.19
- The awarding body will anonymise materials used for teacher and examiner training, inclusion in examiner reports and similar assessment-related publications and research directly related to the awarding body's assessment, qualification and regulatory activities
- Candidates may notify the awarding body, by giving notice to the Exams Manager or a member of senior leadership at Goldington Academy, that they wish to opt out of the awarding body's use of their materials for teacher and examiner training, inclusion in examiner reports and similar assessment-related publications and research directly related to the awarding body's assessment, qualification and regulatory activities. Relevant staff will submit promptly to the relevant awarding body any notice received from a candidate

Candidates with access arrangements/reasonable adjustments

Access Arrangements are determined by the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo), in conjunction with relevant teaching staff and exam office personnel. They are agreed before an assessment/exam. They allow candidates with special education needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to:

- Access the assessment/exam;
- Show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment/exam

Goldington Academy will apply directly to the awarding bodies for access arrangements on your behalf. You will be notified of your approved access arrangements in writing by the SENDCo. Access arrangements are applied for based on your usual way of working. In some cases, an assessment may be carried out with you by an external assessor who specialises in access arrangements. If your teacher thinks you would benefit from this, they will discuss it in detail with you and make recommendations to the SENDCo.

Alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice

Attempted or actual malpractice activity will not be tolerated. The school will follow the JCQ procedures as described in JCQ's "Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessment: Policies and Procedures" document.

The following are examples of malpractice by candidates with regard to non-examined assessments. This list is not exhaustive:

- Plagiarism: the copying and passing off as the candidate's own work the whole or part of another person's work.
- Collusion: working collaboratively with other learners to produce work which is submitted as the candidate's only
- Failing to abide by the instructions of an assessor: this may refer to the use of resources which the candidates have specifically been told not to use

- The alteration of any results document
- Goldington Academy does not allow the use of AI by candidates when producing work for assessments

If a member of staff suspects a candidate of malpractice the candidate will be informed and the allegation will be explained. The candidate will have the opportunity to give their side of the story before any final decision is made. If the candidate accepts that malpractice has occurred, she/he will be given the opportunity to repeat the assignment as long as the candidate has not already signed the authentication form. If found guilty of malpractice following an investigation, the member of staff may decide to re-mark previous assignments and these could also be rejected if similar concerns are identified.

Should the candidate be found guilty of malpractice after having signed the authentication form then the matter is no longer subject to internal school discipline and must be reported to the relevant awarding body.

Results

- Summer 2027 provisional statements of results release date is on Thursday 19 August 2027. Further information will be supplied later in the academic year
- Selected teachers and members of the senior leadership team will be available during the exam results collection window
- Results will **not** be given via telephone under any circumstance
- If you are unable to attend results day in person, you can have them emailed to you or elect another person (including family members) to collect your results on your behalf. For either option, you must complete the 'Candidate Permission form', available from Mrs Henderson, Exams Officer

Complaints procedure

Goldington Academy has a written complaints procedure which will cover general complaints regarding the centre's delivery or administration of a qualification. This can be found on the 'Examinations' section of the school website.

Appendix 1 - JCQ Information for candidates – Privacy Notice

AQA
Privacy notice (aqa.org.uk)

OCR
Candidate privacy policy (ocr.org.uk)

Pearson/Edexcel
Pearson's Privacy Notices

WJEC
Privacy Policy (wjec.co.uk)

Appendix 2 – Candidate declaration form

Candidate declaration form

Notice to candidates

1. **The work you submit for assessment must be your own.**

   You must not plagiarise. This means you must not take someone else's words, thoughts, ideas or outputs and try to pass them off as your own.

2. **You must clearly reference all your sources.**

   If you have used any material to create ideas for your work (like a book, journal or internet search) you must reference this, even if you haven't used the same words or phrases in your own work. You must make clear which part, element or phrase you have used and say where it came from. If you receive help and guidance from someone other than your teacher, you must tell your teacher. They will then record the assistance given to you.

3. **You must clearly acknowledge and reference any use of AI.**

   Sometimes you are allowed to use an AI tool to create your work. You must keep a copy of the original question(s) and any AI-generated content you used, for example, a screenshot with a short explanation of how you used it. You must acknowledge the name of the AI tool used; the date the content was generated and the sources used by the AI tool in generating the content.

   You need to hand this in with your final work so your teacher can check the AI content and how you used it.

4. **You must keep your work confidential.**

   You can only share the work you submit for assessment with your teacher(s). You must not share it with anyone else, and you must not post it online.

5. **The work you submit for assessment must be produced under the conditions set out in the awarding body's specification/scheme of assessment/NEA handbook.**

   Each qualification has a specific set of conditions. Your teacher will have explained the level of supervision and control necessary for this assessment.

