



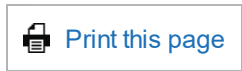
Guidance

Public health guidance to support exams for 2021 to 2022

Updated 20 January 2022

Contents

- [Preparing for and running exams](#)
- [Arrival and departure of candidates](#)
- [Candidate health](#)
- [Reasonable adjustments](#)



Updates since 2 January 2022 include:

- administrative updates
- removal of plan B temporary face covering arrangements from 27 January 2022

This guidance is for:

- school and college senior leaders
- heads of other types of exam centre offering vocational and technical qualification (VTQ) exams
- exams officers and other staff involved in exam delivery
- local authorities and multi-academy trusts (MATs)

It applies to all types of exam centre (“centre”), including:

- state-funded schools
- further education (FE), sixth form and specialist colleges
- independent training providers
- independent schools
- adult and community learning providers
- private exam centres

This guidance:

- applies specifically to the conduct of exams and assessments from September 2021 to August 2022 inclusive
- supplements and clarifies other existing guidance

It remains imperative that we try to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and this guidance describes the measures and actions that centres should take to minimise the risk of transmission during exams and other assessments taking place under exam conditions. You should read this alongside:

- [guidance on schools and colleges' responsibilities for exams](#)
- [guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infections](#)
- [actions for schools during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [actions for FE colleges and providers during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [guidance for special schools and other specialist settings](#)
- [safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#)
- [guidance on autumn series exam support service](#)

Preparing for and running exams

COVID-19 infection prevention measures

Centres should continue to implement the latest COVID-19 infection prevention measures. See the sector guidance relevant for your setting for the latest measures (links are at the top of this document).

The [contingency framework](#) describes the principles of managing local outbreaks of COVID-19 in education and childcare settings.

Arrival and departure of candidates

Candidates should read the [safer travel guidance](#) before planning their journey to their exam, especially where the exam is being held in a location to which the candidate does not normally travel.

Until 27 January, candidates must wear a face covering when travelling on public transport and should do so on dedicated transport to and from education settings and exam centres.

From 27 January, staff and candidates should follow wider advice on face

coverings outside of education settings, including on transport to and from education.

We no longer recommend that students are kept in distinct, separate groups ('bubbles'). This means that centres no longer need to make alternative arrangements to avoid mixing at lunch or whilst arriving for and leaving exams.

Until and including 26 January 2022 we do, however, recommend that face coverings should be worn in communal areas whilst arriving for and leaving exams (see the [face coverings](#) section for more information including where to find information on exceptions to this). From 27 January, face coverings are no longer advised whilst arriving for or leaving exams.

Cleaning

Centres should put in place and maintain an appropriate cleaning schedule for rooms where exams are being sat.

UKHSA has published guidance on the [cleaning of non-healthcare settings](#).

Set up of the exam room

Exam rooms should be set up in line with the [Joint Council of Qualifications \(JCQ\) guidance](#). Additional steps - for example greater spacing between desks - are no longer necessary.

Face coverings during exams

We would not ordinarily expect candidates and invigilators to wear face coverings during exams but they may wear them if they wish to do so and settings should be sensitive to the needs of individuals.

If your education setting operates commercial training environments, such as hairdressing, barbering and beauty salons, sports and fitness facilities or restaurants, they must comply with relevant sector guidance in working safely during COVID-19.

For the latest guidance on face coverings — see [face coverings, when to wear one, exemptions and how to make your own](#).

No candidate should be denied access to an exam on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering.

Invigilators

Your centre will have protocols in place for visitors and temporary staff. Invigilators can move between different centres. They should minimise contact and maintain as much distance as possible from other staff. Further guidance about supply and peripatetic staff is in the school workforce section of the [actions for schools during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

Up to and including 26 January 2022, we recommend that invigilators wear face coverings in communal areas when arriving for and leaving exams, but they do not need to wear them during exams. From 27 January, face coverings are no longer advised for invigilators, but they may wear them if they wish to do so.

Invigilators do not need to wear gloves when collecting exam scripts from candidates but should wash their hands thoroughly and more frequently than usual and particularly after handling exam papers. The [household testing programme](#) continues to support testing of other people connected with students, for example, exam invigilators.

Exam support service

We have provided an [exam support service](#) for the autumn exam series, including VTQ exams in autumn 2021 and spring 2022 which are being used as a resit opportunity for students awarded a TAG in 2021. This allows centres to claim for essential costs associated with running exams, including:

- additional venue space
- invigilation
- invigilator training
- exam fees charged by awarding organisations

Centres supporting students resitting GCSE English or maths under the condition of funding will be able to claim for costs relating to additional venue space and invigilation.

In addition, due to the public health situation we have extended the exam support service to centres running exams and assessments in January, February and March 2022 that are not being run as part of the autumn series (that is, are not a resit opportunity for students who received a teacher assessed grade in summer 2021), for costs related to additional invigilators required as a result of staff absences only.

Further information is available in the [exam support service guidance](#) and guidance on [how to make claims for exams](#) is available. Funding for the exam support service is only available for exams and assessments taking place up to 31 March 2022.

Candidate health

The [guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infections](#) applies to exam candidates in the same way as to other students.

Candidates with symptoms or who have tested positive

Centres must take swift action when they become aware that an exam candidate has symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19. See the sector guidance relevant for your setting for the latest guidance (links at top of this document).

Candidates with symptoms should stay at home and [arrange to have a test](#) to see if they have COVID-19.

Candidates who test positive or who have symptoms must follow public health advice on [when to self-isolate and what to do](#).

Candidates who are isolating in line with public health advice

If a candidate is required to isolate in line with public health guidance, the candidate must not attend exams during their period of isolation.

Information on requirements for isolation is available in [NHS Test and Trace: what to do if you are contacted](#) and in the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).

Candidates in quarantine following foreign travel must not attend exams during their period of quarantine. Families should follow [Travel to England from another country during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

What to do if a candidate cannot attend an exam

Where a candidate is unable to attend an exam, the centre should contact the awarding organisation on the candidate's behalf to determine the next available assessment opportunity or whether special consideration might be available.

Where a candidate has a negative test

Candidates should follow guidance about their [COVID-19 test result](#) when they receive a negative test.

Candidates who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19

Candidates who were previously considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to continue to follow the guidance contained in [coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread](#).

Reasonable adjustments

Educational establishments, as employers, have a duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010 which includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled staff. They also have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and students, to support them to access education successfully.

Centres must, under their Equality Act 2010 obligations, continue to make reasonable adjustments for candidates with special educational needs and disabilities.

Each awarding organisation will have their own policy on reasonable adjustments, with which we expect centres to be familiar.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) will need to ensure that the access arrangement is still appropriate, practicable and reasonable.

In the event of a candidate's circumstances changing, the SENCo may (where required) need to produce evidence and process an online application.

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