

## **CCEA QUALIFICATIONS 2022: A ROADMAP FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Frequently Asked Questions –CCEA A Level (A2) Candidates Northern Ireland**

#### **Will exams go ahead?**

The plan is to return to public examinations during the 2021/22 academic year. It is important students have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills through public examinations, which is a valid and reliable way to generate outcomes.

Everyone should prepare for timetabled public examinations. We recognise, however, that the public health situation can change quickly and there has been a lot of disruption during the past two years, so we will have back-up plans in place for alternative awarding based on teacher judgements in case they are needed.

#### **Will exams take place at the normal time?**

Public Exams for summer 2022 will be held at the normal time during May and June. CCEA will publish the full timetable in the autumn.

#### **Will I definitely be awarded a result for each of my A Levels?**

Yes, candidates who complete CCEA A2 examinations in summer 2022 will be issued with A Level results in August 2022 so that they can progress to the next stage of education, employment or training.

#### **How will A Levels be awarded?**

CCEA A Level awards in 2022 will be made on the basis of candidates' A2 outcomes only.

Within the majority of A Level qualifications, assessment of one A2 unit, worth up to a maximum of 50% of the A2, can be omitted. This is to recognise the significant disruption faced by candidates over their two years of study and the potential for

ongoing disruption. CCEA will specify the unit to be omitted. Candidates can continue to take all A2 units if they wish to do so.

In ten practical subjects, where omission of a unit would take away assessment of practical skills or alternatively all external examinations, the content of internal assessment tasks will be reduced rather than a unit being omitted. CCEA will provide details to schools of the reductions in internal assessment tasks by 1 September 2021. The ten A2 subjects where this approach is being taken are Art and Design, Digital Technology, Environmental Technology, Journalism in the Media and Communications Industry, Moving Image Arts, Nutrition and Food Science, Performing Arts, Software Systems Development, Sports Science and the Active Leisure Industry and Technology and Design

Your school and the class teacher will let you know exactly what is required in each qualification and which assessments can be omitted. Details will also be available on CCEA's website from early June 2021.

These arrangements only apply to CCEA qualifications. Examination Boards in England and Wales have not yet announced any changes to their qualifications. Your school will be able to explain the arrangements for these qualifications once announcements are made.

### **Will there be parts of the course I won't be examined on?**

Yes, in the majority of subjects an A2 unit can be omitted from assessment. In ten practical subjects, there will be a reduction in the requirements of the internal assessment tasks.

This option provides significant mitigation for lost face-to-face teaching time and any ongoing disruption. It also supports teachers and students in their preparation for examinations by allowing specific content to be prioritised by schools and relieves pressure to prepare students for all assessments in event of further lost face-to-face teaching time.

Your school and the class teacher will let you know exactly what will now be required in each qualification. Details will also be available on CCEA's website from early June 2021.

### **Can I take all the A2 exams in my course?**

Yes, CCEA will put in place arrangements so that any student who wishes to take all A2 examinations can do so. There is no obligation to do so.

Any candidate who sits all A2 units will be awarded the higher grade from either all units or the mandatory units only. This will ensure no candidate is disadvantaged by taking all units of the qualification.

### **Will we still be taught everything?**

These changes reduce the content which will be assessed, however, schools will be encouraged to cover as much of the specification as possible to support progression, particularly to Higher Education.

### **Will my grades be lowered by CCEA if I don't sit all units?**

No, your overall grade will be determined by your performance in the unit or units you sit.

### **Will the AS Grades I am awarded in August 2021 count towards my A Level grade in 2022?**

No, the AS award in 2021 will not form part of the A Level award in 2022.

We know that many young people and parents have expressed the opinion that they would wish the AS grade to contribute towards the A level grade in 2022. The Department, therefore, asked CCEA to consider a range of approaches in which the AS grades awarded this year could be recognised as part of the A Level awarding process.

