

# Your Exams

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

**School edition**



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# Getting ready for your exams

Exams let you show what you've learned in your courses.

It's understandable to feel a bit nervous or worried about sitting your exams later this year. And of course you want to do your very best on the day. This booklet tells you what you need to know to do that, and gives you helpful information and advice. It also contains some rules which are there to make sure that exams are fair for everyone. It's important that you read and understand these before your exams start.

If you're not sure about the rules, speak to your teacher. They'll be able to help you, and to 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.

If you need this booklet in a different format, including in large print, Braille or a different language, please email [customer@sqa.org.uk](mailto:customer@sqa.org.uk) or call **0345 279 1000**.



## Important things you need to know about exams in 2025

- The exam timetable starts on Friday 25 April and ends on Monday 2 June.
- If you cannot attend your exam, or if your performance on the day of the exam is disrupted or affected by specific circumstances, you can use the Examination Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service. 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 5 August. You can sign up for MySQA, at [www.mysqa.org.uk](http://www.mysqa.org.uk), to also get your results by text or email (or both) from 8 am on results day.
- There's a free appeals service that you can access directly or through your school. More information will be available by June 2025.



## 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 additional support you receive during normal teaching and assessments in school.

There are different types of assessment arrangements, which may vary by subject, level and learner. These arrangements include adapted question papers and changes to timing and where the exam is taken.

If you need additional support while sitting your exams, arrangements can be made to give you an equal chance to show what you know and what you can do. If you have questions, speak to your school. 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

We updated the exam timetable, which shows the dates and times of exams, on 3 February. Visit [www.sqa.org.uk/timetable](http://www.sqa.org.uk/timetable) to see the updated version. Please use that version of the timetable in case the dates or times of your exams have changed.

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 are taking, when they are, and where they are.

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

## SQA apps

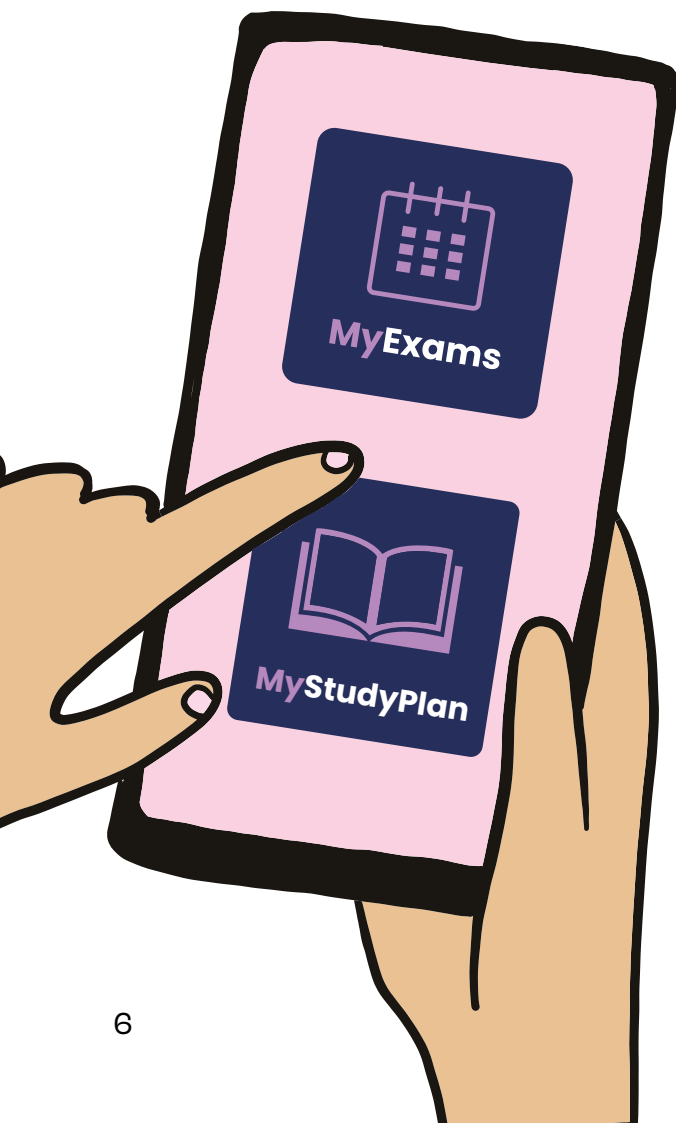
There are free apps available to support you at exam time.

