

## Exams Policy

MDA College is committed to providing reliable, accurate and impartial exams for all students. In order to ensure this, MDA follows a strict set of exam guidelines set out in this policy.

This policy has been developed in reference to the Ofqual's "General Conditions of Recognition" and has been updated in line with the August 2018 update (Ofqual's/18/6405).

### Language Cert

MDA College is a certified Language Cert exam centre and requires students to pass these exams in order to progress onto higher levels in General English courses. These are usually real Language Cert exams, but MDA College may sometimes use mock exams to assess students too.

### Trinity London

Trinity London exams are organised on an individual group basis only and individual students are only permitted to join in special circumstances, for example, if a member of a pre-arranged group has been unable to take the exam. Please contact MDA College for prices and group requirements.

### Exam payments

All students must pay for their exam in full at least 3 weeks before their exam date. Please see our Payments Policy for how to pay.

Students who do not pay in full or miss the deadline for payment will not be able to take the exam. If there is a genuine reason for this with proof, MDA College may be able to reorganise the exam at a later date, but this is not always possible.

When a student registers for an exam, they are entering into an agreement that they will take that exam. Exam payments are non-refundable. Any student missing a booked exam, for whatever reason, will get an automatic fail. Students cannot get refunds on any exam or course fees if they fail the exams.

### Exam permissions

All students must complete an exam registration form before being accepted for an exam. This form says that the student agrees to the terms and conditions of the exam they are taking and that they understand that they must behave properly in the exam according to our rules.

### Exam preparation

MDA College is a preparation centre for Cambridge exams and Academic IELTS.

MDA College runs Academic IELTS classes throughout the year at Lower level (IELTS 4.0- 5.0) and Higher (5.5- 7.5).

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### Exam teachers and training

We train the teachers who will be involved in exam prep classes. We go through all exam specifications and exam guidelines as set by the exam board.

IELTS courses are taught by specialist IELTS teachers who have at least 1 year of IELTS teaching experience.

### Exam preparation guidelines

Staff are expected to prepare students to understand what is expected of them during the exam. This includes:

- Covering all parts of the exam tasks so students understand what they will have to do.
- Discussing what is malpractice and maladministration with students and ensuring they understand what not to do (see policy for details).
- Ensuring students are aware of why rules around exams are important and the penalties if these are not followed.
- Fostering a positive attitude towards exams to reduce anxiety.
- Providing support and information about help to students who are taking the exam.

Staff must attend all training given on exam practice by MDA management.

Management will ensure that the process leading up to exams is handled appropriately. This includes:

- Matching teachers to exam courses appropriately so they are best placed to offer help to students.
- Assisting with exam advice through the Exam Clinic.
- Ensuring all staff are informed of good practice and provided with support.
- Not basing staff appraisals solely on class exam results.
- Fostering a positive and open attitude around exams.
- Ensuring that set up for the exams is done carefully and properly.

Students must:

- Prepare for the exam properly.
- Ensure they are ready for the exam 15 minutes before the start time.
- Follow exam room guidelines and assessment security.

Exams must be held in an appropriate classroom. This means that:

- The classroom must be comfortable (warm enough, cool enough, enough air circulation, enough light and enough space for all the students and examiners).
- The classroom must be quiet. There must be enough space between the exam room and other rooms in use.

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- The classroom must have the posters (other than the world map) covered.
- The classroom's equipment (speakers, clock and anything else required for the exam) must be in good working condition.

Management must ensure that there will not be a fire alarm test during the scheduled exam time and put notices around the school so students and staff are aware.

In the exam room:

- There must be no talking, other than by the examiner following the set script. All other instructions must be given outside.
- For paper-based exams, students must be seated in the exam room at least 10 minutes before the start time to allow time to go over the rules. They must not have the test papers during this time or touch them at all. The door will be closed 5 minutes before the exam and no one will be allowed to enter.
- For Speaking exams, students must be ready 5 minutes before the exam and not enter the room until instructed to do so by the interlocuter. No one can enter during the exam.
- There must be no personal belongings, including mobile phones or bags. All bags must be left in the staff room and all mobile phone and devices switched off. Students may take a few pens/pencils in a clear pencil case and water into the exam room.
- Examiners may only take in mobile phones if they will be used to record speaking exams or as timers. They must not be used for any other reasons.
- There must be two examiners (or one examiner and one invigilator) for each exam. One must always be watching over the students taking the exam.
- Once the exam is over, students must wait in silence for their papers to be collected by one examiner, who will immediately take them back to the Management Office to be locked in the cupboard. The other examiner will then let the students leave the exam room in silence to collect their bags. However, once the exam papers have left the exam room, students may speak without penalty.
- If a recorder is being used, this must be returned immediately to the Management Office and all files uploaded immediately onto the exam platform.

