



Summary of 2022 Exams Announcements

Yesterday, the DfE and Ofqual published a number of documents setting out plans for GCSEs, AS levels, A levels, and vocational and technical qualifications next year. These include the following:

- A '[decisions document](#)' setting out what changes will be put in place for GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2022, following the recent DfE/Ofqual consultation on this.
- An [article](#) by new Chief Regulator Dr Jo Saxton, explaining Ofqual's approach to grading next year, and a [blog](#) setting this out for students.
- A [consultation](#) on the contingency arrangements for GCSEs, AS and A levels.
- [Guidance](#) on the contingency arrangements for vocational and technical qualifications.

Key points from these documents are below:

Adaptations

- There will be optional topics and content in GCSE English literature, history, ancient history and geography.
- If necessary, centres will be allowed to deliver practical work in GCSE biology, chemistry, physics, combined science, geology and astronomy, AS level biology, chemistry, physics and geology, and AS and A level environmental science by demonstration.
- Centres will be allowed to assess the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) across the minimum number of practical activities required to enable students to demonstrate their competence in A level biology, chemistry, physics and geology.
- Students taking GCSE, AS and A level art and design will be assessed on their portfolio only.
- Exam boards will provide advanced information about the focus of the content of exams for all GCSE, AS and A level subjects except GCSE English literature, history, ancient history and geography by **7 February 2022** at the latest. This could be released earlier 'if circumstances require'.
- Students will be given a formulae sheet for GCSE mathematics and a revised equation sheet for GCSE physics and combined science.

Grading

- 2022 will be a 'transition year' to reflect the fact that we are in a pandemic recovery period and students' education has been disrupted.
- Ofqual will therefore aim for grades in 2022 to reflect a midway point between 2021 and 2019. This means that results overall next year will be higher than in 2019 but not as high as in 2020.
- Exam boards will use data as a starting point, to align their standards in a subject. But the grade boundaries for each specification will be set by the senior examiners after they have reviewed the work produced by students.
- Grades for students sitting exams in autumn 2021 will be aligned with grading in summer 2021.
- When predicting grades for UCAS this year, Ofqual recommends that teachers use the 2019 standard as the basis, but that they give borderline students the benefit of any doubt.

- Organisations awarding VTQs are expected to take account of the approach for GCSEs and A levels when setting standards in their own qualifications.
- In 2023, Ofqual aims to return to results that are in line with those in pre-pandemic years.

Results days

Results for exams next year will return to their normal format, with AS and A levels being released on **18 August**, and GCSEs on **25 August**.

Contingency plans

- The government has launched a two-week consultation on what contingency arrangements should be put in place if GCSE, AS and A level exams cannot go ahead as planned in 2022.
- The government's proposal is essentially a tweaked TAG process, with tighter guidance on the evidence on which TAGs would be based. Specific suggestions include:
 - planned assessment points from which to gather evidence (e.g. once in each of the late autumn, spring and early summer terms)
 - the use, at these assessment points, of approaches which replicate exam board papers and exam conditions
- It is likely that the government will produce guidance on this process, once the consultation is complete and the final approach is agreed.
- Guidance on contingency arrangements for VTQs has already been published, as part of this package. This advises:
 - using TAGs for those VTQs which are most similar to GCSEs, AS and A Levels
 - delaying VTQs awards that require students to demonstrate occupational/professional competence, to ensure that students are able to demonstrate the full set of knowledge and skills required

Given the range of announcements and accompanying documents from Ofqual about examinations in 2022 released yesterday, we will need a little time to study what is being proposed and discuss the implications but in the meantime I hope the summary above is useful to you.