

UK NARIC Special Report

The Effects of COVID-19 on International Secondary Assessment

12th May 2020

Foreword

When UK NARIC first began tracking secondary school exam postponements and cancellations due to COVID-19 in March 2020, few could have predicted that by early April, 193 countries would have closed schools, impacting – at its peak – over 91% of enrolled learners¹.

On 17th March 2020, UK NARIC published its first issue of [Charting the impact of COVID-19 on UK admissions and recruitment](#), summarising school closures and the anticipated impact on examinations in what were then the top four countries for COVID-19 cases – China, Italy, Iran and South Korea.

We have continued to track closures, exam cancellations, postponements and alternative assessment announcements as they happen and it will remain an essential and up-to-date resource for those working in international education. As we begin to see some countries re-opening schools though, it is important to remember the inevitable impact of these closures on the secondary school exam systems worldwide.

This report – summarising the effects of COVID-19 on international secondary education and exams – is designed to provide a more in-depth briefing of the global approaches to upper secondary assessment during the pandemic to date, as well as insight into the implications for qualifications and grading in selected countries.

The report also reflects on the longer-term considerations: the impact of protracted school closures will be felt beyond this academic year, and we will continue to monitor the ways in and extent to which international assessment evolves accordingly.

In developing this special report, UK NARIC seeks to support both the work of those involved in international student recruitment and admissions, and fair recognition for the 2020 graduating cohorts and beyond.

Dr Cloud Bai-Yun
Head of UK NARIC

¹ UNESCO, 2020

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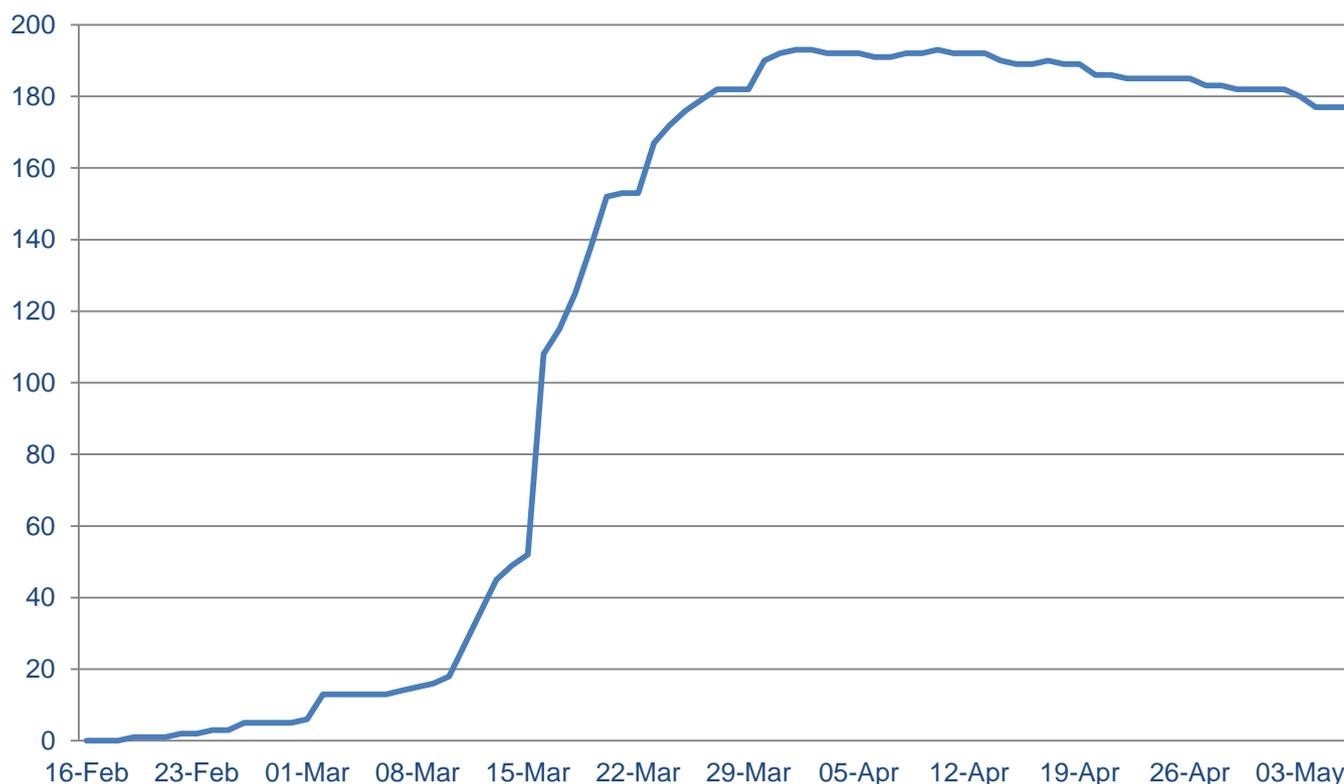
1. Introduction