We have looked very closely at how this might work. However, after looking at a range of different approaches, it is not possible to implement this equitably or fairly for candidates.

The key problem is the need to convert grades awarded in 2021 into marks for the purpose of adding these to the marks awarded for A2 examinations in 2022 in a way which is fair to all candidates.

In both England and Wales, AS grades from summer 2021 will not contribute to A Level awarding in summer 2022.

### **Can I take my AS exams, which I was due to sit in summer 2021?**

Whilst candidates can take AS examinations, the AS outcomes will **not** count towards their overall A Level grade, which will be based on A2 outcomes only.

### **What if the health situation gets worse and schools have to close again?**

The Department has removed a significant amount of assessment to take account of ongoing disruption and ensure candidates feel confident in the units on which they will be examined.

The public health situation can change quite quickly. CCEA will have back-up arrangements for alternative awarding arrangements based on centre professional judgement that can be activated if needed. These will be in place and students will be enabled to complete their qualifications.

### **Are these qualifications less valuable?**

Absolutely not. The level of demand for the qualifications is the same as in previous years. Higher Education providers and employers will see these as valid qualifications. Schools and learners should cover as much content as is possible to facilitate progression. There is simply less assessment, to allow schools and learners the opportunity to manage the disruption caused by the pandemic.

### **What about non-CCEA GCSEs or A Levels?**

Your school will let you know if you are taking qualifications with non-CCEA Examination Boards and provide you with details about these qualifications once announcements have been made in these jurisdictions.

### **What if I miss my exam due to illness or self-isolation?**

The Department will commission CCEA to develop bespoke arrangements for summer 2022 to allow the award of grades for progression should a candidate miss an examination due to illness or self-isolation.

## **Frequently Asked Questions –CCEA AS Level Candidates Northern Ireland**

### **Will exams go ahead?**

The plan is to return to public examinations during the 2021/22 academic year. It is important students have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills through public examinations, which is a valid and reliable way to generate outcomes.

Everyone should prepare for timetabled examinations. We recognise that the public health situation can change quickly and there has been a lot of disruption during the past two years, so we will have back-up plans in place for alternative awarding based on teacher judgements in case they are needed.

### **Will exams take place at the normal time?**

Public Exams for summer 2022 will be held at the normal time during May and June. CCEA will publish the full timetable in the autumn.

### **Will my AS marks from 2022 count towards my A Level award in 2023?**

Yes, if public examinations go ahead as planned AS outcomes from 2022 will contribute to the overall A Level award in 2023.

### **Will I definitely be awarded a result for my AS Levels?**

Yes, candidates who sit CCEA AS examinations in summer 2022 will have AS Level results awarded in August 2022.

### **How will AS Levels be awarded?**

Within the majority of AS qualifications, assessment of one AS unit, worth up to a maximum of 50% of the AS qualification, can be omitted. This is to recognise the significant disruption faced by candidates during their previous GCSE studies and the potential for ongoing disruption. CCEA will specify the unit to be omitted. Candidates can continue to take all AS units if they wish to do so.

In seven practical subjects, where omission of a unit would take away assessment of practical skills or alternatively all external examinations, the content of internal assessment tasks will be reduced rather than a unit being omitted. CCEA will provide details to schools of the reductions in internal assessment by 30 September 2021. The seven AS subjects are Environmental Technology, Journalism in the Media and Communications Industry, Moving Image Arts, Performing Arts, Software Systems Development, Sports Science and the Active Leisure Industry and Technology and Design

Your school and the class teacher will let you know exactly what is required in each qualification and which assessments will be omitted. Details will also be available on CCEA's website from early June 2021.

These arrangements only apply to CCEA qualifications. Examination Boards in England and Wales have not yet announced any changes to their qualifications. Your school will be able to explain the arrangements for these qualifications once announcements are made.

