

Contents

1. [About this guide](#)
2. [What you need to know before your exams](#)
3. [What you should know during your exams and assessments](#)
4. [What happens after you have taken your exams or assessments](#)
5. [What to do if you think there is a mistake in your results](#)
6. [Useful contacts](#)

This guide provides you with information about this year's arrangements for qualifications regulated by Ofqual. It also explains what support is in place when taking exams and assessments.

[Ofqual](#) regulates around 245 awarding organisations to develop, deliver and award qualifications in England. This means we set rules that awarding organisations must follow. We focus on making sure the qualifications system is fair, so that students, parents, teachers, and others can be confident in results.

Ofqual is responsible for making sure that qualifications and assessments meet high standards. We monitor exam boards and awarding organisations and make sure that qualifications do what students, higher education institutions and employers need them to do.

About this guide

This guide is for students taking any of the following qualifications:

- GCSEs
- AS or A levels
- other general qualifications, including International Baccalaureate, core mathematics and Pre-U
- Technical Qualifications within a T Level (the Core Assessment and Occupational Specialism)
- Vocational and Technical Qualifications taken alongside GCSEs and A levels in subjects such as engineering, health & social care and digital media.

In this guide, we refer to schools and colleges as a collective term for all schools, colleges and other exam centres.

We make clear in this guide where information only applies to a certain type of qualification. If you are not sure exactly which qualifications you are taking, check with your school or college.

All organisations that offer qualifications regulated by Ofqual are called awarding organisations. The 4 awarding organisations that offer GCSEs, AS and A levels in England are also called exam boards. Where we refer to exam boards specifically, it is because we are talking about their GCSE, AS or A level qualifications.

This guide refers to exams officers. An exams officer is the person in a school or college that organises exams and assessments. If you have a problem, please speak to your school or college who will be able to help identify the right person for you to speak to.

What you need to know before your exams

Arrangements for exams and assessments

Exams and assessments for all qualifications are going ahead as normal this year and grading arrangements will be as normal.

Your school or college enters you for the exams and assessments for the qualifications you are taking.

If you are unsure about any aspects of the exams or assessments you are entered for you should speak to your school or college.

Support material

[The Department for Education has confirmed](#) it is not necessary for students to memorise formulae for GCSE mathematics and equations for GCSE physics and combined science in 2024. Students will be provided with support materials in the form of formulae and revised equations sheets for GCSE mathematics, physics and combined science exams in 2024 only. For GCSE mathematics this will also apply to exams taken in November 2024.

The Department for Education has confirmed that 2024 will be the final year for these changes to its subject content requirements. There will be a return to normal exam arrangements for these subjects in 2025. This means that formulae and revised equation sheets will not be available after 2024. Students preparing for GCSE mathematics, physics and combined science exams in 2025 and beyond will be expected to know and recall all the usual formulae and equations set out in DfE's subject content.

GCSE tiering

Some GCSE subjects have 2 tiers of entry (foundation or higher). The subjects with tiers of entry are:

- maths
- combined science
- physics
- chemistry
- biology
- statistics
- modern foreign languages

Your school or college decides whether to enter you for foundation or higher tier.

Foundation tier: students may be awarded grades 5 to 1 (5-5 to 1-1 in combined science).

Higher tier: students may be awarded grades 9 to 4 (9-9 to 4-4 in combined science). Students who just miss a grade 4 (4-4 for combined science) may be awarded a grade 3 (4-3 for combined science).

If you do not get enough marks to get a grade, you will receive a 'U'.

Before your exams you should make sure you know which tier you are taking so that you can prepare for, and sit, the correct exam paper.

Exam timetable

Your school or college will give you your individual timetable for exams and assessments. You should check this carefully so that you don't miss an exam or assessment. If you think there are mistakes in your timetable or if you are not sure about the timing of any exams or assessments, check with your school or college.

For many qualifications, including GCSE, AS and A levels, there will not be another opportunity to sit the exam or assessment until the following year. Therefore, if you miss it because for example, you forgot about it, you will not be able to sit it on a different day or receive any marks for it.

For some VTQs, if you miss an assessment it may be possible to sit the exam or assessment at a later point in the year. Your school or college will be able to advise you.

If you have missed an exam or assessment, you should speak to your school or college as soon as possible.

GCSE, AS and A level exam dates

GCSE, AS and A level exams will be held between **9 May and 25 June 2024**. Exam board timetables for the 2024 summer exam series of GCSEs, AS and A levels are available on the [Joint Council for Qualifications website](#).

