

COMMON ENTRANCE EXAMINATION REGULATIONS

AUGUST 2026 - JUNE 2027

INTRODUCTION

These regulations have been produced to ensure the integrity of Common Entrance (CE) examinations at 11+, 13+ and Common Academic Scholarship (CASE) exams in approved and registered centres.

Heads of centres are responsible to ISEB for making sure all examinations are conducted in accordance with these regulations. Heads of centres have a duty at all times to maintain the integrity of the examinations and are responsible for designating the members of staff given access to confidential examination material in any format.

Examination dates and timetables are available on the ISEB website.

PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATIONS

REGISTERING CANDIDATES

Heads of centres are responsible for checking thoroughly that all entries for CE and Scholarship examinations have been submitted using the ISEB website, and by the published closing date.

The Board always does its best to accommodate late entries for its examinations and assessments. However, the costs involved in processing late registrations are high. Therefore, all late entries are subject to a fee which is confirmed on the ISEB website.

Question papers for individual subjects are provided on the basis of final registrations, and therefore ISEB cannot guarantee that question papers will be supplied where very late entries and changes have been made close to the examination date.

Mark schemes are not sent automatically to prep or senior schools. They must be applied for when registering candidates, using the internal marking option or selecting the appropriate senior school when using the ‘Marking School’ drop-down list on the Candidate Registration Upload Template Spreadsheets, accessible through the ISEB website.

PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATIONS

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS AND REQUESTS FOR MODIFIED PAPERS

Pupil assessment is evolving, and ISEB is committed to providing schools, teachers, parents and pupils with the best research, assessment designs, access arrangement guidance and new features to support all children.

When reviewing our assessments, we commissioned research from leading neuroscientists that make provision for those with SEND and neurodiverse children. Using that underpinning research, we can confidently provide schools and parents with guidelines to help ensure that access arrangement decisions are fair to all.

ISEB's core values are to accept, transform and inspire. These values underpin the widely researched ISEB CE Access Arrangement guidelines.

Visit the ISEB website to download **ISEB CE Access Arrangement guidelines.**

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

Candidates whose mother tongue is not English are allowed to use English-to-mother tongue dictionaries, where this is their normal way of working. They are also allowed up to 10% extra time if they have studied in the medium of English for fewer than three years. This must be agreed in advance with the candidate's first-choice senior school.

A bilingual dictionary **must not**, however, be used in:

- English examinations
- Modern Foreign Language examinations testing one of the languages of the dictionary or a similar language, for example, a Portuguese dictionary in a Spanish exam

Bilingual dictionaries to be used in the examination **must** be:

- Held in the centre under secure conditions, **and**
- **Thoroughly checked** to ensure no unauthorised information has been written in the dictionary.

The bilingual dictionary **must not:**

- Contain/display pictures
- Provide an explanation/clarification of words and phrases.

PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATIONS

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

The arrangements outlined above extend to the use of an **electronic bilingual translation dictionary**. As with a paper dictionary, the electronic device **must not** contain/display pictures, or provide an explanation or clarification of words and phrases. Similarly, a device which offers additional functionality, such as a thesaurus, or which provides access to a web-based translator, must not be used.

CHECKING EXAMINATION MATERIALS ON DELIVERY

Heads of centres are responsible for the checking and safekeeping of all confidential materials relating to the administration and delivery of examinations prior to the live examination period.

Question papers are despatched approximately two weeks before the relevant examination period. Heads of centres must ensure that envelopes and boxes containing confidential materials are signed for, and a log is kept, ideally at reception, recording the delivery of confidential materials.

Modified question papers may arrive separately from the main despatch of question papers.

ISEB must be informed immediately if it appears that a box and/or one (or more) of the subject envelopes has been opened during transit and there may have been a breach of security.

As soon as the boxes of examination materials are received, they should be opened and checked, in a secure area, to ensure that the correct number and type of sealed envelopes are enclosed. Any discrepancies should be reported to ISEB at once.