The spread of Covid-19 across the world has had a significant impact on education at all levels. China closed schools in Hubei province in January to contain the spread of the virus, and national school closures followed on the 19th February 2020. Iran began to close schools and universities in February and Italy was the first country in Europe to do so in early March.

By 11th March, 39 countries had announced school closures. It was at this point that UK NARIC first began researching the impact on secondary school examinations on its blog, [Charting the impact of COVID-19 on UK admissions and recruitment](#) publishing the first issue on 17th March.

At this point, there were already 115 countries with school closures according to UNESCO's *Monitoring of COVID-19 Educational Disruption and Response*. The chart below illustrates the growing pace of school closures in mid- and late March, hitting a peak of 193 countries in April with school and university closures with 1,598,099,008 learners affected (91.30% of the world's total enrolled learners).

Figure 1: Number of countries with school closures²



Some countries have begun to re-open, but at the time of publication, schools in 177 countries remained closed.

² Based on UNESCO *Monitoring of COVID-19 Educational Disruption and Response*, correct as of 8th May 2020.

UK NARIC has continued to track developments in relation to secondary school assessment, updating the blog as and where updates are available, noting that the period between April and June is when many national examinations would ordinarily take place.

This Special Report intends to build upon the global coverage provided by the blog, capturing the different global approaches to secondary assessment and the potential implications of these for further and higher education admissions ([Section 2](#)). This section also presents an index of known announcements and guidance on particular countries

[Section 3](#) details the postponements published to date, along with dates anticipated for results, where known; while [Section 4](#) provides more detailed information on selected countries.

[Section 5](#) presents some potential considerations for assessment, and the evaluation of international secondary awards moving forward.

The report is made freely available to support the evaluation and fair recognition of all qualifications awarded or studied for during this time.

This publication is based on information available at the time of writing. If you have an update or question for us, please contact [UK NARIC](#). We will continue to develop and share further information as appropriate. Please follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) or contact [UK NARIC](#) for information.

2. Analysis of Global Approaches

Globally, there have been many different approaches to the administration of assessment at the upper secondary level during these uncertain times. These can be broadly categorised as follows:

- Exam postponements
- Exam cancellations
- Revised (adapted or alternative) assessments.

APPROACH 1: EXAM POSTPONEMENTS

Many countries have postponed examinations that were due to take place in April, May and June until later in the year. As well as being necessary to ensure students' safety during the pandemic, this allows students more time to prepare to allow for the disruption caused by school closures. In many countries, the postponement is also intended to enable re-opening or partial re-opening of schools before the examinations take place.

Postponing final examinations at upper secondary level will have an impact on admissions to higher education, particularly in cases where results will not be available in time to enable admissions decisions to be made before the start of the new academic year. In the majority of countries, the new examination timetables will enable results to be made available to students and institutions by August at the latest. However, there are a number of countries where the timing of rescheduled exams is likely to pose a challenge for higher education recruitment cycles.

In Europe, exams for the **Maltese Matriculation Certificate Examinations** have delayed until September. This arrangement has an impact for students intending to enter higher education in the autumn of 2020, whether in their home country or overseas. In **Vietnam**, the high school graduation exams will now take place in August, with implications for national and international universities admitting Vietnamese students.

In addition, there are a number of countries where dates have not yet been confirmed for postponed exams, including **India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Nigeria** and **Ghana**. In India, some exams were in progress when the country went into lockdown on 24th March and all of the remaining exams were postponed. Decisions on if / when the exams will take place will be taken by the relevant exam boards. To date, only the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has announced new dates for the delayed examinations. The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) has also postponed exams indefinitely, so it is not yet clear when the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) will take place.