The exam timetable contains 3 contingency sessions on the afternoons of **6 and 13 June**, and **all day on 26 June**. These sessions would be used in the unlikely event that an exam had to be moved nationally because it could not take place when planned. You must be available for all 3 contingency sessions, even if you do not have exams scheduled on that day. These sessions cannot be used to reschedule an exam that you have missed. If an exam has to be moved to one of these sessions, your school or college will tell you.

In GCSE English language and GCSE mathematics, exams are also available in November, but only for students who were aged 16 or above on 31 August of that year. The November exams will be held between **4 November and 15 November 2024**. Exam board timetables for the 2024 November exam series of GCSEs, AS and A levels will be available on the [JCQ website](#).

VTQ exams and assessments

Assessment dates for vocational technical qualifications (VTQs) and Technical Qualifications within T Levels vary depending on the qualification, with assessments throughout the year. Dates will be available on awarding organisations' websites. Your school or college will tell you when your exams or assessments are scheduled.

Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments, often called access arrangements, are changes made to an exam or assessment, or to the way an exam or assessment is carried out, so that disabled students can demonstrate what they know, understand and can do. The exam must still test the same knowledge, skills and understanding for that qualification.

Your school or college will arrange any reasonable adjustments or access arrangements. They could include:

- extra time to complete exams or assessments
- changes to exam papers, for example, large print or Braille
- help with specific tasks, for example, another person might read questions to you or write your dictated answers

Different reasonable adjustments are available depending on the needs of individual students. If you think you need a reasonable adjustment or access arrangement, it is important that you speak to your school or college as soon as possible.

Your school or college will have someone who organises these arrangements, a special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) in schools, and a named person in colleges. They can give you more information about reasonable adjustments and whether they apply to you.

Awarding organisations, schools and colleges often call reasonable adjustments (for students with disabilities), access arrangements. Access arrangements also include changes that might be made to an assessment due to a temporary illness, injury or event (such as needing a scribe for a broken arm). While the arrangement may be the same, the reason for it will be different.

You can find more information about reasonable adjustments and access arrangements for GCSEs, AS, A levels and some VTQs in this [JCQ guidance](#). You can find more information about reasonable adjustments and access arrangements for other VTQs and Technical Qualifications within T Levels, on the website of the relevant awarding organisation.

What you should know during your exams and assessments

Preparing for your exams and assessments

Speak to your teachers or exams officer before your exams and assessments to make sure you know what will happen and what you need to do. For example:

- make sure you have your personal assessment timetable and know ahead of time where and when your exams or assessments are, including when you need to arrive
- know what equipment you're allowed to take in for each exam or assessment – this includes approved calculators that are only allowed in some exams and assessments
- use a clear pencil case and, if you need a water bottle, remove the label
- don't take a mobile phone, watch or any communication device into an exam, even if it is switched off, as you could lose marks or be disqualified
- when you receive your exam paper, check it has the correct information on it, for example, date, name and tier of exam
- if you are not sure about anything, raise this immediately with the exam invigilator
- listen carefully and follow all instructions given by the exam invigilator

Special consideration

Special consideration is any adjustment given to a student, who has experienced a temporary illness, injury or event outside of their control at the time of the exam or assessment, which significantly affects their ability to take an exam or show what they can do in an assessment.

Special consideration is only for things that happen immediately before or during an exam or assessment that have a significant effect on a student's ability to take that exam or assessment, or on how they performed.

To be eligible for special consideration you must have been fully prepared for the assessment and have covered the whole course. You will not be eligible for special consideration because you did not cover the course due to joining the class part way through, or if your education was disrupted due to staff shortages, building work or lack of facilities.

These are the 3 most common types of special consideration:

- changes to the way assessments are taken if you have temporary injury or illness, sometimes referred to as 'access arrangements' (as above) - for example, a student with a broken arm may have someone write their dictated answers
- a small number of extra marks may be awarded if your exam performance is affected by temporary illness, injury, or other unforeseen circumstance
- awarding a grade if you unavoidably missed an exam or assessment, as long as you have completed at least one other exam or assessment for that qualification

If you think you might be eligible for special consideration, you should talk to your school or college as soon as possible.

There is further information available for GCSE, AS, A level and some VTQ students in the [JCQ publication: A guide to the special consideration process](#).