If boxes cannot be checked immediately upon receipt, they **must** be locked away in secure storage until an authorised member of staff is available to make the necessary checks.

KEEPING EXAMINATION MATERIALS SECURE

Before the examination:

All examination materials **must** be stored securely at all times, with access restricted to those members of staff directly involved in the administration of the examinations, in order to prevent unauthorised access to the examination materials.

Question papers **must** be kept in their sealed packets, and **only** opened in the examination room, on the day of the examination, in the presence of the invigilator supervising the session and within sight of the candidates sitting the examination.

PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATIONS

KEEPING EXAMINATION MATERIALS SECURE

Where PDF copies of question papers have been made available via ISEB's secure extranet site and subsequently printed, these **must** be stored in the same way as other printed papers.

Any mark schemes requested for internal marking purposes are despatched separately from question papers and are sent in sealed **red** envelopes. These must also be stored in a secure location and remain **unopened** until the end of the day on which the relevant examination has taken place.

During the examination:

Question papers **must not** be removed from the examination room until all candidates have completed the examination, unless it is for the purpose of checking a possible problem with the question paper with ISEB.

TIMETABLING OF EXAMINATIONS

There are no published start times for examination sessions, but the timing prescribed for each examination must be strictly observed.

Centres can conduct examinations in any order as long as the examination is taken on the timetabled day.

Candidates are not permitted to take an examination **before** the date shown on the timetable

THE EXAMINATION ROOM

Arrangements should be made for examinations to be taken in conditions which are as quiet and as comfortable as the centre can provide. In particular:

- Attention must be paid to appropriate heating, lighting, ventilation and the level of outside noise
- **Display material** (such as maps, diagrams, wall charts and projected images) which might be helpful to candidates must not be visible; particular care must be taken with examinations held in classrooms, laboratories or libraries
- A **reliable clock**, big enough for all candidates to read clearly, must be visible to each candidate in the room
- A board/flipchart/whiteboard showing the actual **start and finish times** of each examination must be visible to all candidates

PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATIONS

THE EXAMINATION ROOM

- The **seating arrangements** must prevent candidates from overlooking (intentionally or otherwise) the work of others; candidates are to be seated at single desks, at least one metre apart, facing the invigilator's table; candidates should normally be seated in alphabetical order
- A **seating plan** must be drawn up, showing the exact position of each candidate in the examination room, and a copy retained for future reference; any changes made to seating arrangements during the examination must be noted on the seating plan; the seating plan must be signed by the invigilator and available to ISEB or the senior school upon request.

RESOURCES FOR EXAMINATIONS AT 11+ AND 13+

Heads of centres should check that ample supplies of stationery are available in the examination room and that all arrangements for the smooth administration of the examination have been completed.

Lined paper will be required for the following examinations:

- Additional Mathematics (13+)
- Classical Civilisation (13+)
- English (11+/13+/CASE)
- Geography (CASE)
- History (13+/CASE)
- Theology, Philosophy & Religion (13+/CASE).

Candidates are responsible for bringing with them any materials needed for an examination, such as a calculator.

Even if they do not intend to use it, no candidate may bring into the examination room any form of electronic device with access to web-enabled information or with a data storage facility, such as a mobile phone or smartwatch, as this may constitute malpractice. In such circumstances, the incident must be referred to the senior school to which the candidate is applying.

This means that:

- Any pencil cases taken into the examination room are see-through

- Where possible, all items not required in the examination should be left outside the examination room. If this is not possible, any unauthorised items must be placed out of reach of candidates (not under their desks) prior to the commencement of the examination. This would normally be at the front of the examination room or a similar arrangement that enables the invigilator to control access to the items.

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC EXAMINATIONS RESOURCES

Geography
Candidates may use a calculator, a piece of string and a magnifying glass.

Languages – Modern and Classical
Dictionaries are not allowed for any paper at any level. However, for candidates who are non-native speakers of English, please refer to the above guidance on English as an Additional Language (EAL).