APPROACH 2: EXAM CANCELLATIONS

In some countries, examinations have been cancelled and students' performance will be based on performance in assessments undertaken to date.

In some education systems, students are assessed throughout their studies and the grades achieved through continuous or internal assessment always contribute to their final grade. Authorities in some countries have opted to base the final grade entirely on these elements this year. This approach has been taken in the **Netherlands**, where both school and national examinations contribute to the final grade for the *Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs (VWO)*; this year grades will be based solely on school assessment. Similarly, in **Norway**, written and oral examinations for upper secondary students have been cancelled. The *Vitnemål for videregående opplæring* (Leaving Certificate from Upper Secondary School)

will be awarded based on student performance in coursework and internal assessments throughout the year. **Slovakia** has also cancelled external *Matura* examinations.

Although students will still receive certificates and grades in these cases, there may still be an impact on admissions where universities would usually have given particular consideration to results achieved in external national examinations as part of the admissions decision making process.

In other systems, the grade achieved is based solely or primarily on performance in examinations at the end of the course. In these instances, the cancellation of examinations has led to a range of other evidence being used to inform the grades awarded to students, in line with national policy. School qualifications in the **UK** (A level, AS level, GCSE, Scottish National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher) are assessed through external examinations, with externally marked or moderated coursework contributing to the final grade in a small number of subjects. Following the decision to cancel all examinations, the relevant authorities across the UK have developed a process for awarding these qualifications based on estimated grades submitted by schools and colleges. The *Baccalauréat* in **France** will be awarded on the basis of continuous assessment conducted by schools throughout the programme of study, as the final examinations for all streams (*général, technologique and professionnelle*) have been cancelled.

Since the beginning of May, examinations have also been cancelled for the **Irish Leaving Certificate** and the **Pakistani Higher Secondary School Certificate**. Students in Ireland will receive calculated grades based on teacher assessment. Students in Pakistan will be able to use the results of examinations taken in grade 11 to progress onto higher education within their home country.

To date, the number of countries that have taken the decision to cancel national examinations is fairly small. For qualifications for which the final grade usually comprises an element of internal or continuous assessment, the weighting of this component can be increased to compensate for the cancellation of external examinations. However, for qualifications for which external examinations are the sole means of assessment, it is necessary to develop an alternative process for awarding grades, ensuring that outcomes reflect students' ability and performance in a fair way and will enable progression onto higher education or entry into employment.

APPROACH 3: ADAPTED OR ALTERNATIVE EXAMINATIONS

Many countries have made changes to the examination requirements to ensure that students are able to take their examinations safely and to mitigate for the disruption to studies.

Reduced number of examinations

In a number of countries, the number of examinations that students are required to take has been reduced. In many cases where students are usually required to sit oral examinations, these have been cancelled. An exception is **Italy**, where only an oral examination will be completed.

Country	Qualification	2020 format
Austria	<i>Reifeprüfung / Matura</i>	Written examinations in three subjects No oral examinations.
Hungary	<i>Érettségi Bizonyítvány (Secondary Education Graduation Certificate)</i>	Written examinations only.
Israel	Matriculation Certificate	Examinations in five subjects.
Italy	<i>Esame di Stato</i>	Oral examination only.
Poland	<i>Świadectwo Dojrzałości (Certificate of Maturity)</i>	Written examinations only.

In **Croatia**, examinations for compulsory subjects will go ahead between 8th and 29th June. A decision has not been taken on whether examinations will be held for optional subjects yet; the results of these subjects are considered for admission to higher education.

Optional examinations

In order to reduce the number of students sitting examinations in this summer's session, an approach adopted in a small number of countries has been to make examinations optional or only required for certain students.

In **Portugal**, it has been decided that the *Diploma Nível Secundário de Educação / Certificado Nível Secundário de Educação* can be awarded on the basis of school assessment and students will not be required to take national examinations. The examinations will only be taken by students intending to enter higher education.

In **Estonia**, the state examinations (*Riigieksamid*) will be optional and will not be required to access higher education.

Adapted examinations

An online test has been developed for the **Advanced Placement (AP)**, a US qualification that is taken by students in many different countries. The format of the examination has been adapted to enable it to be conducted online.

The Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) intends to offer examinations for its qualifications, including the **Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE)** in a revised format to ensure that results for postponed examinations can be marked within a reduced timeframe.

