Guidance

Ofqual student guide to exams and assessments in 2026

This guide provides information about arrangements for qualifications regulated by Ofqual. It explains what you need to know before, during and after your exams and assessments.

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Applies to England

Documents

What you need to know before your exams (/government/publications/ofqual-student-guide-to-exams-and-assessments-in-2026/what-you-need-to-know-before-your-exams)

Ref: Ofqual/26/7294/1
HTML

What you should know during your exams and assessments (/government/publications/ofqual-student-guide-to-exams-and-assessments-in-2026/what-you-should-know-during-your-exams-and-assessments)

Ref: Ofqual/26/7294/2

HTML

What happens after you have taken your exams or assessments (/government/publications/ofqual-student-guide-to-exams-and-assessments-in-2026/what-happens-after-you-have-taken-your-exams-or-assessments)

Ref: Ofqual/26/7294/3
HTML

What to do if you think there is a mistake in your results (/government/publications/ofqual-student-guide-to-exams-and-assessments-in-2026/what-to-do-if-you-think-there-is-a-mistake-in-your-results)

Ref: Ofqual/26/7294/4
HTML

Useful contacts (/government/publications/ofqual-student-guide-to-exams-and-assessments-in-2026/useful-contacts)

Ref: Ofqual/26/7294/5
HTML

Details
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 and core mathematics
- T Levels (the core assessment and Occupational Specialism)
- Vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) taken alongside GCSEs and A levels in subjects such as engineering, health & social care and digital media

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.

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



Information for private candidates

This guide also applies to private candidates who may be home educated or retaking a qualification after leaving school or college. You may be studying with a distance learning provider, tutor, parent, or without any support. If you are a private candidate, you will need to register at a school or college to sit your exams. You can find more information on how to do this in this guide.

Understanding awarding organisations and exam boards

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 tell you who to speak to.



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