Malpractice

Malpractice involves some form of wrongdoing. Examples include:

- sharing answers
- impersonation
- leaking exam papers or other assessment materials
- swapping scripts
- inappropriate use of artificial intelligence (AI) in non-exam assessments such as the use of chatbots
- smuggling information or taking mobile phones and communication devices into exam halls

To be clear, you **must not** wear a watch in the exam or take a mobile phone into the exam hall with you, as doing so will also be treated as malpractice.

All work submitted as part of exams and assessments must be your own work; submitting any work that is not your own is malpractice.

You may see websites or individuals offering leaked exam papers or other assessment materials in advance of your exams or assessments. Do not look at any papers or materials offered in this way. They are probably fake and awarding organisations investigate any attempt to breach assessment and exam paper security. If there is any evidence that you have engaged with leaked papers you could face sanctions, including disqualification from the qualification.

Students who cheat or commit malpractice face serious sanctions, including being disqualified from all qualifications offered by an awarding organisation.

How to report suspected malpractice

Everyone involved in delivering and taking exams and formal assessments has a role to play in preventing and reporting malpractice, including you. This is to make sure that exams are fair for all students.

All allegations of malpractice are taken extremely seriously and will be investigated.

If you see or suspect malpractice you should report it to a teacher, your exams officer or the awarding organisation. Your school or college must report such incidents to the awarding organisation.

If you would rather not talk to your school or college, you can contact the relevant awarding organisation or [Ofqual](#).

What happens after you have taken your exams or assessments

Marking

After you have taken your exam or assessment, your work will be marked. Awarding organisations decide how this is done. It could be paper based or online and could be marked by several different people. Awarding organisations check markers' work at every stage to make sure it is consistent and high quality.

If your qualification includes non-exam assessment, for example practical work or a performance, this may be marked by the awarding organisation, or by your teacher according to the awarding organisation's requirements. If you have concerns about how your non-exam assessment has been marked or how your provisional grade has been worked out, please speak to your school or college.

Where assessments are marked by your teacher, in GCSE, AS, A level and Technical Qualifications within a T level, you are entitled to know your marks. If you do not think your mark is correct, you can ask your school or college for a review of your teacher's marking before your marks are given to the awarding organisation. Someone not previously involved in the marking will review your work. Speak to your school or college for information about how to do this.

The awarding organisation then checks your school or college's marking. This checks that the marking meets the awarding organisation's expectations. Some awarding organisations call this moderation, while others might call it standardisation verification.

Awarding organisations check teachers' marking of non-exam assessments so that marking is consistent across all schools and colleges. Awarding organisations might look at a sample of work from your school or college, to check that the marking is in line with the national standard. Your work might be included in that sample.

Grading

For many qualifications, after the exam papers or assessments have been marked, awarding organisations will then determine how many marks are needed for each grade. This is known as grading. Awarding organisations will review the papers to see the quality of student work and all the available evidence before recommending the grade boundaries – the number of marks

needed to get each grade. This happens after work has been marked, so that awarding organisations can see how students have answered the questions.

For some VTQs, each piece of assessed work will be given a grade, and these will be combined to give your final overall grade.

Normal grading arrangements will continue for GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2024. As usual, Ofqual will make sure that the awarding organisations take a suitable approach to grading each of their qualifications. There are no set numbers of each grade available. You will be awarded a grade that reflects your performance.

It is important to remember that grade boundaries vary from year to year for each qualification. Although senior examiners aim to produce exam papers of the same difficulty each year, in practice this is very hard to do. Because of this, the grade boundaries vary to reflect the level of challenge of the papers taken that year. These changes to grade boundaries make sure that fair and appropriate grading standards are set and that it is not easier or harder to get a grade from one year to the next. As in any year, senior examiners will recommend grade boundaries for every qualification after they have reviewed students' work in their exams and other assessments.

As grade boundaries can change each year, when preparing for your exams or assessment you should focus on the underlying content, knowledge and skills required for each qualification, rather than only the grade boundaries set for papers from previous years.

Getting your results

The date you receive your results will depend on the qualification you are studying, the way it has been assessed, and the awarding organisation.

You will receive A level, AS and T Level results on **Thursday 15 August 2024**.

If you are studying a Level 3 VTQ and are planning to use your results to progress to higher education, you will receive your results on or before **Thursday 15 August 2024**.

You will receive GCSE results on **Thursday 22 August 2024**.

If you are studying a Level 2 or Level 1/2 VTQ and are planning to use your results to progress to further education, you will receive your results on or before **Thursday 22 August 2024**.

Some VTQs are taken on-demand; results for these will be available at different times throughout the year. You can find the date you will receive your qualification results on the website of the relevant awarding organisation, or you can ask your school or college.