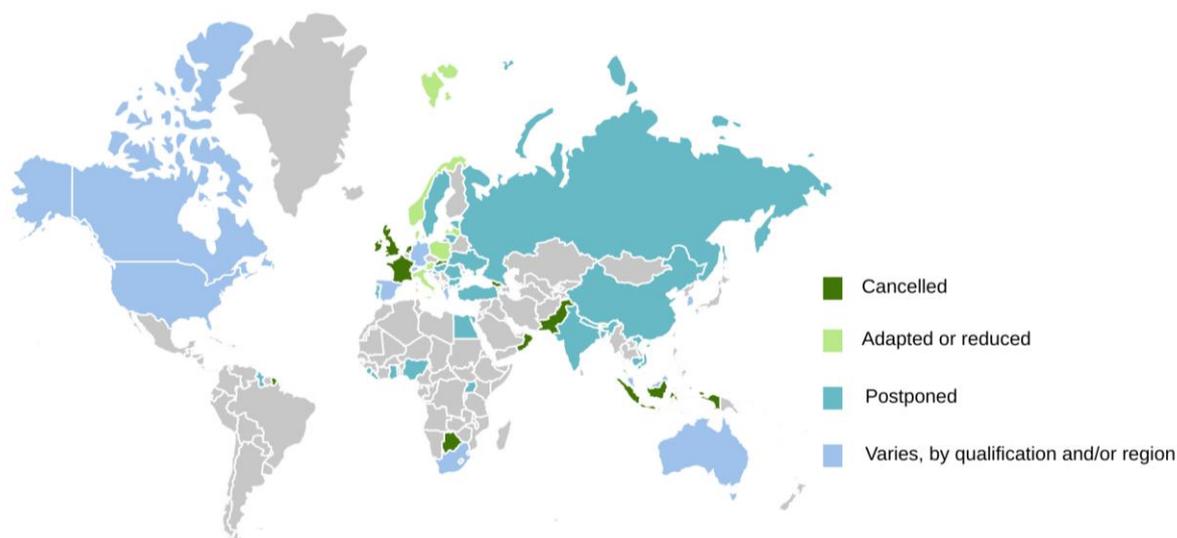
The images below present an interesting contrast of the school closures (Figure 2) and announcements in relation to examinations (Figure 3). Countries still included in grey in Figure 3 may fall into the following categories:

- Examinations for the current cohort had taken place before school closures, as is the case in countries like the **Philippines**
- Examinations are still some time away, such as in **New Zealand** where examinations are scheduled for November³
- To UK NARIC’s knowledge, no formal announcements have been made yet. In many cases, the timing, format and volume of the exam will depend on the date of re-opening of schools.

Figure 2: Global map of school closures



Figure 3: UK NARIC’s summary of global responses to date in relation to upper secondary assessment



³ In the case of New Zealand, a large number of examinations will also be available digitally.

The table below provides an index of known approaches to academic upper secondary awards, as available at the time of publication:

Country	Qualification	Status
Albania	<i>Diplomë e Maturës Shtetërore</i>	No change.
Anguilla	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	Postponed. See Section 4 – The Caribbean.
Antigua and Barbuda	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	Postponed. See Section 4 – The Caribbean.
Armenia	Միջնակարգ (ընդհանուր) կրթության ատեստատ (Certificate of Secondary General Education)	Cancelled.
	ՎԿԱՅԱԳԻՐ (Certificate of Unified Examination)	Postponed.
Australia	Senior Secondary Certificate of Education – exact titles vary by state/territory	Varies. Approaches may vary by state/territory. It was announced by the Minister of Education that all students would receive a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education in 2020, but states have yet to announce decisions on individual exams. On 27 th April, the Australasian Conference on Tertiary Admissions Centres announced that the ATAR would be calculated in all states, though state-specific approaches and timelines may vary and it is important to refer to the individual Tertiary Admissions Centre.
	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank	
Austria	<i>Reifeprüfung / Matura</i>	Reduced. Written examinations in 3 subjects. No oral examinations.
Bahrain	الإعانة ال ثانوية شهادة (General Secondary Education Certificate)	Cancelled.
Bangladesh	Higher Secondary Certificate	Postponed.
Barbados	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	Postponed. See Section 4 – The Caribbean.
Belize	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	Postponed. See Section 4 – The Caribbean.
Bhutan	Bhutan Higher Secondary Education Certificate	To be confirmed as reduced or cancelled, based on school reopening dates. For example, if schools open after May, examinations will be based on a reduced, prioritised curriculum, but if schools do not open until after August, there will be no examinations.

