



Joint Council for
Qualifications^{CIC}

Notice to Centres

Guidance for centres on the decoding of symbols and unit abbreviations in Mathematics and Science examinations

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Produced on behalf of:



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A reader may decode symbols and unit abbreviations in Mathematics and Science examinations where it reflects the candidate's current and normal way of working within the centre.

This would occur when a candidate cannot independently access any of the text and symbols in questions. For example, a candidate with a significant visual impairment who cannot read Braille, cannot access tactile diagrams or, due to the severity of their impairment, cannot access the standard modified enlarged papers.

Generally, candidates with learning difficulties or other disabilities should not need a reader to decode symbols and unit abbreviations for them. The reader would simply point to the symbol.

'Decoding' means naming the symbol. It does not involve explaining when or how the symbol is to be used or describing the symbol.

Examples of decoding:

- CO₂ the reader reads each letter/number
- 2² the reader says 'two squared'
- ≤ the reader says 'less than or equal to'
- ∈ the reader says 'is an element of'
- ∞ the reader says 'infinity'
- $\sqrt[3]{}$ the reader says 'cube root'
- θ the reader says 'Theta'
- ∫ the reader says 'Integral'

Centres **must** ensure that readers are thoroughly trained and can decode symbols and unit abbreviations accurately.