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ten exam tips for maths.

1. It's not unusual to read the task instructions (and scenario) more than once. At the second reading, a common feature of an organised approach, that is often beneficial, is to list and label information as it's identified. Another approach, which can be helpful is to rephrase, when reading, using more informal language ('your own words').

2. We may approach problems from different perspectives, so it's important for candidates to know that there may not just be 1 correct approach that's expected. There may be more than 1 approach that's valid.

3. Similarly, there are sometimes different methods that are equally valid and will result in the same correct answer. For example, if a candidate is asked to calculate 15% of 50 grams, there are a variety of methods that are all correct. Different methods are expected but do need to be displayed.

4. A full, clear display of the method used is important so that examiner can award marks for what has been done correctly, for example, a wrong conversion at the initial task stages will affect a response. However, there may be marks available for subsequent valid calculations or comparisons.

5. Likewise, candidates should be encouraged to always attempt a task, for example, in a MSS task the conversion of sides of 250cm and 175cm in to metres accurately may be worth a mark.

6. Final answers should always be displayed with units (for example, cm or kg or £). Money should always be displayed to 2 decimal places, for example, £1.70, unless the task requests otherwise.

7. If rounding an amount, I would advise writing/typing the unrounded value as evidence of rounding (this is important if there's been an error and the final value isn't correct, as there may be 1 mark available for accurate rounding).

8. The level of accuracy expected from candidates is to work to 2 decimal places, unless otherwise requested or indicated. For example, if working with converted amounts, a length converted to 18.24512 metres will result in more accuracy in a subsequent sum as 18.25 rather than just 18.

9. Checks should be carried out when requested: reverse calculations are expected. For example, the calculation of a mean average of 60÷10=6 would be checked with 6x10=60. If a 'check using estimation' is requested then rounded values should be used in a repeat or reverse calculation.

10. On line exams: it's often beneficial for candidates to practise their completion of an on-line assessment prior to their final, for familiarity and confidence with the format. Candidates should be familiar with the accepted ICT symbols for division, multiplication, addition and subtraction. If candidates are presenting area then 'm2' or 'm sq' are both acceptable. Candidates should be reminded that the examiner will only see what they type in with on-line assessments (and will not receive the paper that they use for working).