Country	Qualification	Status
Botswana	Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education	Cancelled. External examinations are delivered in collaboration with Cambridge Assessment International Education.
British Virgin Islands, the	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	Postponed. See Section 4 – The Caribbean .
Brunei	Brunei / Cambridge GCE A Level	Cancelled.
Bulgaria	Диплома за средно образование (Diploma of Completed Secondary Education)	Postponed.
Cambodia	Diploma of Upper Secondary Education	Postponed.
Canada	High School Diploma (exact titles vary by province)	Varies – a number of provincial Ministries of Education have announced the cancellation of Grade 12 examinations.
Cayman Islands	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	Postponed. See Section 4 – The Caribbean .
China	高中毕业证书 (Senior Secondary School Graduation Certificate)	Postponed.
	普通高等学校招生全国统一考试 (高考) (Gaokao – National College Entrance Examination (NCEE))	Postponed.
Croatia	<i>Svjedodžba o maturi / Svjedodžba o državnoj maturi / Potvrda o položenim ispitima državne mature</i> (Matura Certificate / State Matura Certificate)	Compulsory subjects – postponed. Optional subjects – TBC.
Cyprus	<i>Απολυτήριο Λυκείου</i> (<i>Apolytírio Lykeíou</i> - Upper Secondary School Leaving Certificate)	Postponed.
Czech Republic, the	<i>Vysvědčení o maturitní zkoušce</i> (Secondary School Leaving Certificate)	Likely to be postponed (dates TBC).
Denmark	<i>Bevis for Højere Forberedelseseksamen</i> (Higher Preparatory Examination Certificate)	Reduced.
Dominica	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	Postponed. See Section 4 – The Caribbean .
Egypt	شهادة الدراسة الثانوية العامة (Certificate of General Secondary Education)	Postponed. Examinations to be held in June / July.
Estonia	<i>Gümnaasiumi lõputunnistus with the Riigieksamitunnistus</i> (Secondary School Leaving Certificate with the State Examination Certificate)	Postponed and reduced.

Country	Qualification	Status
Finland	<i>Ylioppilastutkintotodistus / Studentexamensbetyg</i> (Matriculation Examination)	No change.
France	<i>Diplôme du baccalauréat général</i>	Cancelled.
Gambia, the	West African Senior School Certificate	Postponed.
Georgia	სრული ზოგადი განათლების ატესტატი (General Education Diploma)	Cancelled.
	Unified National Examinations	TBC.
Germany	<i>Zeugnis der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife / Abitur</i>	No change / postponed (varies by state).
Ghana	West African Senior School Certificate Examination	Postponed.
Greece	ΑΠΟΛΥΤΗΡΙΟ ΓΕΝΙΚΟΥ ΛΥΚΕΙΟΥ (Upper Secondary School Leaving Certificate)	Cancelled.
	Panhellenic Examinations	Postponed.
Grenada	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	Postponed. See Section 4 – The Caribbean
Guyana	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	Postponed. See Section 4 – The Caribbean
Hong Kong	Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education	Postponed. Oral examinations have been cancelled.
Hungary	<i>Érettségi Bizonyítvány</i> (Secondary Education Graduation Certificate). Also known as: Matura	Written examinations only.
India	Standard 12 (exact titles vary by board)	Varies by board. Examinations scheduled for late March onwards have been postponed.
Indonesia	<i>Ijazah - Sekolah Menengah Atas / Madrasah Aliyah (SMA / MA)</i> (Certificate of Graduation from Academic / Islamic Secondary School)	Final national examinations (<i>Ujian Nasional</i>) cancelled.
International	International AS & A Levels	Cancelled. See Section 4 – International GCSEs, AS and A Levels.
	International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme	Cancelled.
Ireland	Leaving Certificate	Cancelled.
Israel	בגרות תעודת (Matriculation Certificate). Also known as: 'Te'udat Bagrut' or 'Bagrut'.	Reduced. Examinations in 5 subjects.
Italy	<i>Diploma di Esame di Stato</i>	Reduced. Oral examination only

