

Summer 2022



Assessment Arrangements for GCSE, AS and A level Qualifications in 2021/22: Technical Questions and Answers



Introduction

This document sets out responses to a range of technical questions about assessment arrangements for CCEA's GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in 2021/22 that have been presented to us in recent weeks.

For ease of use, we have set out some general questions and answers and then categorised the remainder by qualification type. This version (Version 2) provides answers to questions based on the information available to us up to Monday 15 November 2021. It includes responses to new questions regarding special consideration; moderation arrangements for Year 11 students undertaking controlled assessments in 2021/22; how AS in 2022 will contribute to A level in Summer 2023; and how the mandatory assessments in a qualification will contribute to final grading where optional assessment units have been omitted.

In addition to this document, we have further frequently asked questions on our [website](#) that are less technical in nature and that are aimed more at students and parents.

We hope the questions below support and further explain the information provided in the subject-specific addendum documents issued on 1 June 2021.

General

1. Has CCEA made any contingency plans for Summer 2022 in the event that examinations cannot go ahead as planned?

Yes, while we are working on the basis that examinations will go ahead in Summer 2022, we are looking at all of our options if they are cancelled for a third year. We will continue to work with all stakeholders, including school leaders, unions, CCEA Regulation and the Department of Education, to arrive at the best solution for awarding grades in Summer 2022.

2. Will the January 2022 series be available for GCSE English Language and GCSE Mathematics?

For one year only the January series of examinations will be brought forward. This is to mitigate, as far as possible, the need to cancel the series because of a deterioration in the public health situation, which was the case in January 2021. Examinations in GCSE English Language and GCSE Mathematics will therefore take place in late November or early December 2021 and will be a part of the GCSE November 2021 examination series. The November 2021 examinations timetable can be found [here](#). CCEA has provided [key dates](#) on our website for this examination.

3. Will Occupational Studies, all vocational qualifications and Certificate of Personal Effectiveness remain in the January 2022 series?

There will be no January 2022 examination series for CCEA's non-general qualifications. Instead, CCEA will offer an assessment opportunity for Occupational Studies, Preparation for Adult Life (PAL), Performance Skills and Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) specifications as part of the November 2021 examination series. The deadlines for submitting samples for non-general qualifications are:

- Friday 10 December for Occupational Studies
- Friday 17 December for PAL, Performance Skills and Certificate of Personal Effectiveness.

[Key dates](#) for this examination series are available on our website.

The release of results date for candidates for Occupational Studies, Preparation for Adult Life, Performance Skills and Certificate of Personal Effectiveness specifications from the November series will be Thursday 24 February 2022.

4. When will CCEA publish its examination timetables for the 2021/22 academic year?

The final versions of our examination timetables are now available on our website:

- [GCSE Timetables for November 2021, March 2022 and Summer 2022](#); and
- [GCE Timetable for Summer 2022](#).

5. Will unit entries in Summer 2020 and Summer 2021 count as an attempt for resit purposes?

No. Summer 2020, January 2021, March 2021 and Summer 2021 unit entries will not count as an attempt for resit purposes.

6. Will CCEA ensure that standards in Summer 2022 will not disadvantage this cohort compared to previous cohorts impacted by the pandemic?

In his statement to the Northern Ireland Assembly on 17 May 2021, the Minister of Education stated: *“My Department will also continue to work closely with colleagues in England and Wales on grading standards. While decisions on standards will be taken together across all three jurisdictions, I give you an assurance that generous grading will form part of the arrangements for 2022.”*

CCEA awarding organisation will therefore work with our examinations regulator to agree how best to award grades in Summer 2022.

7. Why has the burden on teachers not been eased?

Our aim from the outset was to reduce the burden of assessment on students. We believe students must experience, as far as possible, the full range of knowledge and skills associated with each qualification they are studying to ensure they are properly equipped for the next stage of their education or to prepare them appropriately for employment.

8. Where the option to omit an assessment unit is available, is this decided by the school or by the student?

Before entries are made for Summer 2022, we would recommend that the subject teacher has a conversation with the student, and possibly even the parents, to suggest what they believe to be the best option for that student, based on their professional judgment and/or public health considerations. If the student and/or parent goes against the advice of the school and asks, for example, that the student is entered for all units, they have the security of knowing the student will still get the best of both routes through the qualification – either on completion of all units or completion of the mandatory units only.

9. Does the omission of one unit of assessment from a qualification change the contribution the remaining units make to the subject level grade awarded?

The contribution a unit or units make to the final grade awarded to a student will depend on whether a student decides to sit assessments in all units or assessments in the mandated units only. No matter what they decide, the number of uniform marks available for each unit will not change and the level of demand of the unit(s) will also remain the same.