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. Visit [www.sqa.org.uk/studyplan](http://www.sqa.org.uk/studyplan) for tips to help you create a plan that will help you focus on studying.

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 and find out how to update the MyStudyPlan app after changes to the timetable.





## Past papers

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

You can download past papers, and instructions for marking them, from [www.sqa.org.uk/pastpapers](http://www.sqa.org.uk/pastpapers)

## 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.

Your teacher will give you an SCN card to write your name, school name, date of birth and SCN on. 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 lose your SCN card, ask your teacher for another one.







## 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 name and address.

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

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'll be given a desk or seat number for each exam. Make sure you know this number before each exam.

## Invigilators

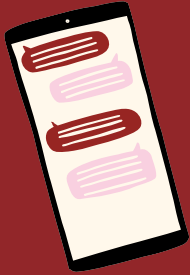
The people who supervise exams are called 'invigilators'. Their job is to make sure your exams take place according to the rules and that the rules are applied fairly. You must listen to and follow any instructions the invigilators give you.

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

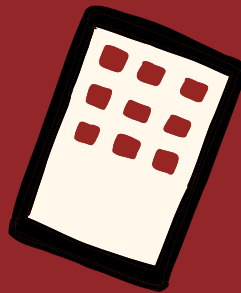


# Prohibited items

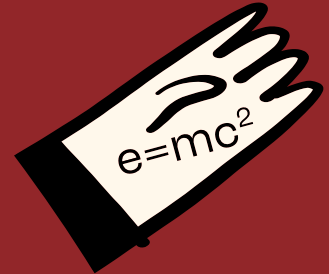
Prohibited items are things that you must not have with you at your allocated seat or desk in the exam room, unless they have been approved by us as part of an assessment arrangement for the exam you are sitting.



Mobile phones (Even if your phone is switched off, you must not have it with you at your seat or desk.)

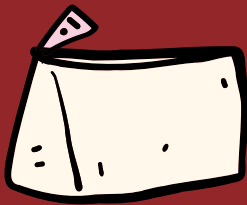


Electronic devices such as tablets, earbuds, smartwatches or any other device that stores information or can connect to the internet



Extra information:

- books, sketches or paper
- anything written on your clothes or body, and
- notes or unauthorised information on your SCN card



Pencil cases or calculator cases



Calculators, except for exams where calculators are allowed



Dictionaries, except for exams where dictionaries are allowed

For information on when calculators or dictionaries are allowed, visit [www.sqa.org.uk/yourexams](http://www.sqa.org.uk/yourexams)

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 such as calculators or dictionaries are allowed in an exam, you must make sure that yours 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**:

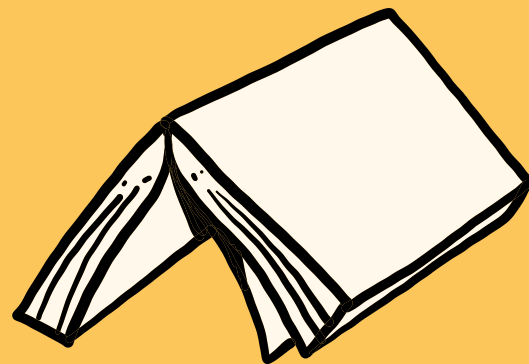
- a combined question paper and answer booklet (you must fill in your details clearly on the front page of the booklet, in the boxes provided), **or**
- a separate question paper and answer booklet (you must fill in your details clearly on the front page of the answer booklet, in the boxes provided).

If you need extra paper, raise your hand and ask the invigilator. In some subjects, you'll 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 or unwanted answers in your answer booklet. You're not allowed to use correction pens, tape or fluid in any exam.



### Remember

- Take your time.
- Read the 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 from the start. 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.

If you need to leave the exam room for any reason other than because you have finished the exam or done as much as you can (for example, to go to the toilet), raise your hand to speak to the invigilator.

# 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 or getting a lower grade. Or your exam entry could be cancelled, and you wouldn't receive a result. Your school can explain more about this.