Country	Qualification	Status
Jamaica	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	Postponed. See Section 4 – The Caribbean.
Kenya	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education	No changes as yet – the examinations are currently scheduled to take place in October and November.
Kuwait	شهادة الدراسة الثانوية العامة (General Secondary Education Certificate)	Postponed. Examinations will take place in August.
Latvia	Atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību (Certificate of General Secondary Education)	Adapted.
Liberia	Senior School Certificate	Postponed.
Lithuania	<i>Brandos Atestatas</i> (Secondary School Leaving Certificate)	Postponed.
Malaysia	STPM (<i>Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia</i>) (Malaysia Certificate of Education)	Postponed.
	UEC (Unified Examination Certificate) Senior Middle Level	Postponed. Examinations will take place in December 2020.
	<i>Matrikulasi</i> (Matriculation Certificate)	Cancelled.
Malta	Matriculation Certificate Examination	Postponed. See Section 4 – Malta
Montserrat	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	Postponed. See Section 4 – The Caribbean.
Morocco	شهادة البكالوريا (Attestation du Baccalauréat)	No announcement as yet. Examinations are due to take place at the beginning of June.
Namibia	Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate	No announcements as yet. Examinations are typically held in November.
Nepal	School Leaving Certificate Examination (Grade XI & XII)	Postponed.
Netherlands, the	<i>Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs</i> (HAVO) diploma	Cancelled.
	<i>Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs</i> (VWO)	Cancelled.
New Zealand	National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 3	No change as yet – exams are scheduled for November currently.
Nigeria	Senior School Certificate	Postponed.
	West African Senior School Certificate	Postponed.
Norway	<i>Vitnemål for videregående opplæring</i> (Leaving Certificate from Upper Secondary School)	Cancelled.
Oman	دبلوم التعليم العام (General Education Diploma)	Cancelled.

Country	Qualification	Status
Pakistan	Intermediate / Higher Secondary Certificate	Cancelled. See Section 4 – Pakistan .
Philippines	Senior High School Certificate / Diploma	Exams have already taken place for the current academic year.
Poland	<i>Świadectwo Dojrzałości</i> (Certificate of Maturity)	Postponed and reduced. Written examinations only.
Portugal	<i>Diploma Nível Secundário de Educação / Certificado Nível Secundário de Educação</i>	Postponed but possible to graduate on internal assessment alone. Students can choose to take exams at a later date.
Qatar	شهادة ال ثانوية العامة (General Secondary Education Certificate)	No change.
Romania	<i>Diplomă de Bacalaureat</i>	Postponed.
Russia	Единый государственный экзамен, ЕГЭ (Unified State Examination)	Postponed. The examination should now take place on 8 th June.
Sierra Leone	West African Senior School Certificate	Postponed.
Singapore	Singapore GCE A level	O, N and A Level exams take place in October. There are likely to be some adjustments, with topics typically taught at the end of the year omitted from the exam. Mid-year exams have been postponed and/or cancelled depending on the subject, and some coursework deadlines have been extended.
Slovakia	<i>Vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške</i> (Secondary School Leaving Certificate)	Cancelled. External Matura exams have been cancelled. Internal Matura grades awarded by schools will be based on continuous assessment. Internal exams will be held in late May / early June for students who wish to improve their grade.
Slovenia	<i>Aturitetno spričevalo</i> (Matura Certificate) Also known as: <i>Splošna Matura</i> (General Matura Certificate) / <i>Spričevalo o splošni maturi</i> (Certificate of General Matura Examination)	Postponed.
South Africa	National Senior Certificate	May/June examination session for re-sits have been postponed. The main examination session is ordinarily held in November.
South Korea	고등학교 졸업증명서 / 고등학교 졸업장 (High School Diploma / High School Certificate of Graduation)	No change (no external national examinations).
	대학수학능력시험 (College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) Also known as: 수능 (Suneung)	Postponed.