If we use GCSE History as an example, it consists of two units: Unit 1 and Unit 2. Unit 1 is worth 60% and Unit 2 is worth 40%. This means there are 120 uniform marks available for Unit 1 (60% of 200) and 80 uniform marks available for Unit 2

(40% of 200). In GCSE History the assessment for optional omission is Unit 2, so students can choose to complete Unit 1 only. If a student decides to avail of the omission, the uniform marks for Unit 1 will not change and will remain at 120, and the grade awarded will be based on their performance in this unit alone. If a student decides to take both units, the grade awarded will be the higher of their performance across the two units (200 uniform marks available) or their performance in Unit 1 only.

This approach provides flexibility and gives students choice while ensuring the structure of the qualification remains the same.

10. Will special consideration arrangements be in place for 2021/22?

Yes, special consideration arrangements will be in place; however, some specific details are currently being reviewed to ensure they are compatible with the assessment arrangements in place for CCEA qualifications in the 2021/22 academic year.

11. Will we be able to apply for special consideration in the November series?

If a student sits an examination in November, but is affected by temporary illness, temporary injury or some other event outside of their control at the time of the assessment, an application for special consideration can be made on behalf of the student. Please note, special consideration will not be applied as a result of lost teaching and learning time.

For further information on the special consideration process, please refer to the JCQ publication [A guide to the special consideration process, with effect from September 2021](#).

12. The task requirements in a number of coursework and controlled assessment units have been changed for 2021/22. If a student decides to resit in 2022/23, will these arrangements carry over?

No, the reduced assessment requirements in place for a number of coursework and controlled assessment units, introduced to address public health concerns or align with policy decisions, will apply for one year only. If a student decides to resit an assessment unit in 2022/23 that currently has reduced assessment requirements, they will be expected to meet the task requirements in place for that unit in a normal year.

GCSE

13. Which students are eligible to omit units in GCSE qualifications in Summer 2022?

The table below sets out who can and who cannot have the option to omit a unit from final grading in the eligible GCSE subject(s).

| | |
|--|--|
| Students who began their course of study in September 2020 and are completing the qualification in Summer 2022 | Students will have the option to omit a CCEA specified unit from their final award in subjects where applicable. |
| Students who wish to resit a GCSE qualification in November 2021 or March/Summer 2022 | Students will have the option to omit a CCEA specified unit from their final award in subjects where applicable. |
| <u>Students in Year 12 and above</u> who will begin their course of study for the first time in September 2021 and are completing the qualification in Summer 2022. | Students will have the option to omit a CCEA specified unit from their final award in subjects where applicable. |
| Students who will begin their course of study in September 2021 and are completing the qualification in Summer 2023. | They must complete all units. |

14. Some candidates would like to resit GCSE English Language in November 2021 to improve their centre determined grade from Summer 2021. What units do they need to be entered for in November 2021?

Candidates with no prior attainment at unit level wishing to resit GCSE English Language will be required to take Units 1, 2 and 4. They also have the option to omit one assessment, which in this instance is Unit 3.

15. Can students cashing in at qualification level in November 2021 omit an assessment unit?

Yes, students in Year 12 or above cashing in GCSE English Language, GCSE Single Award Science and GCSE Double Award Science in the November series can receive a qualification grade by sitting the mandatory units only. Prior attainment from units taken in previous series can also contribute.

For GCSE Mathematics, students cashing in must complete all assessments.

16. Will the terminal rule apply for qualifications taken in 2021/22?

To facilitate the exceptional assessment arrangements for GCSE qualifications, as outlined by the Minister for Education for the 2021/22 academic year, the terminal rule will be suspended. Students do not have to complete 40% of the assessment in the terminal series in which they request certification. This decision is to facilitate all assessment routes through a qualification and will help inform entry decisions,

particularly in subjects where assessments are available in examination series prior to Summer 2022. The expectation remains that all specification content continues to be covered.

17. How will GCSE grades be awarded for candidates who are omitting a unit?

If a student chooses to omit a unit from final grading, the grade awarded will be based on their performance in the unit(s) they take. For example, if the unit being omitted is worth 30%, the student's grade will be based on their performance in the remaining 70% of the assessment.

18. I will begin my GCSE Further Mathematics course in September 2021 and hope to achieve a qualification grade in Summer 2022; can I choose to omit a unit?

GCSE Further Mathematics candidates can choose to omit **one** of the following units: Unit 2, Unit 3, or Unit 4, each of which is worth 25%, from overall assessment for their final grade. This includes those candidates who begin their GCSE Further Mathematics course in **September 2021** and hope to achieve a qualification level grade in Summer 2022.

