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GUIDANCE

Examinations and assessments: coronavirus

Information on examinations and assessments, including A levels, during the coronavirus pandemic.

Part of: [Further and higher education: coronavirus, Qualifications and Schools: coronavirus](#)

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What will happen to the November exam series?

For learners, in schools and in further education colleges there will be an opportunity to sit core GCSEs in English Language, Mathematics, Mathematics-Numeracy and Welsh Language in November 2020 as planned. Other qualifications will be available in January 2021 and as part of the summer 2021 series.

This is so that those learners due to take GCSEs will be able to continue with their education with the minimum possible disruption, under the circumstances. This also applies to learners due to sit their university entrance exams. [More information](#).

Further operational guidance to support centres (i.e. schools and colleges) on the safe running of the exam series will be published on Monday.

Will exams happen in summer 2021?

We recognise the way qualifications will be assessed this year is of concern to many, particularly given the continuing disruption we are seeing.

The Minister has made a clear commitment to make a statement on our approach to qualifications – including vocational qualifications - before the next half term, at the end of this month. This will allow time for preparation and implementation.

We want to listen to learners as we develop our approach, and ensure the approach we take has system-wide understanding. To achieve this, both Welsh Government and Qualifications Wales have established enhanced governance and stakeholder arrangements to oversee the programme of work for summer 2021. This will ensure our approach is robust and has fairness at its heart.

The independent review, we established to look at the key issues that have emerged from the arrangements for summer 2020 and to provide recommendations and considerations for approaches for 2021, will report its interim findings later this month.

The Minister has also asked Qualifications Wales to provide further advice about the options now available, given the continuing disruption, with a clear focus on deliverability and equality in any approach– this will be provided so that it can be considered alongside the findings of the independent review.

For learners in exam years, our overriding priority is to ensure that learners have the knowledge, skills and confidence to progress into the next phase of their education, training or employment. This is why alongside the considerations being made for qualifications, we are investing almost £50 million in measures to support learners in exam years. This includes the Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards programme, the A-level revision work and the further funding announced last week to develop GCSE resources and to provide a mentoring programme for all learners in exam years.

Will learners have to sit the Numeracy (Reasoning) paper test this year?

There will be no statutory paper-based tests in Wales in 2020/21. The online personalised assessments in Numeracy (Reasoning) are being trialled in 2020/21 and will become a statutory requirement from the 2021/22 academic year.

Will learners be required to take the online personalised assessments in Numeracy (Procedural) and Reading?

Yes. Personalised assessments in Numeracy (Procedural) and Reading are statutory in 2020/21. The assessments are available for schools to schedule when they consider it appropriate to do so.

Where learners have completed procedural numeracy assessments this year, schools will have access to feedback on their skills, age-standardised scores and progress reports.

Feedback reports for the reading assessments are also available. However, scores and progress reports will only be available once the majority of learners have taken the reading assessments. Given current circumstances, this will not be until the end of the summer term 2021.

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