Country	Qualification	Status
Spain	<i>Título de Bachiller</i>	No change (no external national examinations).
	<i>Evaluación de Acceso a la Universidad (EvAU)</i> (university entrance exam)	Postponed. Examination will take place between 22 nd June and 10 th July.
Sri Lanka	Sri Lankan General Certificate of Education (Advanced level)	No change as yet.
St Kitts and Nevis	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	Postponed. See Section 4 – The Caribbean
St Lucia	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	Postponed. See Section 4 – The Caribbean
St Vincent and the Grenadines	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	Postponed. See Section 4 – The Caribbean .
Sweden	<i>Avgångsbetyg / Slutbetyg från Gymnasieskola</i> (Upper Secondary School Leaving Certificate)	Postponed.
	<i>Högskoleförberedande Examen</i> (Higher Education Preparatory Diploma)	Postponed.
Switzerland	<i>Maturitätszeugnis / Certificat de maturité / Attestato di maturità</i>	Varies by canton. Cancelled in some cantons.
Trinidad and Tobago	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	Postponed. See Section 4 – The Caribbean .
Turkey	<i>Yükseköğretim Kurumları Sınavı (YKS)</i> (university entrance exam)	Postponed. The examination will be held on 25-26 th July.
Turks and Caicos Islands	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination	Postponed. See Section 4 – The Caribbean .
Uganda	Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education	Possibly postponed – registration for the 2020 exams was due to start on 1 st April but has been postponed until schools reopen.
Ukraine	Свідоцтво про здобуття повної загальної (Certificate of Complete General Secondary Education)	Postponed.
	Сертифікат зовнішнього незалежного оцінювання (Certificate of Independent External Examination)	Postponed. Examinations will take place on 25th June – 17th July or 17th August – 4th September, depending when schools are able to reopen.
United Kingdom, the	General Certificate of Education Advanced (GCE A) Levels	Cancelled.
United States of	ACT	Postponed. See Section 4 – The USA .

Country	Qualification	Status
America, the	Advanced Placement (AP)	Adapted. See Section 4 – The USA .
	SAT	Postponed. See Section 4 – The USA .
Vietnam	<i>Bằng Tốt Nghiệp Trung Học Phổ Thông (THPT)</i> (Senior Secondary School Graduation Diploma)	Postponed.
Zambia	School Certificate / General Certificate of Education	No announcement as yet. Examinations are typically scheduled in November.
Zimbabwe	A Levels	No announcement as yet – examinations are scheduled for late May and June, with a sitting also operating in November as usual.

3. Postponements by Region

The following tables provide details of exams that have been postponed. They include information on when exams were originally due to take place and when results are usually issued, as well as the re-arranged dates for this year (where these have been announced) and an indication of when results will be available.

Europe

Country	Examination	Awarding body	Original examination dates	New examination dates	Original results date	New results date
Austria	<i>Reifeprüfung / Matura</i>	University preparatory schools (<i>Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schulen</i>)	May 2020	25 th May - 3 rd June 2020	Mid-June 2020	Results and certificates issued by the end of June.
Bulgaria	Диплома за средно образование (Diploma of Completed Secondary Education) - State Matriculation Examinations (<i>Държавни зрелостни изпити - Dŭzhavni zrelostni izpiti</i>)	Ministry of Education and Science	20 th - 29 th May 2020	1 st - 4 th June 2020	12 th June 2020	26 th June 2020
Croatia	<i>Svjedodžba o maturi / Svjedodžba o državnoj maturi / Potvrda o položenim ispitima državne mature</i> (Matura Certificate / State Matura Certificate)	National Centre for External Evaluation of Education	May / June 2020	Compulsory subjects: 8 th - 29 th June Optional subjects: TBC	13 th July 2020	TBC