#### Assessment security and malpractice

Exam papers must be kept locked in the Management Office until it is time to open them. The exam papers must only be picked up by the Academic Manager. If they are not available, the papers must be picked up by the Administration. Teachers and students must not come into contact with the exams at any time. Once exams are picked up, they must be locked away immediately.

Exams must not be left in the exam room at any time. Once the exams are taken out of the locked cupboard, they must remain in the Management Office and the door must be locked if the examiners need to leave the room for any reason. Exams can only be taken to the exam room just before the exam to be set up and must always be accompanied. In the case of a fire, the exam classroom must be locked during the evacuation to avoid anyone going inside.

If the exams are left alone at any time, the exam will be terminated and students will be informed of when they can retake. Staff will be subject to disciplinary action if appropriate.

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All excess exam papers must be returned to the cupboard in the Management Office immediately after set up of the exam room by one of the examiners and locked away. They must be shredded immediately after the exam finish. Excess exams papers must not be put in the bin or in the recycling under any circumstances without being shredded first.

Completed exam papers must be returned immediately to the Management Office and placed in the returns envelope and sealed. They then must be locked again in the cupboard and sent within 24 hours of completing the exam by either the Academic Manager or Administration. Forgetting to immediately seal the envelope or seeing a broken seal will immediately invalidate the test papers and all students must retake. Staff may be subject to disciplinary action and an investigation.

All conflicts of interest must be declared by staff ahead of the assigning of staff. Any incidents of conflict of interest will be dealt with severely.

Any malpractice will be treated seriously, such as talking during the exam, cheating or mobile phones going off and will result in penalties. Penalties will be decided by MDA management depending on the circumstances and severity. Please see the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy for more details.

Results must be treated in the same way as exam papers and not released until results day.

#### Special considerations

MDA College does not currently admit students with severe mental disabilities or physical disabilities as we cannot guarantee the care and safety of such students. Please read the Safeguarding Policy for further information. Please see the Exam Special Considerations for more details on this policy.

Students asking for special considerations must ask the Academic Manager in writing and must say what problems they have and what considerations they would like at least 2 weeks before the exam date. Teachers can recommend students for special considerations only with the student's knowledge. The Academic Manager will evaluate each case and will need proof of needs.

Acceptable situations for special considerations are:

- Learning difficulties, such as dyslexia. In these cases, accommodations will be made based on the individual needs.
- Ongoing medical problems.
- Injuries to writing arm/hand.
- Sight/hearing problems.
- Family emergencies or visa issues.

Accommodations will be decided on by management and will be checked with the exam board if necessary. Accommodations will include:

- Postponing or rescheduling an exam without penalties.
- Giving extra time.
- Taking the exam on a different day/time or in a different room.

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- Allowing accompanied breaks.
- Allowing paper exams to be taken on a computer (if possible) or requesting special exam papers (for example, printed on coloured paper or larger print).
- Specific seating in the exam (for example, closer to the speaker or the door).
- Allowing quiet snacks (for example, bananas, an energy drink or a sandwich) to be brought into the exam room.
- Providing a scribe.

Students will need to prove that they need the accommodation. Unacceptable situations are:

- Minor illnesses.
- Unproven conditions or conditions not supported by teachers.
- Travel problems to the school (for example, traffic).
- Unrelated injuries, such as a foot injury.

MDA will try as much as possible to help students who have a real disadvantage to do their best on every exam. However, MDA cannot unfairly help these students, or allow other students to get help that they do not genuinely need. Teachers and management will discuss student needs and any necessary accommodations in academic meetings to ensure that the right help is going to the right people.

### Complaints

If students have any complaints about an exam, they must talk to the Academic Manager as soon as possible. All complaints will be investigated, so other students and staff may need to be informed of the complaint, but this will be confidential. Please see the Complaints Policy.

All complaints will be logged into the Complaints Log. Students will be informed about the progress of the investigation and any results once they have been discussed by management and by staff.

Students who are unhappy with how MDA has handled an exam, or is not happy with the result of a complaint can contact our accreditors, English UK.

### Appeals

When the results are released, students have the right to appeal against their results if they feel that the marks are not correct.

Students can appeal directly to the exam board but are recommended to appeal with the school.

If a student wants to appeal against their results, they should first speak to their teacher. Their teacher will be able to tell them if the test result is different to what they expected and discuss the exam with them. Their teacher may or may not recommend that they appeal the results.

The student and teacher should then go to the Academic Manager, who will speak to both separately about why the student wants to appeal and whether they have a good reason to appeal. If the Academic Manager thinks that an appeal is necessary, then they will then approach the exam

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board and the appeals process can start. However, the school might decide that the test results are fair and offer the student a resit instead. Students can decide to ignore this decision and appeal anyway, but MDA will not support them in this. Students who want to appeal their results will need to pay any necessary charges themselves.

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