

**Richmond
School &
Sixth Form
College**

**Parents' Guide to
Controlled
Assessments**

2009-11

Controlled Assessment – A summary for parents And some frequently asked questions

From September 2009, Controlled Assessment replaces coursework for most new GCSEs, as well as other 14-19 courses.

Traditional coursework, in which candidates produce their own GCSE work at home or school and then submit it for assessment, is being replaced in most subjects by controlled assessments for pupils who began their two year GCSE courses in September 2009 ie our current Year 10 pupils. There had been concerns about the authenticity and levels of control with coursework and the changes have been driven by the QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) following a report it commissioned and published in June 2007. Controlled assessments offer a greater degree of control of both the task setting and task completion. The teaching of the topics will continue to be done in lessons with research and planning taking place either in school or at home. The final write-up or completion of the tasks will now invariably take place in school, in lesson time and under controlled conditions.

The aim of Controlled Assessment and Coursework

The aim of Controlled Assessment and Coursework units is to assess particular skills, activities or aspects of study not covered by traditional written examinations. These units may attract perhaps 20% of the total mark for a subject. In others there may be several assignments carrying a proportionally greater weighting such as in Art and Design Technology.

Controlled assessment differs from coursework essentially in that the final piece is produced under closely supervised conditions. In some subjects this may mean writing up the final piece in class over the course of one or more lessons monitored by the teacher. Supporting materials such as notes may be used during the writing up, but not a complete draft. Teachers will give details on how controlled assessment is carried out in their subjects. Basic factsheets are available on the exam boards' websites.

What is Controlled Assessment?

It is a form of internal assessment where the control levels for each assessment stage (task setting, task taking and task marking) have been defined by QCA for all examination boards.

Controlled assessment tasks have a time guidance which should be adhered to.

Which Examining Body does Richmond School use?

Different departments choose different boards from the three available but all boards are governed by the QCA controls.

At Richmond School, most subjects use AQA, some OCR and few Edexcel. Detailed and subject specific information can be found on their websites.

How will controlled assessment be delivered?

Each subject area has planned the delivery window or dates where controlled assessment in their subject will take place. To reduce pressure these have been staggered across the Spring and Summer terms of year 10 and the Autumn and Spring terms of year 11. Information outlining the controlled assessment dates will be available to view on the school website.

How different will it be from coursework?

This will depend upon the subject. Some will have no element of controlled assessment and will be 100% examination assessed. In some subjects, eg the sciences, controlled assessments were introduced a couple of years ago and are established. Changes in English will not take place for this cohort who will complete a portfolio of coursework as in the past.

For the majority of subjects, there will not be a major change in what is being taught and learned but the final write up will take place at specified times in lessons.

Where will controlled assessments take place?

- Controlled assessment is designed to take place within the normal teaching timetable, for example in the classroom, lab or workshop.
- There may be occasions, however, when it is more appropriate or convenient to have all students in a larger venue, such as the hall or Gym under close supervision; but this will be the exception.

What is the Controlled Assessment process?

- There are three stages to Controlled Assessment:
 1. task setting
 2. task taking
 3. task marking.
- Each stage has a level of control (high, medium or low) to ensure reliability and authenticity and to make assessments more manageable for teachers and students.
- Individual subject specifications give specific details about which tasks are high, medium and low control. Your son / daughters teachers will inform them which tasks are to be completed in high, medium or low control conditions.

What does formal supervision (high level of control) mean?

- Students must be in direct sight of the supervisor at all times.
- Use of mobile phones, MP3/4 and other electronic devices is strictly prohibited and all breaches will be noted and reported to the exams office.
- The use of resources is tightly prescribed, normally only research folders/diaries.
- Students must complete all work independently but those students who work with learning support, following an assessment, can be assisted; this is noted and declared to the examination boards.
- Students are not permitted to communicate with each other. The assessment is carried out under 'examination conditions'.
- No assistance can be given to students.

What does informal supervision (medium level of control) mean?

- Students do not have to be directly supervised at all times but there must be adequate supervision to ensure that work can be authenticated.
- Use of mobile phones, MP3/4 and other electronic devices is strictly prohibited and all breaches must be noted and reported to the exams office.
- Teachers must ensure that:
 - the students' work is their own
 - plagiarism does not take place
 - the contributions of individual students are recorded accurately.
- Students have access to resources.
- Students can work together.
- Students can receive limited teacher guidance.

What does limited supervision (low level of control) mean?

- Some work can be completed without supervision, outside the classroom/centre.
- Students will be given guidance on how to complete low control tasks. They are usually research tasks that students can collect at home and bring to class.
- Students have access to resources such as books and files during low control tasks.
- Students can work together to collect information but how they use this information in their work must be on an individual basis.
- Students can receive guidance from teachers during low control tasks.

What proportion of the final marks do controlled assessments account for?

This will depend upon the subject but it is normally either

0%

25%

or 60% of the final mark.

In all cases the remainder is assessed under formal examination conditions.

How long should students spend preparing for the tasks?

Limits are set on preparation time allowed in school and pupils will be guided by their subject teachers as to how long they should be spending on research and preparation at home. Preparation will be important of course but it would be a mistake to over-prepare at the expense of other aspects of the course or other subjects.

Other very important information:

Use of ICT and security of students work.

- If ICT use is permitted during controlled assessment students are not permitted to access their work between controlled assessment sessions.
- Therefore, all year 10 pupils will be issued with a separate computer login and password to use during controlled assessment sessions.
- Students are **not allowed** to save work on USB devices to bring home. USB ports can be 'switched off' during controlled assessment ICT sessions.
- Students are **not allowed** to upload or download their work to the school portal as they will be able to access this at home.
- Breaches of these measures can be interpreted as cheating and the students have been informed of the possible consequences.

Student attendance

As the examination boards have issued time guidance for the completion of controlled assessments good attendance is therefore very important. Key dates and deadlines will be sent home for parents / carers information each term. If your child is absent it is important that school is notified as soon as possible.

Plagiarism has been a growing concern with the wealth of material widely available through the Internet and other media. Increasingly, there is scope for candidates to trawl for material, import it virtually or entirely unedited into their own work then, by default or design, to represent it as their own. Candidates doing this **will be severely penalised**. All sources must be carefully and individually acknowledged as outlined in JCQ's regulations.

If candidates use the same wording as a published source, they must place quotation marks around the passage and state where it came from. Candidates must give detailed references even where they paraphrase the original material. For material taken from the Internet, references must include the exact location from the address line e.g. <http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/morris/239/hamlet.html>

The school is legally obliged to satisfy itself, at the point of submission, that each candidate's work is entirely his own. Candidates are required to certify this by signing a formal declaration of authenticity that is submitted to the Board along with the candidate's work.

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