### **Will there be parts of the course I won't be examined on?**

Yes, in the majority of subjects an AS unit will be omitted from assessment. In seven practical subjects, there will be a reduction in the requirements of the internal assessment tasks.

This option provides significant mitigation for lost face-to-face teaching time and any ongoing disruption. It also supports teachers and students in their preparation for examinations by allowing specific content to be prioritised by schools and relieves pressure to prepare students for all assessments in event of further lost face-to-face teaching time.

Your school and the class teacher will let you know exactly what will now be required in each qualification. Details will also be available on CCEA's website.

### **Can I take all the AS exams in my course?**

Yes, CCEA will put in place arrangements so that any student who wishes to take all AS examinations can do so. There is no obligation to do so.

Any candidate who sits all units will be awarded the higher grade from either all units or the mandatory units only. This will ensure no candidate is disadvantaged by taking all units of the qualification.

### **Will we still be taught everything?**

These changes reduce the content which will be assessed, however, schools will be encouraged to cover as much of the specification as possible to support progression.

### **Will my grades be lowered by CCEA if I don't sit all units?**

No, your overall grade will be determined by your performance in the unit or units you sit.

### **What will happen in 2022/23?**

It is envisaged that candidates starting their A Level courses in September 2021 will take all A2 units at the end of their second year of A Level study in summer 2023. The Department will of course be monitoring the public health situation closely.

### **What if the health situation gets worse and schools have to close again?**

The Department has removed a significant amount of assessment to take account of ongoing disruption and ensure candidates feel confident in the units on which they are examined.

The public health situation can change quite quickly. CCEA will have back-up arrangements for alternative awarding arrangements based on teacher judgement that can be activated if needed. These will be in place and students will be enabled to complete their qualifications.

### **Are these qualifications less valuable?**

Absolutely not. The level of demand for the qualifications is the same as in previous years. Higher Education providers and employers will see these as valid qualifications. Schools and learners should cover as much content as possible to facilitate progression. There is simply less assessment, to allow schools and learners the opportunity to manage the disruption caused by the pandemic.

**What about non-CCEA GCSEs or A Levels?**

Your school will let you know if you are taking qualifications with non-CCEA Examination Boards and provide you with details about these qualifications once announcements have been made in England and Wales.

**What if I miss my exam due to illness or self-isolation?**

The Department will commission CCEA to develop bespoke arrangements for summer 2022 to allow the award of grades for progression should a candidate miss an examination due to illness or self-isolation.



## **Frequently Asked Questions –CCEA GCSE Students (normally Year 12)** **Northern Ireland**

### **Will exams go ahead?**

The plan is to return to public examinations during the 2021/22 academic year. It is important students have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills through public examinations, which is a valid and reliable way to generate outcomes.

Everyone should prepare for timetabled examinations. We recognise that the public health situation can change quickly and there has been a lot of disruption during the past two years, so we will have back-up plans in place for alternative awarding based on teacher judgements in case they are needed.

### **Will exams take place at the normal time?**

Due to the public health context, the GCSE English and Maths series normally held in January will be brought forward to late November/early December 2021. There will also be a series at that time for GCSE Single and Double Award Science. There will also be a February examination series for GCSE Single and Double Award Science. This will approach give candidates the opportunity to complete a number of GCSE modules prior to summer 2022.

Exams for summer 2022 will be held at the normal time during May and June. CCEA will publish the full timetable during the autumn.

Your school or college will let you know which exams you have been entered for.

### **Will I be issued with a result for my GCSEs?**

Yes, candidates who complete CCEA GCSE examinations in summer 2022 will be issued with GCSE results in August 2022 so that they can progress to the next stage of education or employment.

## **Will there be parts of the course I won't be examined on?**

Yes, in the majority of GCSEs where students are in the second year of study (normally Year 12), one unit of the course can be omitted from assessment. CCEA will specify the unit to be omitted.

