



Joint Council for
Qualifications^{CIC}

JCQ Frequently Asked Questions

Produced on behalf of:



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1. Introduction

JCQ has developed this series of frequently asked questions along with supporting answers to help exam centres should summer 2022 examinations not go ahead as planned.

The government's clear policy decision is that GCSE, AS and A level exams will go ahead in England in Summer 2022. JCQ and the awarding organisations continue to work, and to support students, schools and colleges, on this basis.

Ofqual's **Contingencies decisions document**, published jointly with the Department for Education, sets out the plans in the unlikely event that exams are unable to go ahead as planned in Summer 2022.

If you are unable to find the answer to your question here, please refer to your relevant awarding organisation for further assistance.

[AQA](#)

[OCR](#)

[Pearson](#)

[WJEC](#)

2. Malpractice

Can candidate malpractice occur and if so what should we do?

Yes, malpractice could occur as these assessments might be used to determine students' grades if exams are cancelled, and coursework (NEA) will also contribute to outcomes in the summer 2022 examinations.

Students might attempt to gain an unfair advantage during the centre's delivery of assessments by, for example, being in possession of/using a mobile phone, submitting fabricated evidence or plagiarised work. Such incidents would constitute malpractice and centres must report these to the appropriate awarding organisation in the normal way using the JCQ M1 Form (the form and further details can be found in the [JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures](#)). The awarding organisation will then provide further guidance on the next steps, including details of any sanctions to be applied.

Can teacher and centre malpractice occur and if so what should we do?

Yes, malpractice could occur as these assessments might be used to determine students' grades.

Teachers might – either inadvertently or otherwise – commit malpractice by doing such things as providing improper assistance to students (including providing too much information about the content of assessments), fabricating student evidence or knowingly giving higher marks for student work than warranted.

Centres could commit malpractice by failing to take reasonable steps to follow the published guidance, including by not retaining evidence or not ensuring completed assessments are authentically the students' own.

Any instances of teacher or centre malpractice and maladministration must be reported to the relevant awarding organisation in the normal way using the JCQ M2 Form (the form and further details can be found in the [JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures](#)). The awarding organisation will then provide further guidance on the next steps, including details of any sanctions to be applied.

If a student commits malpractice, should we give 0 marks?

No, please report the incident to the relevant awarding organisation which will then provide further guidance on the next steps, including details of any sanctions to be applied.

If a student commits malpractice, should we get them to complete another assessment?

No, please report the incident to the relevant awarding organisation which will then provide further guidance on the next steps, including details of any sanctions to be applied.

Can candidates take these assessments remotely (i.e. online and not within the centre)?

The preferred way for these assessments to be delivered is by in-person assessments. However, the awarding organisations recognise that due to public health guidance changes, the need to cater for private candidates, and students' mitigating circumstances, there may be valid reasons in exceptional circumstances for an assessment to be conducted online.

If this happens the centre must ensure that students are fully aware of the conditions under which they are completing the assessment and that any form of wrongdoing might constitute malpractice. Centres must take reasonable steps to ensure the integrity of the assessment, for example ensuring the student is appropriately supervised and that the completed assessment is authentically the student's own.

3. Private Candidates

FAQ for students

General

Who is classed as a private candidate?

Private candidates are candidates who have not studied with the exam centre which makes their entry. Included in this group are, for example:

- School age students who have been home-educated;
- Adults who have studied independently;
- Students who have studied with a distance learning provider which does not offer exam entry.

This guidance may also be relevant to students at a school or college who have studied an additional subject outside of the school or college, and to former students who have returned to their school or college to resit a qualification.

I am a private candidate, what do I need to do?

If you are already registered with a centre, you may wish to discuss their approach to contingency arrangements if exams were cancelled.

If you are not registered with a centre, you can look for a centre now to make your exam entry and also discuss with them their approach to contingency arrangements. However, you are not required to do this yet. The entries deadline for the summer 2022 series is 21st February 2022.

By the end of December, JCQ will provide an updated list of centres able to take on private candidates for GCSE, AS and A level. You will be able to use this list to contact centres who are offering the qualification you wish to take. Some centres who are not on the list may also be willing to accept private candidates. You don't have to wait for this list to be published to try to find a centre to work with, you can contact a centre at any time.