Results for GCSEs taken in November 2024 will be released to students in **January 2025**.

If you have concerns about when you will receive your results or what your results are, you should speak to your school or college who will be able to help you.

What to do if you think there is a mistake in your results

Reviews of marking and enquiries about results

If you think there has been a mistake in the marking of your exams or assessments, you should talk to your school or college.

Your school or college can ask the awarding organisation to check if there were any errors in how your exam or assessment was marked. Most awarding organisations do not accept requests directly from students. Where this is the case, schools and colleges must give students the opportunity to appeal against any decision they take not to ask the awarding organisation to review its marking. If a school or college (or a student, where the awarding organisation allows them to) requests a review, the awarding organisation must do this in line with Ofqual's rules and communicate the outcome of the review to the school or college or student.

For some qualifications, including GCSEs, AS and A levels, and Technical Qualifications within a T Level, your school or college can also ask to see your marked assessment or exam paper. They can do this before deciding whether to ask for a review of marking, to see whether they think there was a mistake when your work was marked. The awarding organisation may charge for this.

If you are a private candidate, you can contact the awarding organisation directly to ask for your marked paper or a review of marking. Or you can ask the school or college you sat your exam at to put in a request for you.

If your school or college asks for a review of marking and the awarding organisation does not find any mistakes, your mark will not change, so your grade will not change. If the awarding organisation finds a mistake, your mark could go up or down. If your mark changes, this could mean that your grade stays the same, goes up or goes down.

An awarding organisation cannot give you extra marks just because your mark was close to a grade boundary or because you did not get the grade your school or college predicted. It is important to remember that, in most years, only around 20% of students accepted to university meet or exceed the grades they were predicted. If you don't get the grade your school predicted, it does not automatically mean something has gone wrong with the marking or grading of your exam.

For GCSE, AS, A level, Technical Qualification within a T Level and some VTQs, your school or college can also apply for a review of moderation of non-exam assessment that was marked by your teacher, if marks were changed by the awarding organisation following moderation. This review would apply to all students taking the qualification at your school or college, not just to you.

If the awarding organisation finds a mistake with the moderation, your grade could stay the same or go up, but it cannot go down. This is because the review affects many students, and schools and colleges may not be able to get permission from everyone to request the review.

The awarding organisation may charge fees for reviews of marking or moderation if your grade does not change. There will be no fees if your grade changes following a review. Your school or college will be able to tell you about any fees that you may need to pay.

If you are not sure whether this would apply to the qualification you are taking, you should speak to your school or college.

Deadlines

Awarding organisations publish details of the deadlines for seeking reviews of marking or moderation, and appeals, on their websites.

Your school or college can request a priority review of marking if you need the outcome of the review to get your higher or further education place. Awarding organisations will aim to complete priority reviews by **4 September**, which is UCAS's advisory deadline for higher education providers to hold places open for students.

If you are a private candidate, you should make your request for a priority review directly to your awarding organisation.

Appeals

For all qualifications, if you and your school or college still have concerns, your school or college can challenge the review decision through an appeal. If you are a private candidate, you can submit an appeal directly to the awarding organisation. The possible outcomes of an appeal are the same as for reviews of marking or moderation, explained above. Your school or college will be able to tell you about any fees you may need to pay.

Your school or college can also challenge awarding organisations' decisions about reasonable adjustments, special consideration, other administrative decisions and malpractice sanctions. If you have concerns about any of these decisions, speak to your school or college.

Exam procedures review service

If your qualification is a GCSE, AS or A level, Level 3 Project (EPQ) or Technical Qualification within a T Level, and your school or college thinks the review of marking or moderation and/or appeal were not completed properly, they can ask Ofqual to review the case. This is called the exam procedures review service (EPRS). An application can only be made to EPRS after your case has been considered at the awarding organisation's final appeal stage. There is no fee for the EPRS.

The EPRS will look at whether the awarding organisation has followed its own procedures and Ofqual's rules. Ofqual will not review your work or change your grade. Your grade will only change if the awarding organisation decides your grade was wrong and needs to be corrected. It is important to remember that a new grade could be higher or lower. We can ask the awarding organisation to look at your appeal again if we think the awarding organisation has made a mistake when it completed the review of marking or moderation, or when it considered your appeal.

See [guidance on the EPRS](#) for more information.

Resilience arrangements

It is very unlikely that formal exams and assessments will be cancelled but, just in case something does happen, there are arrangements in place.