19. The Minister's statement on 17 May says schools can enter current Year 11 students for modular GCSE assessments in 2021/22, but the option to omit a unit will not apply to them, if cashing in. Does this mean I cannot enter my Year 11 class for the unit specified for optional omission?

No, you can still enter your Year 11 class for the unit specified for omission. However, Year 11 students who wish to cash in at qualification level in one year must enter all available units, as they are not eligible to omit the specified unit. Arrangements for omissions apply only to those in the final year of their GCSE qualification who began their course of study in September 2020, or those in Year 12 and above taking the qualification for the first time.

The only exception to the above ruling is students in Year 11 and below studying GCSE Irish. This is to facilitate progression to GCSE Gaeilge.

20. Can a student sit all available external assessments in GCSE Religious Studies, Government and Politics or Statistics as well as the internal assessment?

No, this is not possible. The arrangements for GCSE Religious Studies, Government and Politics, and Statistics were agreed in Autumn 2020 and carried over in to 2021/22. The communication to schools from the Department of Education in November 2020 stated, *"Candidates will not have the option of completing both examination units and the assessment task in these three subjects, as this option would increase the assessment burden, which is contrary to the policy intent."*

21. Can a student still complete the full controlled assessment portfolios for GCSE Health and Social Care, and Food and Nutrition?

No, this is not possible. Again, the arrangements for GCSE Health and Social Care, and Food and Nutrition have also been carried forward from last Autumn.

The communication to schools from the Department of Education in November 2020 made clear that, *“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 will **not** be the option for candidates to be assessed on all elements of the original controlled assessment task.”*

22. My Year 11 students are beginning their GCSE Construction and the Built Environment controlled assessment in the next few weeks, and we had planned to undertake the task that is in place in a normal year. Is this OK?

Yes. However, if you wish for your students to undertake a task with the requirements in place in a normal year, the work should be held back and not submitted for moderation until Summer 2023. In GCSE Construction and the Built Environment, and in a number of other subjects, the task requirements in 2021/22 have been amended to take account of public health restrictions or to reflect policy changes. Work submitted by centres in Summer 2022 should therefore reflect these requirements.

23. If a student cashed in for the GCSE Short Course Religious Studies in Summer 2021, can they complete the controlled assessment task and use this alongside the unit already completed to receive a full course qualification grade?

No, this will not be possible. This is because there isn't a uniform mark associated with any of the centre determined grades issued to students in Summer 2021.

24. In GCSE Religious Studies, Statistics and Government and Politics, can I ask my students to complete the controlled assessment task to see how they get on and then make a decision on whether to enter them for the examination?

No. Again, this is against the instruction issued by the Department of Education, where the aim is a reduction in the assessment burden. As per the communication to schools from the Department of Education in November 2020, *“Candidates will not have the option of completing both examination units and the assessment task in these three subjects, as this option would increase the assessment burden, which is contrary to the policy intent.”*

AS and A Level

25. Which students are eligible to avail of an omission at AS in Summer 2022?

The table below sets out who has the option to omit a unit from final grading in the eligible AS subject(s).

| | |
|---|--|
| Students who commenced their GCE AS course in September 2021 | These students will have the option to omit one CCEA specified unit from final grading in most AS qualifications*. |
| Students who received an AS grade in Summer 2020 or Summer 2021 and wish to improve this AS grade in 2022 | These students will have the option to omit one CCEA specified unit from final grading in most AS qualifications*. Please note, any AS grade issued in Summer 2022 will not contribute to an A level cash-in. |
| Students who have AS unit results from Summer 2019 or earlier | These students will have the option to omit one CCEA specified unit from final grading in most AS qualifications*. |

*An omission is not available in some AS qualifications [see Q29].

26. Which students are eligible to avail of an omission at A2 in Summer 2022?

The table below sets out who has the option to omit a unit from final grading in the eligible A level subject(s).

| | |
|--|---|
| Students who commenced their GCE A2 course in September 2021 | These students will have the option to omit one CCEA specified unit from final grading in most A level qualifications*. |
| Students who commenced their GCE course in September 2019 or 2020 or before and have prior attainment at either AS or A2 level | These students will have the option to omit one unit from final grading in most A2 qualifications*. |
| Students who received a GCE A2 grade in Summer 2020 or Summer 2021 and wish to improve on this A2 grade in Summer 2022 | These students will have the option to omit one CCEA specified unit from final grading in most A level qualifications*. |

*An omission is not available in some A2 qualifications [see Q29]. AS will not contribute to A level.

27. I have an A2 student who has an AS unit level award from Summer 2019. Can these marks contribute to their final grade in Summer 2022?