# Dos and Don'ts



**Do**

**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**

**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.

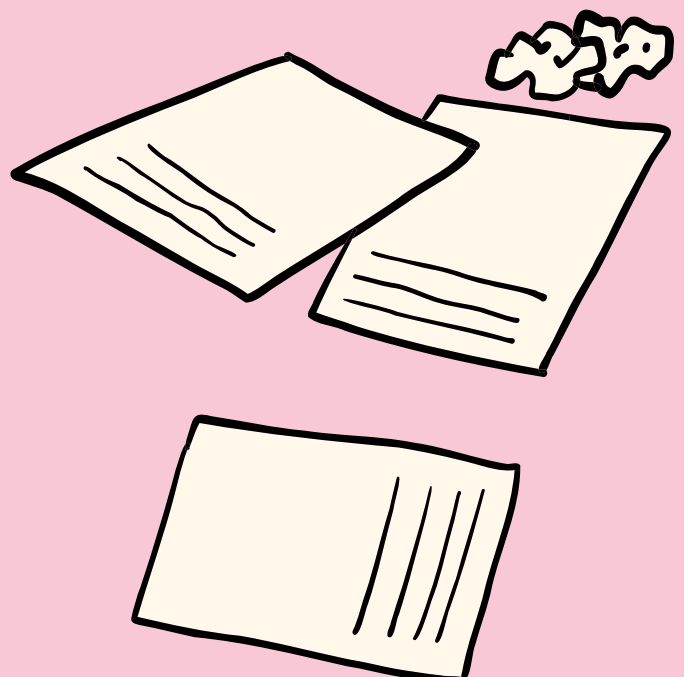
**Don't** behave in a disruptive way or cause a disturbance.

**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.





# If something unexpected happens



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

You or a 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 (EECCS). 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 EECCS will support you if:

- you have been unable to attend the exam, or 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.

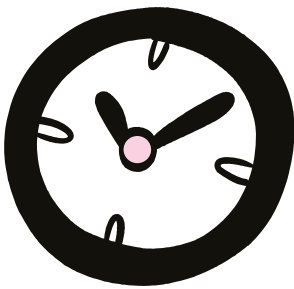
To be eligible for the EECCS, you must have completed all the compulsory parts of your course that are not on a question paper, such as performances and portfolios. You must also have had an estimated grade provided by your school.

If you want to use the 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 will request the service for you within 10 days of the exam. You must give your school permission to request the service.



Your school will need to provide alternative evidence based on the assessments you completed throughout the year. This could be prelims, class tests, class work or records of performances (in some subjects). SQA examiners will review this, and any exam and coursework materials that you completed, to decide your grade. The grade you are awarded through the EECCS may be different from your estimated grade.

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



**If you have used the EECCS, you will not be able to appeal against your grade through the appeals service.**



# Your results

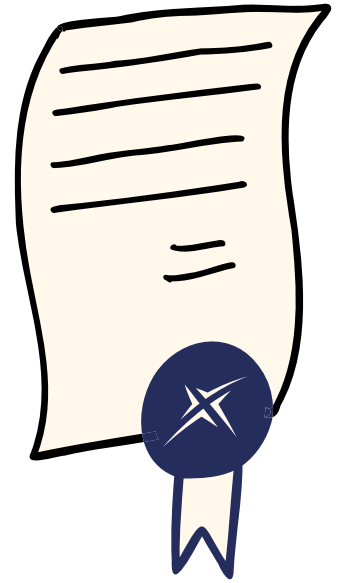
## Getting your results

You will receive your exam results by post on Tuesday 5 August.

Your school will also receive your results. If you have applied to a university or college through the Universities and Colleges Admission Service (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.