If you break the rules, you could get zero marks, be disqualified from the unit or subject, or even from all exams. The awarding body will investigate and decide what happens.

If there is anything you don't understand, please speak to your teacher before you sign the form below.

Candidate declaration

I have read and understood the Notice to Candidates above. I declare that the work submitted for this assessment:

1. is my own work;
2. has clearly referenced all sources;
3. has clearly acknowledged any use of AI;
4. has been kept confidential;
5. has been produced under the conditions set out in the specification/scheme of assessment/NEA handbook.

I understand that if I make a false declaration this is a form of malpractice.

If there is anything you don't understand, please speak to your teacher before you sign the form.

Candidate Signature.....Date.....

Appendix 3 - JCQ Information for candidates

You **must** read this information if you are taking any qualifications that contain elements of non-examination assessment.

This document tells you about some things that you **must** and **must not** do when you are completing your work.

When you submit your work for marking, the awarding body will normally require you to sign an authentication statement confirming that you have read and followed the regulations.

If there is something that you do not understand, you **must** ask your teacher.

Preparing your work - good practice

If you receive help and guidance from someone other than your teacher, you **must** tell your teacher. They will then record the assistance given to you.

If you worked as part of a group on an assignment, for example undertaking field research, you **must** write up your **own account** of the assignment. Even if the information you have is the same, you **must** describe in your own words how that information was obtained. You **must draw your own conclusions from the data**.

You **must** meet the deadlines that your teacher gives you. Remember – your teachers are there to guide you. Although they cannot give you direct assistance, they can help you to sort out any problems before it is too late.

Take care of your work and keep it safe. **Do not** leave it lying around where your classmates can find it. **Do not** share it with anyone, including posting it on social media. You must always keep your work secure and confidential. If it is stored on the computer network, keep your password secure. Collect all copies from the printer and destroy those you do not need.

Do not be tempted to use any prepared or generated online solutions and try to pass them off as your own work – this is cheating. Electronic tools used by awarding bodies can detect this sort of copying.

You **must not** write inappropriate, offensive or obscene material.

Research and using references

In some subjects, you will have an opportunity to do some independent research into a topic.

The research you do may involve looking for information in published sources, such as textbooks, encyclopedias, journals, TV, radio and on the internet.

You can demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of a subject by using information from sources, or generated from sources, which may include the internet and AI. Remember, though, information from these sources may be incorrect or biased. You **must** take care how you use this material - you cannot copy it and claim it as your own work.

Using information from published sources (including the internet) as the basis for your assignment is a good way to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of a subject. You **must** take care how you use this material though – you **cannot** copy it and claim it as your own work.

> The regulations state that:
>
> 'the work which you submit for assessment **must** be your own';
>
> 'you **must not** copy from someone else or allow another candidate to copy from you'.

When producing a piece of work, if you use the same wording as a published source, you **must** place quotation marks around the passage and state where it came from. This is known as **referencing**. You **must** make sure that you give detailed references for everything in your work which is not in your own words. A reference from a printed book or journal should show the name of the author, the year of publication and the page number. For example: Morrison, 2000, p29.

For material taken from the internet, your reference should show the date when the material was downloaded and **must** show the precise web page, not the search engine used to locate it. This can be copied from the address line. For example: http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/october/28/newsid_2621000/2621915.stm, downloaded 5 February 2027.

Where AI has been used, your reference **must** show the name of the AI tool used and should show the date the content was generated. For example: ChatGPT 3.5 (https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/), 25/01/2027. You should also acknowledge the sources used by the AI tool in generating the content.

You **must** retain a copy of the question(s)/prompts used to generate the AI content and the AI-generated content itself in a non-editable format (such as a screenshot) and provide a brief explanation of how you used it. This **must** be submitted with your work for final assessment so that your teacher can review the work, the AI-generated content and how it has been used.

You may be required to include a bibliography at the end of your piece of written work. Your teacher will tell you whether this is necessary. Where required, your bibliography **must** list the full details of publications you have used in your research, even where these are not directly referred to. For example: Curran, *J. Mass Media and Society* (Hodder Arnold, 2005).

If you copy the words, ideas or outputs from other sources and do not show your sources in references and a bibliography, this will be considered as cheating.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves taking someone else's words, thoughts, ideas or outputs and not crediting the source. This includes outputs from AI tools. It could also include AI-produced material. **Plagiarism is a form of cheating which is taken very seriously.**

Don't think you won't be caught; there are many ways to detect plagiarism.