Mathematics
11+ I Candidates will need a pen and pencil, a ruler graduated in centimetres, a protractor or geoliner (a combined ruler, protractor and set square), and a pair of compasses. **Calculators are not permitted.** Tracing, graph, and squared paper should also be available.

13+ I For all mathematics papers, candidates will need a pen, a pencil, an eraser, a ruler graduated in centimetres and millimetres, a protractor and tracing paper.

For the **calculator** papers, candidates will require a simple scientific calculator with algebraic logic, π and square root buttons. More advanced functionality, such as graph plotting, any automated algebra, or recall of formulae or notes, is **not allowed.**

For the **Mental Arithmetic** test, only a pen or pencil is required. Candidates may **not** use an eraser or any other equipment.

Candidates for the **Additional Mathematics** paper may have a calculator. Additional lined paper should be available in the room, for candidates requiring more space to continue or to repeat a question. Any additional sheets of paper used must be clearly named and titled, and questions clearly labelled.

CASE I Candidates for the **Scholarship** mathematics paper may **not** use a calculator. Additional lined paper should be available in the room, for candidates requiring more space to continue or to repeat a question. Any additional sheets of paper used must be clearly named and titled, and questions clearly labelled.

Science
11+ I Calculators may be used.

13+ I Candidates will need a pen and pencil, a ruler graduated in centimetres and millimetres, a protractor and a calculator.

CASE I Candidates for the Scholarship science paper may use a calculator.

INVIGILATION ARRANGEMENTS

The invigilator is the person in the examination room responsible for conducting an examination in the presence of the candidates.

Invigilators have a key role in upholding the integrity of the examination process. An invigilator must be trained to know what is, and what is not, permissible in the examination room.

When only one invigilator is present, they **must** be able to get help easily, without leaving the examination room and without disturbing the candidates.

The role of the invigilator is to ensure that the examination is conducted according to these instructions in order to:

- Ensure all candidates have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities
- Ensure the security of the examination before, during and after the examination
- Prevent possible candidate/staff malpractice
- Prevent possible administrative failures.

INVIGILATORS MUST

- Be familiar with these instructions
- Be able to observe each candidate in the examination room at all times
- Be aware of the needs of any candidates with special access arrangements
- Supervise the candidates throughout the whole examination
- Move around the assessment area quietly and at frequent intervals
- Be vigilant and remain aware of emerging situations, looking out for candidates who may be feeling unwell or for possible malpractice
- Inform the head if they are suspicious about the security of the examination papers. (In such cases, the head must inform the relevant senior schools immediately and send a full written report within seven days of the suspicion arising).

Any irregularities **must** be recorded.

HEADS OF CENTRES MUST

- Ensure that either a printed paper copy or an electronic copy, accessible via a laptop or tablet, of these regulations is available in the examination room
- Ensure that all invigilators are suitably qualified and experienced adults
- Ensure that invigilators are appropriately trained
- Ensure that a teacher who teaches the subject being examined, or who has prepared candidates for a particular examination, is not the sole invigilator
- Ensure that any relative or friend of a candidate in the examination room is not the sole invigilator

INVIGILATION ARRANGEMENTS

HEADS OF CENTRES MUST

- Keep signed records of the seating plan and the invigilation arrangements for each examination.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE INVIGILATION OF CANDIDATES WITH ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Visit the ISEB website to download **ISEB CE Access Arrangement guidelines.**

Where a candidate has access arrangements which may distract or disturb other candidates, they should be accommodated in a separate room.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE EXAMINATION

PEOPLE PRESENT IN THE EXAMINATION ROOM

While an examination is taking place, only those members of staff authorised by the head of the centre may be present in the examination room.

Staff who are called upon to enter the examination room during the course of the examination (because a candidate has identified a possible problem that the invigilator is unable to resolve) do not need prior authorisation from the head of centre. If they leave the examination room, they may only take the question paper with them if they need to check a possible problem with ISEB.

Only candidates sitting the examination may be present in the room, and they must all be easily identifiable to invigilators from the seating plan.

STARTING THE EXAMINATION

An examination is treated as in progress from the time the candidates enter the room until all the examination scripts have been collected.