The centre list will show which centres will accept private candidate exam entries for 2022, which will offer contingency assessments (including remotely supervised assessments) that may be used as evidence if exams are cancelled and which will consider working with you to provide a TAG should exams be cancelled.

Finding a centre

How can I find an exam centre which will accept my entry?

You can approach local centres to see whether they are able to accept your entry. A list of centres accepting private candidates for GCSE, AS and A level will be available in a database on the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website by the end of December. You will be able to search for a centre by name, the qualification you wish to take with the relevant awarding body, and its location relative to your postcode.

When will the private candidate centre list be available on the JCQ website?

The updated list will be available by the end of December on the JCQ website. Awarding organisation websites will also provide a link to the JCQ list.

Can I use a centre not on the JCQ list?

Yes, as long as the centre agrees to accept your entry and the centre is approved by the relevant exam board, they do not need to be on the centre list for you to work with them.

Will all centres be able to accept private candidates?

All centres are allowed to accept private candidates. To help you find a centre to make your qualification entry, JCQ will publish an updated list of available centres by the end of December. Ofqual has encouraged all centres to accept entries from private candidates.

What if I need reasonable adjustments?

You should discuss this with the centre before asking them to make your entry.

Can the centre charge me a fee to make a reasonable adjustment?

Centres are not allowed to charge a fee for making reasonable adjustments

Making entries

When is the entry deadline for summer 2022 private candidate entries?

This year, centres will be able to make private candidate entries up to 21 February 2022, without incurring any late fees. Some centres may have earlier deadlines for accepting new private candidate entries.

If I make an entry with a centre now to take my exam, and I need to move my entry if exams are cancelled, will I be able to transfer my entry and will I be charged?

You should discuss this with the centre that makes your entry as they would need to withdraw your entry so that a new one can be made by your new centre. Awarding organisations will set a deadline for withdrawing an entry without fee to the centre. When published, the deadline will be available on the awarding body website. We encourage centres to be flexible when a private candidate needs to transfer centres but we cannot intervene in individual cases.

Taking exams

Are exams going ahead in 2022?

The government has confirmed its firm intention that exams will go ahead in 2022.

Will there be a November series of exams in 2022?

There are no plans at present for a November series of exams in 2022, other than for GCSE English, Welsh language and Maths exams which are normally offered in November to eligible candidates.

Where can I find information about the changes to 2022 exams and non-examined assessments? (e.g. adaptations, use of formulae sheets and advance information)

You can find information about the changes being made to [2022 exams](#) and NEA on Ofqual's website, and exam boards have also published information about the changes on their websites.

How can I access past papers for practice?

Past papers are available on the awarding organisation websites. You can also discuss this with your centre once you have made an entry.

Do I need to take assessments now in case exams are cancelled?

No, you don't need to do this. **Ofqual's guidance** has confirmed that private candidates could sit assessments to be used as evidence later, at the point of exams being cancelled. In this case you would be assessed in a shorter period than those students who have been assessed earlier in the course. You would need to work with a centre to do this.

Alternatively, if you want to take contingency assessments earlier and can find a centre to work with, you can do this if you prefer.

If students at schools and colleges are taking assessments that can be used as evidence for their TAG if exams are cancelled and I'm not – does that put me at a disadvantage?

If exams cannot take place, the contingency arrangements mean that private candidates can work with a centre to be assessed in a shorter period. **Ofqual guidance** states that the total assessment time should not normally exceed the total time students would spend taking exams for the relevant qualification, plus any time spent on non-exam assessment. If you prefer to take assessments earlier and can find a centre to work with, you can do this.

If I want to take some assessments in case exams are cancelled, will I have to pay more than the fee I've agreed for my exam entry?

It is likely that centres would charge an additional amount for such assessments because of the work involved. You would need to speak to your centre to confirm the cost.

Can parents, carers or private tutors supervise and mark contingency assessments for private candidates?

No, contingency assessments cannot be supervised or marked by parents, carers or private tutors.

Can distance learning providers or supplementary schools such as language centres supervise and mark the assessments if they are not approved exam centres?