- Markers can spot changes in the style of writing and use of language.
- Markers are highly experienced subject specialists who will be very familiar with work on the topic concerned. They may have read the source you are using or even marked the work you have copied from.
- Internet search engines for detecting plagiarism and specialised computer software can be used to match phrases or pieces of text with original sources and to detect changes in the grammar and style of writing or punctuation.

Sanctions for breaking the regulations

If it is discovered that you have broken the regulations, one of the following sanctions will be applied:

- you will be awarded zero marks for your work;
- you will be disqualified from that component for the examination series in question;
- you will be disqualified from the whole subject for that examination series;
- you will be disqualified from all subjects and barred from entering again for a period of time.

The awarding body will decide which sanction is appropriate.

REMEMBER – IT'S YOUR QUALIFICATION SO IT NEEDS TO BE YOUR OWN WORK.

Appendix 4 - JCQ Information for candidates – Social media

You **must** read this information to help you stay within examination/assessment regulations when using social media.

JCQ

Information for candidates

Using social media and examinations/assessments

While we like to share our experiences online, when it comes to exams and other assessments, we have to be careful.

- Sharing ideas online can be helpful when you're studying or revising
- However, sharing certain information (see information on the right) can break the rules and could affect your results
- If you're not sure what you can and can't discuss online, check with your teacher
- If you receive exam content on social media, you must tell your teacher
- Don't be caught out by scammers selling fake exam papers

Things to do on social media:

- Have fun
- Be responsible
- Report any exam or assessment content you see to your teacher

Things not to do on social media:

- Buy/ask for/share exam or assessment content
- Pass on rumours of what's in exams or assessments
- Share your work
- Work with others so that your assessment is not your own independent work

If you do any of the above activities, you may:

- Receive a written warning
- Lose marks
- Be disqualified from a part or all of your qualifications
- Be banned from taking exams and assessments for a number of years

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the JCQ rules: **jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents**

Appendix 5 – JCQ Information for candidates AI

Information for candidates **AI (Artificial Intelligence and assessments)**

What is AI?

AI stands for artificial intelligence and can be used to create text, images, videos, music and artwork based on instructions given to an AI tool.

What is an AI tool?

AI tools are applications, such as ChatGPT, Snapchat My AI, Google and Google translate. There are many more!*

*The list of certain suppliers of AI-related products is for information purposes only and does not constitute an endorsement by JCQ and awarding bodies. It is each centre's responsibility to investigate and verify any suppliers they use, including any terms and conditions which govern the sale or use of the supplier's products. The list provided is not exhaustive.

When can I use AI?

- Your teachers may use it in class when teaching the course, but remember teaching in the classroom is not an exam!
- There are some assessments where you can use AI – your teachers will tell you if you can or cannot use an AI tool.
- Remember, the rules are different for different assessments and subjects, so always check with your teachers first!
- When an AI tool is allowed, **you must acknowledge**** the AI tools and the material produced by the AI tool that you have used in your work. If you do not acknowledge AI use, it will be **considered as cheating.**

When can I not use an AI tool?

- AI tools cannot be used in an exam or any other assessment where exam rules apply. This includes use or possession of hidden AI-enabled technology like smart glasses.
- This is what exam boards call **AI misuse and it is a form of cheating.**

**Acknowledgment – When producing a piece of work, if you use the same wording as a published source, you must place quotation marks around the passage and state where it came from. This is known as referencing. You must make sure that you give detailed references for everything in your work which is not in your own words, for example, *ChatGPT 3.5 (https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/), 25/01/2025.*

IF YOU USE AN AI TOOL, YOU CANNOT GET MARKS FOR WHAT THE AI TOOL HAS PRODUCED, AS IT IS NOT YOUR OWN WORK

If I'm allowed to use AI, how is this breaking the rules?

AI misuse is:

- when you use an AI tool in an exam or assessment where you are not allowed to; and/or
- where you use an AI tool to create work and then say it's your own.

AI misuse can have serious consequences including possible disqualification.

How to make sure you don't misuse AI

ACKNOWLEDGE

If you are allowed to use an AI tool in your assessment (remember to check!), you must do the following:

- reference the AI tool you have used
- give the date of when the AI tool generated the content
- give details of how you used it
- save screenshots of what you have asked or instructed the AI tool to do and what answer the AI gave you, and include this with the work submitted.

DECLARE

- Remember to sign your declaration form when handing in your work for final assessment.
- Your signature on the declaration form tells your teacher and the exam board that you are saying all the work you're handing in is your own.
- If you have used an AI tool, **you must declare***** that you have used it before signing the declaration form

***Declare – this means that when you submit your work for marking, the awarding body will normally require you to sign an authentication statement confirming that you have read and followed the regulations.

LAST CHECKS | Know the rules | Check with your teachers | ACKNOWLEDGE and DECLARE