Before the examination starts, the invigilator **may:**

- Read the instructions on the front of the question paper to the candidates
- Remind candidates about the importance of the presentation of their work
- Remind candidates to write their answers clearly in the designated space on the question paper or on separate answer pages
- Remind candidates not to use correcting, ink eradicator, erasable or gel pens
- remind candidates not to use highlighter pens in their answers, although they may be used to highlight material within the question paper or on any resource material provided.

AT THE BEGINING OF THE EXAMINATION

STARTING THE EXAMINATION

Before the examination starts, the invigilator **must:**

- Check that candidates have handed in any mobile phones or other unauthorised items
- Remind candidates that they are not allowed to communicate in any way with, ask for help from, or give help to, another candidate while they are in the examination room
- Ask candidates to check that they have been given the correct question paper for the subject, and the correct level, if appropriate
- Tell the candidates to fill in their name, surname, and current/senior school in the appropriate spaces on the question paper, as required
- Check that candidates have all the materials they need for the examination
- Tell the candidates about any erratum notices
- Specify the time allowed for the paper(s)
- Announce clearly to the candidates when they may begin to write their answers
- Only answer questions from candidates about the instructions on the front of the question paper.

The invigilator **must not:**

- Direct candidates to particular questions or sections of the question paper
- Comment on the content of the question paper
- Read a word or words printed on the question paper to a candidate, other than the instructions on the front cover

DURING THE EXAMINATION

SUPERVISING THE CANDIDATES

Invigilators **must:**

- Supervise the candidates throughout the examination and give complete attention to this duty
- Move around the assessment area quietly and at frequent intervals
- Be vigilant and remain aware of emerging situations, looking out for candidates who may be feeling unwell or possible malpractice.

Invigilators **must not:**

- Carry out any other task (for example, reading a book or marking) in the examination room
- Direct candidates to particular questions or sections of the question paper
- Comment on the content of the question paper

DURING THE EXAMINATION

- Read a word or words printed on the question paper to a candidate, other than the instructions on the front cover
- Re-phrase a question for a candidate
- Explain any subject-specific or technical terms to a candidate
- Offer any advice or comment on the work of a candidate.

Any irregularities **must** be recorded.

SUSPECTED ERRORS IN A QUESTION PAPER

The invigilator **must not:**

- Give any information to candidates about possible mistakes in the question paper, unless there is an erratum notice or permission has been given by ISEB
- Make any comment where a candidate believes that there is an error or omission on the question paper.

The invigilator **must:**

- Instruct candidates to answer the question as printed, where there is a suspected error on the question paper and it has been confirmed that no erratum slip has been issued
- Refer suspected errors **immediately** to the head of centre.

LEAVING THE EXAMINATION ROOM

Candidates who leave the examination room temporarily must be accompanied by a member of staff. Those candidates may be allowed extra time at the discretion of the centre, to compensate for their temporary absence.

If a candidate has to withdraw from the examination room because of illness, the invigilator should collect his/her papers and write the time of withdrawal on the script. This should be referred **immediately** to the head of centre, who should liaise with the candidate's chosen senior school regarding any new arrangements.

EMERGENCIES

The invigilator **must** take the following action in an emergency, such as a fire alarm:

- Stop the candidates from writing
- Advise candidates to leave all question papers and examination scripts in the examination room
- Evacuate the examination room in line with centre policy

DURING THE EXAMINATION

- Ensure candidates leave the room in silence
- Make sure that the candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room, to make sure there is no discussion about the examination
- Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted
- Allow the candidates the full working time set for the examination on their return to the examination room
- Make a full report of the incident and of the action taken and send it to ISEB and the relevant senior school(s).

MALPRACTICE

If malpractice is suspected, the head of centre **must** be informed.

The head of centre **must seek advice from ISEB immediately** with reference to any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice in connection with an examination, whether these relate to a candidate or any member of staff.

Any member of staff who has reason for concern may contact ISEB for guidance.