If you wish to take contingency assessments earlier, in case exams are cancelled, you should first speak to the centre that has made your entry. The centre may be able to supervise the assessments for you, or they may be willing to accept assessments supervised by a third party such as a distance learning provider or supplementary school. Centres are permitted to accept assessments supervised by a third party provided that they have an established relationship with that third party, or where it is an educational organisation recognised by an appropriate independent authority, for example LEA, DfE, Ofsted, or an awarding organisation.

What format will the contingency assessments take? Is there anything candidates should do - or not do - to prepare for them?

The **Ofqual guidance** provides more information about the format of contingency assessments.

What if I am unable to sit an assessment at my exam centre?

Assessments must be supervised. If you are unable to sit the assessment at the centre, you could be supervised remotely for contingency assessments. Centres can choose whether or not to offer remote assessment.

If I'm entered for a qualification and then exams are cancelled, will my centre work with me to provide a TAG?

You will need to speak with your centre about whether they would consider working with you to generate evidence to inform a TAG in the unlikely event that exams are cancelled. The JCQ centre list will make clear which centres that accept private candidate exam entries would also be willing to consider providing TAGs if exams are cancelled.

If exams are cancelled, how will I be assessed for a TAG as a private candidate?

You would need to work with a centre to be assessed for a TAG. You would only be assessed on what you have studied, like other students. This should be informed by an initial conversation with the centre. Ofqual would only publish detailed information on how TAGs would be determined in summer 2022 if exams were cancelled.

If exams are cancelled and I have to take other assessments, will it cost more?

It is likely that centres would charge an additional amount for such assessments because of the work involved. If exams are cancelled, the Department for Education would explore ways to encourage centres to work with private candidates and to provide affordable opportunities for private candidates to work with centres, as it did in 2021.

Will there still be access arrangements/reasonable adjustments for contingency assessments? Do I need to get them approved in the same way as usual?

Yes, if you are entitled to access arrangements/reasonable adjustments for exams, you should receive the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments for contingency assessments. If these are approved for your exams, you will not need to seek separate approval for the contingency arrangements.

FAQ for Centres

Can I be added to the JCQ centre list for centres offering to accept private candidate entries?

Yes, JCQ will be contacting all centres in November to ask if they would like to be added to the JCQ centre list.

Can I still accept private candidate entries if I am not on the JCQ list?

Yes, all approved exam centres can accept private candidate entries. You do not have to be included on the JCQ list.

If I make an exam entry for a private candidate and exams are cancelled, do I have to work with them to provide a Teacher Assessed Grade?

No, centres are not obliged to provide TAGs to private candidates in the event that exams are cancelled but we would encourage you to work with the candidate if possible. You should make it clear to private candidates when you accept their entry whether you are willing to do this.

Will there be a grant to cover additional assessment costs, as in 2021?

If exams are cancelled, the Department for Education would explore ways to encourage centres to work with private candidates and to provide affordable opportunities for private candidates to work with centres, as they did in 2021.

If I accept a private candidate exam entry and the student later wants to move to a new centre, will I be charged for withdrawing the entry?

We encourage centres to be as flexible as possible in allowing students to change centres if they need to. Awarding organisation deadlines for withdrawing an entry without incurring a fee will be published on the awarding organisation websites.

How can centres determine what a private candidate has been taught, in order to set suitable contingency assessments?

You could do this through a conversation with the student and, if appropriate, their parent or carer. If the student has worked with a distance learning provider, tutor or supplementary school, you could ask the student to obtain a list of topics that they have been taught from their teacher. You should confirm the content that a private candidate has studied, and also which assessments have been used by the student during their studies or in mock examinations.

4. Special consideration

Q. – Can a teacher apply a special consideration tariff to a grade?

A. A teacher can only apply a special consideration tariff to a mark for an assessment.

This would be where a temporary illness, a temporary injury or some other event outside of the student's control has affected their performance in an assessment which might be used to inform a TAG.

Special consideration would be given by applying an allowance of additional marks to the affected assessment. The size of the allowance depends on the timing, nature and extent of the illness or misfortune. The maximum allowance given would be 5% of the total raw marks available for the assessment. The teacher must be satisfied that there has been a material detrimental effect on the student's performance in the assessment.

Examples of circumstances and the percentage adjustments are listed on pages 6 and 7 of the JCQ publication *A guide to the special consideration process* - **Guide to the special consideration process- General and Vocational Qualifications.**