Yes, prior attainment from previous series, in the form of uniform marks, can be used to contribute to the final A level grade issued in Summer 2022. We will grade the student in two ways:

- using the marks achieved in previous series along with their performance in their A2 units in Summer 2022; and
- on the basis of their performance in the A2 units alone.

The student will be awarded the highest grade from either route.

28. I have a student who wishes to sit their AS units alongside their A2 units in Summer 2022. Will the AS units outcomes contribute to the overall A level grade?

No, AS will be decoupled from A2 in Summer 2022, as per the Education Minister’s instruction, meaning AS outcomes will not contribute to the overall A level grade awarded. A student can, however, achieve separate AS and A level qualifications if they wish.

29. In 2021/22 there are some AS and A2 level subjects where an optional omission is not available. What are they?

In some subjects an optional omission is not available. Instead, the requirements of the internally assessed tasks have been reduced. This is to ensure the fundamental characteristics of the assessment in these qualifications is not undermined as a result of the omission of one unit.

These subjects are:

| AS Level | A2 Level |
|--|--|
| Environmental Technology | Art and Design |
| Journalism | Digital Technology |
| Moving Image Arts | Environmental Technology |
| Performing Arts | Journalism |
| Software Systems Development | Moving Image Arts |
| Sports Science and the Active Leisure Industry | Nutrition and Food Science |
| Technology and Design | Performing Arts |
| | Software Systems Development |
| | Sports Science and the Active Leisure Industry |
| | Technology and Design |

30. Can a student still complete the full internally assessed tasks in any one of the AS or A2 subjects that have seen the assessment requirements reduced?

No, the students must complete the tasks only on the basis of the revised requirements in place for 2021/22.

31. How will AS and A level grades be awarded for candidates who are omitting a unit?

If a student chooses to omit a unit from final grading at either AS or A2 level, the grade awarded will be based on their performance in the unit(s) they take. For example, if the unit being omitted is worth 30%, the student's grade will be based on their performance in the remaining 70% of the assessment.

32. We don't normally cash in our students at AS level. Do we have to do so this year to allow them to avail of any assessment omission available in that subject?

We strongly advise you to cash in your students if you would like them to avail of the assessment omission at AS level. In the absence of a cash-in, our systems will only see a unit entry and will not calculate a qualification grade for your students. If this impacts your normal practices, please contact entries@ccea.org.uk

Whether you cash in AS in Summer 2022, or not, the AS unit outcomes from Summer 2022 will contribute to the overall A2 outcome in Summer 2023.

33. How will A* be awarded at A level in Summer 2022?

In Summer 2022, an A* grade will be awarded to students who achieve 90% or more of the available uniform marks in the A2 units they sit (either the mandatory units or all units).

34. Will AS centre determined grades received in Summer 2021 contribute towards the overall A level grade in 2022?

AS grades issued in Summer 2021 will not contribute to the A level grade in Summer 2022. This is because there are no marks associated with these grades. More information on the reasons for this decision is available [here](#).

If a student attained marks at AS level prior to Summer 2020, these marks can contribute to final grading.

35. My students plan to omit a unit of assessment at AS level in Summer 2022. How will their uniform mark at subject level be arrived at in order to contribute to their A level grade in Summer 2023?

The percentage of uniform marks awarded at subject level at AS will be determined by performance in the mandated unit, if that is the only unit taken. These will then be replicated at subject level to arrive at a total AS level uniform mark. For example, if your student achieves 75% of the uniform marks in the mandated unit(s), they will be awarded 75% of the uniform marks at subject level. In Summer 2023, the AS subject level uniform marks will then be added to those achieved at A2 as normal to arrive at a total uniform mark for GCE.

36. If a student wishes to resit their A2 qualification in Summer 2023, will the option of a unit omission continue to apply?

Yes, students who cash in their GCE qualification in Summer 2022 will be able to avail of the omission in Summer 2023 if they decide to resit. If they also decide to sit the assessment unit available for omission, they will be awarded the better grade from their performance in the mandatory unit or across all units.

37. I am studying a GCE subject as a private candidate and have not submitted an entry for Summer 2022. How do I go about making an entry?

A candidate is unable to enter directly for an examination via CCEA. To enter for an examination, a candidate must register with a school or further education college, who will take forward the entry on the candidate's behalf.

As such, it is up to you, as the private candidate, to contact a centre regarding entry for examinations and conditions of acceptance. It is advised that you contact centres well in advance of the entry closing dates and it is recommended that you contact a centre with whom you have had a previous relationship. Alternatively, you can contact entries@ccea.org.uk or info@ccea.org.uk

Summary of Changes since First Issue

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A green line in the margin indicates new or amended text.



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