ISEB may refer such alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice to the relevant Association.

AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION

FINISHING THE EXAMINATION

The timing prescribed for each examination must be strictly observed. A five-minute warning to candidates before the end of the examination may be given.

At the end of the examination, invigilators **must:**

- Tell candidates to stop working and remind them that they are still under examination conditions
- Instruct candidates to:
  - Remain seated until all examination scripts have been collected
  - Make sure they have put all the necessary information on their examination scripts and any additional answer pages, e.g. name, school
  - Make sure that additional answer pages, where applicable, are arranged in the correct order before being secured in the top left-hand corner
  - Ensure examination scripts are not folded
- Collect all the examination scripts before candidates are allowed to leave the examination room
- Sign the seating plan
- Pass the examination scripts to the head of centre as soon as possible.

AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION

Examination scripts must not be read, photocopied or altered by any person prior to their despatch, without the consent of ISEB.

AFTER THE EXAMINATION

DESPATCH OF EXAMINATION SCRIPTS

The ISEB Board expects all papers to be marked by the senior school for which a candidate is registered.

Heads of centres are responsible for the safekeeping of completed examination scripts, and for their timely and secure despatch to the relevant senior school.

Heads of centres sending scripts to be marked by senior schools should liaise with the senior schools to establish how and when they would like examination scripts despatched. Scripts may be posted at the end of each examination day, or scanned and emailed at the end of each examination day, with hard copies being sent in one batch at the end of the week.

All hard copies of scripts should be sealed and sent by **secure, guaranteed next-day delivery** to the relevant senior school, in accordance with the instructions below.

PACKING AND SENDING EXAMINATION SCRIPTS TO SENIOR SCHOOLS

Heads of centres **must:**

- Check that they have enough large plastic envelopes to despatch all examination scripts (please note, these are **not** provided by ISEB)
- Ensure that all examination scripts for each subject are packed in separate envelopes and are despatched to senior schools by **secure, guaranteed next-day delivery**, in accordance with senior school guidance
- Ensure that any examination scripts that cannot be, or are not being, despatched on the day of the examination are retained in a secure area prior to despatch
- Ensure that a Notification of Access Arrangement form accompanies examination scripts, where appropriate, for those candidates granted access arrangements; this form can be downloaded from the ISEB website and a copy **must** be included with the examination scripts for each subject;

AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION

- Obtain proof of postage/despatch for each packet of examination scripts, which **must** be retained on the centre's files until the results are published, in case of loss or damage. (Proof of postage will provide evidence that the candidates' examination scripts have left the centre. This is taken to indicate that the examination scripts were written at the appointed time and that, should the examination scripts not be received by the senior school, then special consideration may be possible).
- Ensure that the **centre declaration form** has been signed and sent to the relevant senior schools at the end of the examination period.

SENDING OVERSEAS EXAMINATION SCRIPTS

Sitting centres outside the UK should check with the relevant senior school how they wish to receive candidates' examination scripts. Some senior schools may require overseas sitting centres to scan, fax, email or post candidates' examination scripts on a daily basis.

Others may require scripts to be posted in a single packet on the last day of the examination period and sent by the quickest and most reliable service.

SCHOOLS WITH CANDIDATES FOR INTERNAL MARKING

Mark schemes are not sent automatically to prep schools. They must be applied for when registering candidates, using the **internal marking** option on the senior school drop-down list.

Marking sets are despatched separately from examination papers in sealed **red** subject envelopes. These must **not** be opened until the end of the day on which the relevant examination has taken place.

Prep schools marking scripts internally should liaise with the relevant senior schools **in advance of the examination period** to establish their requirements in respect of the despatch of scripts and results.

Examination scripts should NOT be sent to the ISEB office for marking.

RETURN OF EXAMINATION SCRIPTS

The return of individual examination scripts by senior schools is entirely at their discretion.

For any further queries relating to examination regulations and conducting Common Entrance and Scholarship examinations, schools should contact ISEB directly.

*Email: **common-entrance@iseb.co.uk***