



Joint Council for
Qualifications^{CIC}

Frequently Asked Questions for Private Candidates

Summer 2022

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 private candidates prepare for a scenario in which summer 2022 examinations do not go ahead as planned. This document relates to GCSE, AS, A level, Project and AEA qualifications.

The government's clear policy decision is that 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 for GCSE, AS, A level, Project and AEA qualifications 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. You should also refer to the relevant awarding organisation websites if you are intending to take qualifications other than GCSE, AS, A level, Project and AEA.

[AQA](#)

[OCR](#)

[Pearson](#)

[WJEC](#)

2. 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. The entries deadline for the summer 2022 series is 21st February 2022, although some centres may set their own earlier deadline.

JCQ has produced 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. You don't have to use the JCQ list to find a centre as some centres who are not on the list may also be willing to accept private candidates.

The centre list shows 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 is available in a database on the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website. You can 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 is available now 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 awarding organisation, 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, even if they are not on the JCQ list. Ofqual has encouraged all centres to accept entries from private candidates. although some may choose not to.

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 awarding organisations 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?

No. 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 makes 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.