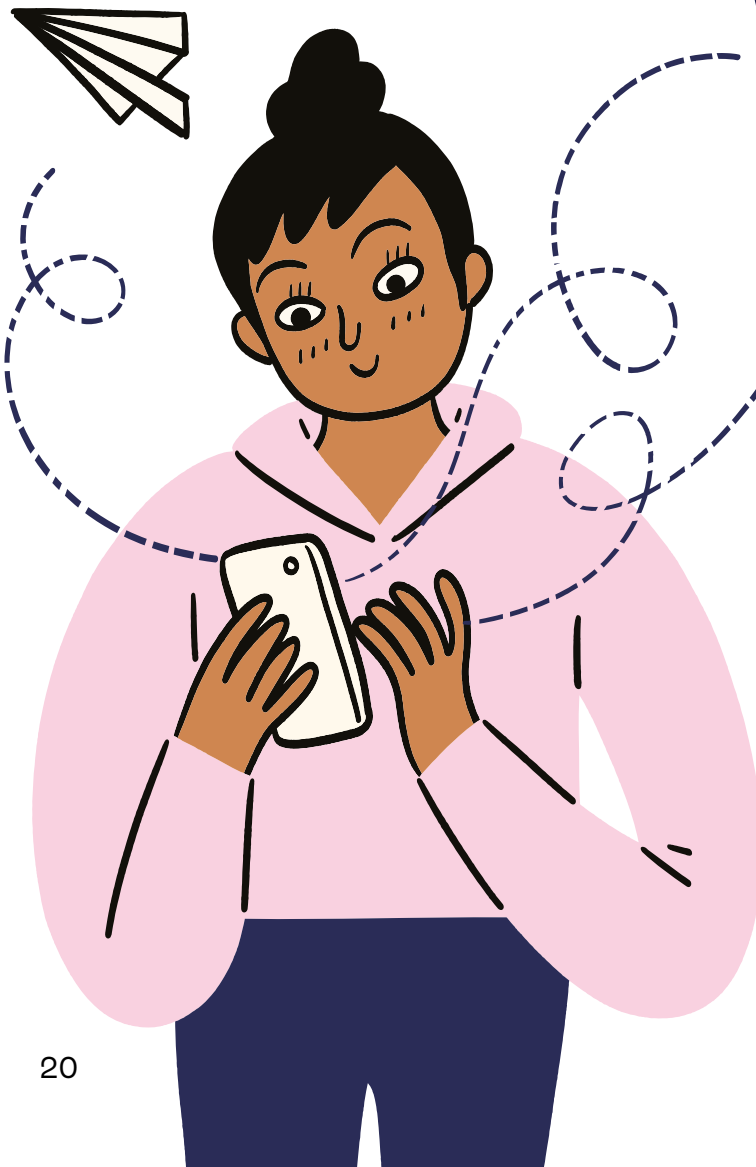
## MySQA

If you want to get your results by text or email (or both), sign up at **[www.mysqa.org.uk](http://www.mysqa.org.uk)** by 5 pm on Wednesday 16 July.

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 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 **June 2025**.

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 email [customer@sqa.org.uk](mailto:customer@sqa.org.uk) or call **0345 279 1000**.



# Your information

We collect information about you from your school and your local authority. We also collect information from your exam papers and other assessment materials.

All this information relates to your qualifications and we use it to:

- make arrangements for you to do SQA exams and assessments
- award and issue your results certificate (also known as your Scottish Qualifications Certificate)
- provide services you have asked for, such as MySQA
- answer your questions, and
- investigate evidence of rule breaking (known as malpractice).

We also use it for research purposes and to produce statistics.

We may share some of your information with other organisations, including the Scottish Government, UCAS, your school, and other organisations that help us provide our services. Visit [www.sqa.org.uk/privacystatement](http://www.sqa.org.uk/privacystatement) to get more details on how we use your information.

You can ask for a copy of the information we hold about you. You can find out how to do this at [www.sqa.org.uk/requestpersonalinformation](http://www.sqa.org.uk/requestpersonalinformation) (look under 'How do I request my information?').

To stay up to date with information about your exams, the exam timetable and past papers, visit [www.sqa.org.uk/learners](http://www.sqa.org.uk/learners)

To find out where you can get more support, including organisations you can speak to if you are feeling anxious about your exams, visit [www.sqa.org.uk/learnerssupport](http://www.sqa.org.uk/learnerssupport)

We're asking learners to take part in surveys and other research. Signing up gives you the opportunity to have your say on a range of issues. If you're interested, visit [www.sqa.org.uk/haveyoursay](http://www.sqa.org.uk/haveyoursay)



# Customer Contact Centre

**Phone: 0345 279 1000**

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

## Remember

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