Ofqual has asked schools and colleges to [gather evidence](#) of your work during the year that could be used to determine grades for GCSE, AS and A levels, Project Qualifications and Advanced Extension Awards. This evidence would only be used in the unlikely event that national exams and assessments could not go ahead as planned. Schools and colleges have been told that this evidence should come from assessments that students normally take, for example, mock exams. Your teachers should tell you when you are taking assessments that could be used as evidence, but you should just approach them as you normally would.

For qualifications used alongside or instead of GCSEs, AS and A levels, Ofqual has asked awarding organisations to decide if there is a need for schools and colleges to gather evidence to determine grades. Many VTQs are modular and often have a high proportion of non-exam (internal) assessment. This means that evidence will already be generated during your course of study and so no additional evidence is needed.

For other qualifications, including those assessed mainly through exams (such as Technical Qualifications within T Levels), awarding organisations may decide that it is necessary to gather

further evidence. If this is the case, awarding organisations will provide guidance to your school or college. As with GCSEs, AS and A levels, your teachers should tell you when you are taking assessments that could be used as evidence.

Students should expect that exams and assessments will go ahead. Further information will be provided to schools and colleges in the unlikely event that exams cannot go ahead as planned.

Resits

Most exams for GCSEs, AS and A levels take place in May or June each year. That means most students who want to resit a GCSE, AS or A level will need to wait until the following summer to do so.

In GCSE English language and GCSE mathematics, exams are also available in November, but only for students who were aged 16 or above on 31 August of that year.

Some VTQs operate assessments throughout the year. Students may be able to take their assessment again, at the next available opportunity.

You should talk to your school or college if you would like more information about resits.

Useful contacts

Ofqual

You can find the most up to date information about the arrangements for 2023 to 2024 on [Ofqual's rolling update](#).

[Contact Ofqual](#) - click on the 'enquiries' option.

Telephone: 0300 303 3344

Our phone line is normally open from 09:00 to 17:00 on weekdays – please check our website for opening times on and after results days.

If you want to complain to Ofqual about an exam board or awarding organisation, for example, because you think they have not followed their own published policies and procedures of Ofqual's rule, see our [complaints procedure](#). We would usually expect you to give the awarding organisation a chance to resolve your complaint by using their complaints process before coming to us.

Queries about your qualifications

If you have any questions about the qualifications you are taking, or about preparing for your exams and assessments, you should talk to your school or college first. Your school or college will then contact the relevant awarding organisation on your behalf.

Details of all awarding organisations that deliver qualifications that Ofqual regulates, are listed on the [Ofqual Register](#).

Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)

[JCQ](#) is the exam boards' membership organisation (AQA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC). Exam boards use JCQ to set common policies and procedures that schools and colleges must follow.

JCQ has [published information for schools and colleges and students](#) on the 2023 to 2024 arrangements.

JCQ's members also include CCEA, City and Guilds, NCFE and SQA, developing and delivering many vocational and technical qualifications in England.

Information and contact: [JCQ website](#)

National Careers Service

The [National Careers Service](#) provides free and impartial careers advice, information and guidance including [T Levels and VTQs](#). The service is available to anyone aged 13 plus. The NCS runs an exam results helpline from level 3 results day to a week after level 2 results day.

Telephone: 0800 100 900

Lines are open from 08:00 to 20:00 Monday to Friday and 10:00 to 17:00 on Saturdays. Calls are free from landlines and most mobile numbers.

UCAS

[UCAS](#), the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, is an independent charity, and the UK's shared admissions service for higher education.

For any questions about higher education application and admissions, you should contact the relevant institution directly.

Telephone: 0371 468 0 468

Lines are open Monday to Friday, 08:30 to 18:00

Equality Advisory and Support Services (EASS)

[Equality Advisory and Support Service \(EASS\)](#) advises and assists individuals on issues relating to equality and human rights, across England, Scotland and Wales.

Telephone: 0808 800 0082

Textphone: 0808 800 0084

Mental health support

Always make sure you speak to somebody if you are feeling anxious or struggling with your mental health. This might be a parent, carer or someone else you trust.

You may find it helpful to read our [resources on preparing for exams](#) – including Ofqual's [guide to coping with exam pressure](#).

Other organisations

[Childline](#) is a service provided by the NSPCC offering confidential support and advice to children and young people.

[Mind](#) is a charity providing mental health support for anyone experiencing a mental health problem.

[Young Minds](#) is a charity working to improve emotional well-being and mental health amongst children and young people.

[NHS - Mental health support for children and young people](#) are services that work with children and young people who have difficulties with their mental health or wellbeing.