In GCSE Religious Studies, Statistics and Government and Politics, candidates will be permitted the option of completing the examination for one assessment unit and a controlled assessment task for the second unit, as an alternative to the second examination.

In line with normal procedures, the controlled assessment tasks in these three subjects will be set by CCEA, internally marked by teachers according to a mark scheme provided by CCEA, and then externally moderated by CCEA.

In GCSE Food and Nutrition and GCSE Health and Social Care, there will be a reduction in the content and word limit for the controlled assessment task which will continue to be worth 50% of the qualification.

There may also be some changes, particularly to practical assessments and fieldwork to make sure the qualifications can be delivered safely in the current public health context.

Your school and the class teacher will let you know exactly what is required in each qualification and which assessments will be omitted. Details will also be available on CCEA's website from early June 2021.

These arrangements only apply to CCEA qualifications. Examination Boards in England and Wales have not yet announced changes. Your school will be able to explain the arrangements for these qualifications once announcements are made.

## **What about GCSE English Language and Mathematics?**

In GCSE **English Language**, candidates will have the option to omit Unit 3, which is the internal assessment of Study of Spoken and Written Language. Preparation for controlled assessment takes up a lot of time. We believe the omission of this

assessment will free up additional teaching and learning time, as well as reducing the assessment burden on young people.

The Department and CCEA have looked very closely at **GCSE Maths**. Due to the unique structure of this qualification, with many different pathways at different levels, omitting a unit can have negative consequences for learners and change the range of grades available to them.

It would also remove assessment of nearly half of this key passport qualification, which is required for a number of Higher Education courses such as nursing and teaching. No changes have been made to the qualifications in England and Wales and we are concerned that reduction of almost half the assessment in this key qualification could affect comparability and portability.

The Department is very conscious that learners have experienced significant disruption. CCEA will, therefore, provide additional examination aids for candidates taking GCSE Mathematics in autumn 2021 and summer 2022 to provide additional support.

### **Will we still be taught everything?**

These changes significantly reduce the content which will be assessed, however, schools will be encouraged to cover as much of the specification as possible to support your progression to Level 3 studies such as A-Levels.

### **What if the health situation gets worse and schools have to close again?**

The Department has removed a large amount of assessment content to take account of ongoing disruption and ensure candidates feel confident in the units on which they are examined.

The public health situation can change quite quickly. CCEA will have back-up arrangements for alternative awarding arrangements based on teacher judgement that can be activated if needed. These will be in place and students will be enabled to complete their qualifications.

### **Can I take all the exams in my GCSE course?**

Yes, I have asked CCEA to put in place arrangements so that any student who wishes to take all examinations in a GCSE can do so. There is no obligation to do so.

Any candidate who sits all units will be awarded the higher grade from either all units or the mandatory units only. This will ensure no candidate is disadvantaged by taking all units of the qualification.

### **Are these qualifications less valuable?**

Absolutely not. The level of demand for the qualifications is the same as in previous years. Higher Education providers and employers will see these as valid qualifications. Schools and learners should cover as much content as possible to facilitate progression. There is simply less assessment, to allow schools and learners the opportunity to manage in the disruption caused by the pandemic.

### **What about non-CCEA GCSEs or other qualifications?**

Your school will let you know if you are taking qualifications with non-CCEA Examination Boards and provide you with details about these qualifications once announcements have been made in these jurisdictions.

### **What about CCEA entry level, vocationally related and occupational studies qualifications?**

Similar changes to omit units are being made to these qualifications. Unit omissions up to a maximum of 50% will be permitted. Your school will provide you with details about these qualifications.

Schools and learners should cover as much content as possible to facilitate progression. There is simply less assessment, to allow schools and learners the opportunity to manage in the disruption caused by the pandemic.

### **What if I miss my exam due to illness or self-isolation?**

The Department will commission CCEA to develop bespoke arrangements for summer 2022 to allow the award of grades for progression should a candidate miss an examination due to illness or self-isolation.