



9 December 2020

Dear Cambridge International students and families

Ref: Sitting exams in 2021 – what students need to know

This letter aims to explain how we will be running exams in 2021, given the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic in many parts of the world during 2020.

In recent weeks, we've been talking to schools worldwide to understand how they would like us to help them manage exams in March, June and November 2021, and what their students need.

Most schools told us they want Cambridge International to give students the opportunity to sit exams on the full syllabus, wherever it is possible.

However, we also know that the pandemic has impacted teaching and learning in many parts of the world. Therefore, we also need to manage exams in a way that is fair to everyone.

At the same time, schools want us to maintain robust and meaningful qualifications, and to ensure universities accept your grades.

Will students sit exams in 2021?

Cambridge International will provide exams for you, if your government says it's safe for your school to run them.

We will hold full exam series in March, June and November 2021. We have already published the final exam timetables for March and June 2021 exam series, so you can plan your revision.

We believe, and most schools believe, that exams remain the fairest way of assessing your achievements. We are strongly encouraging schools to enter students for exams where they can.

What is Cambridge International doing to adjust for the impact of the pandemic for 2021?

We know there has been a lot of disruption, so we are making exams as fair as possible for students and helping schools manage the impact of the pandemic.

This means that we have adjusted many aspects of the work students need to do, such as coursework, speaking tests, science practicals and more. Your school will know more about these adjustments.

Schools can also request exemptions from some exam components – such as speaking tests and science practicals – where teaching or assessment was disrupted by the pandemic because it required:

- working with others in a way that wasn't possible due to Covid-19
- access to facilities or equipment in a way that wasn't possible.

Schools will be able to apply for these exemptions in January 2021.

While the content and format of the exams will be the same as normal, the awarding standard of our exams in 2021 will align with the standard set for parallel qualifications in England. This means that you will not be at a disadvantage compared with students in England.

What if I can't sit exams in 2021 due to the pandemic?

If you can't sit your exams in 2021 due to the effects of the pandemic, your school will be able to advise you on your options. These could include deferring to a later series, if you have not completed enough of the course. However, if you have only missed some components of the exam, Cambridge International may be able to award a grade based on the exam components you have taken, in some circumstances.

Will universities still accept my grades?

Universities worldwide recognise Cambridge International qualifications because they are rigorous, reliable and prepare students well for university study. Our teams are working hard to ensure that universities in key countries understand our approach and will accept Cambridge students in the usual way.

We are very grateful to students and parents for your hard work and dedication throughout a challenging year.

If you have any further questions, please contact your school in the first instance, or check all the information on our website [here](#).

We wish you the very best at this challenging time.

Yours faithfully



Christine Özden

Chief Executive, Cambridge Assessment International Education