

Useful information for teachers, parents and candidates

Arrangements for awarding qualifications in 2021

The continuing pandemic has led to some exams and assessments being cancelled in 2021.

On the 25 February, the government announced the policy and scope of awarding qualifications in 2021. The arrangements for different qualifications are as follows:

Qualification type	How results will be awarded
GCSEs, AS and A levels	Graded by teacher judgements
Qualifications which are similar to GCSEs, AS and A levels (e.g. vocational qualifications taken in schools/colleges including BTECs)	Graded by teacher judgements and other sources of evidence
Qualifications which are not similar to GCSEs, AS and A levels (e.g. Functional Skills and ESOL Skills for Life)	Assessments will go ahead as usual but other evidence may be used if assessments cannot take place
Qualifications which lead to assessment of proficiency or occupational competence	Assessments will go ahead as usual using adapted assessments or delayed if cannot take place

What does this mean for performing arts graded examinations?

Graded and vocational graded examinations in music, dance, speech and drama and musical theatre are included in the category of ***qualifications which lead to assessment of proficiency or occupational competence.***

This will mean that students will need to take an examination to demonstrate their technical and performance skills before they can be awarded a certificate.

Examinations will continue where possible, although the examination may be held via a live (online) stream or recorded video submission rather than face to face. Alternatively the examination may need to be delayed until it can be carried out safely in line with public health guidance.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will my examination be affected by the arrangements for GCSEs and A levels?

No. Graded examinations in music, dance, speech and drama and musical theatre are not part of the arrangements being made for GCSEs and A levels and will not be awarded based on teacher assessments.

Can I expect any changes for examinations due to the arrangements?

Any changes will be around the mode of examination, so this may be via a live stream or video upload rather than face to face. In some circumstances examinations may need to be delayed if they cannot go ahead. If face to face examinations take place there are likely to be additional safety requirements in place at the venue, e.g. social distancing, use of masks / face visors, hand sanitisers etc.

Will the way the examination is marked change?

No. Examiners will mark examinations based on the usual mark scheme and the same standards will apply. For some disciplines there may be a slight change to content to allow for the examination to be taken via live stream or video, and/or to enable the inclusion of wider repertoire, but this will not affect the way the examination is marked.

What if I have not been able to practice due to the pandemic?

We strongly recommend that you do not enter for an examination until you are fully prepared. This may mean that you need to delay your examination until you have had enough time to practice and your teacher agrees that you are ready to take it.

What if I have been affected by the pandemic and can't perform as well as I should?

If you think there will be a problem taking your examination before the scheduled date (for example if you are unwell or are self-isolating), talk to your teacher or the awarding organisation as soon as possible. The awarding organisation may be able to offer an alternative date and/or different arrangements if you don't feel ready to take the examination.

If you feel that your performance has been affected by a temporary and unforeseen circumstance, such as injury or illness of a family member, etc., you may apply for a special consideration. Please contact your awarding organisation to find out about their policy for special consideration.

What if I am scheduled to take an examination but this is affected by the pandemic?

If you are concerned about the pandemic affecting your examination, talk to your teacher or the awarding organisation as soon as possible.

If you have an examination scheduled which is affected by changes to restrictions (for example lockdown or further social restrictions being put in place), contact the awarding organisation as soon as possible to discuss your options. The awarding organisation will be able to offer guidance on alternative arrangements or postpone the examination to a later date.

What if I want to withdraw from an examination that I am scheduled to take?

If you don't feel able to take the examination on the scheduled date, talk to your teacher as soon as possible.

If you are a teacher who has concerns about your students taking an examination on the scheduled date, talk to the awarding organisation as soon as possible. The awarding organisation will be able to offer guidance on alternative arrangements or postpone the examination to a later date.