Czech Republic	<i>Vysvědčení o maturitní zkoušce</i> (Secondary School Leaving Certificate)	<i>Centrum pro zjišťování výsledků vzdělávání</i> (CERMAT)	May 2020	June 2020 (if students are able to return to school by 1 st June)	May / June 2020	TBC
Cyprus	Panyprian Examinations (Παγκύπριες Εξετάσεις)	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth	May / June 2020	June (date TBC)	June 2020	Late June / early July
Estonia	<i>Riigeksamid</i> (State examinations)	Foundation Innove	April / May 2020	Late May / early June	May / June 2020	No later than 30 th June
Germany	<i>Zeugnis der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife / Abitur</i>	Individual schools	April / May 2020 (written exams) May / June 2020 (oral exams) Exact dates vary by state.	May 2020 (written exams) Late May / June (oral exams) Exact dates vary by state.	June / July 2020, depending on the state.	Between the end of June and end of July, depending on the state.
Greece	Panhellenic Examinations (Πανελλαδικές Εξετάσεις)	Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs	May 2020	June / July 2020	June / July 2020	TBC
Malta	Matriculation Certificate Examination	MATSEC Examinations Board	May 2020	31 st August - 10 th October 2020	15 th July 2020	6 th November 2020
Poland	<i>Świadectwo Dojrzałości</i> (Certificate of Maturity)	Central Examination Board / regional examination boards	May 2020	Between 8 th and 29 th June (written exams only)	July 2020	By 11 th August
Portugal	<i>Diploma Nível Secundário de Educação / Certificado Nível Secundário de Educação</i>	<i>Ministério da Educação</i>	June 2020	July (for higher education admission only; diploma can be awarded on basis of school assessment)	July 2020	TBC
Romania	<i>Diplomă de Bacalaureat</i>	Ministry of National Education	June 2020	From 22 nd June 2020	July 2020	TBC

Asia

Country	Examination	Awarding body	Original examination dates	New examination dates	Original results date	New results date
Bangladesh	Higher Secondary Certificate	Boards of intermediate and secondary education	1 st April - 13 th May 2020	TBC	Mid-July 2020	TBC
China	普通高等学校招生全国统一考试 (高考) (National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) (<i>Gaokao</i>))	Provincial examinations authorities	7 th - 8 th June 2020	7 th - 8 th July 2020	Late June 2020	Late July 2020
Hong Kong	Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE)	Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA)	27 th March - 7 th April 2020	24 th April – 27 th May 2020	8 th July 2020	22 nd July 2020
India	Indian School Certificate	Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE)	3 rd February - 31 st March 2020	TBC - a period of 6-8 days to be announced 8 days in advance.	May 2020	TBC
	All India Senior School Certificate Examination / Delhi Senior School Certificate Examination	Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)	22 nd February - 30 th March 2020	1 st – 15 th July 2020	May 2020	Late August (TBC)
	Senior Secondary School Examination	National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)	11 th March - 24 th April 2020	TBC	May 2020	TBC
	Higher Secondary School Certificate Examination	Chhattisgarh Board of Secondary Education	March / April 2020 (some exams took place prior to lockdown)	TBC	June 2020	TBC
	Senior Secondary (12th Class) Examination Certificate	Punjab School Education Board	3 rd – 18 th April	TBC	June 2020	TBC
	Higher Secondary Examination Certificate	Government of Kerala Board of Higher Secondary Examinations	April 2020	21 st - 29 th May 2020	June 2020	TBC

Malaysia	STPM (<i>Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia</i>) (Malaysia Higher School Certificate)	Malaysian Examinations Council	Semester 2: March 2020 Semester 3: November 2020	Semester 2: August 2020 Semester 3: first quarter 2021	Semester 2: August 2020 Semester 3: February 2021	Semester 2: TBC Semester 3: TBC
Nepal	Secondary Education Examination (SEE)	National Examinations Board (NEB)	19 th March - 30 th March 2020	TBC	May 2020	TBC
South Korea	대학수학능력시험 (College Scholastic Ability Test) (CSAT)	Korea Institute of Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE - 한국교육과정평가원)	19 th November 2020	3 rd December 2020	Early December	Late December
Vietnam	<i>Bằng Tốt Nghiệp Trung Học Phổ Thông (THPT)</i> (Senior Secondary School Graduation Diploma)	Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)	June 2020	7 th - 11 th August 2020	July 2020	TBC

Africa

Country	Examination	Awarding body	Original examination dates	New examination dates	Original results date	New results date
Gambia	West African Senior School Certificate Examination	West African Examinations Council (WAEC)	June 2020	TBC	Late July / August	TBC
Ghana			June 2020	TBC	Late July / August	TBC
Liberia			June 2020	TBC	Late July / August	TBC
Nigeria	Senior School Certificate	National Examinations Council (NECO)	June 2020	TBC	Late July / August	TBC
	West African Senior School Certificate Examination	WAEC	June 2020	TBC	Late July / August	TBC
Sierra Leone	West African Senior School Certificate Examination	WAEC	June 2020	TBC	Late July / August	TBC

Americas

Country	Examination	Awarding body	Original examination dates	New examination dates	Original results date	New results date
Anguilla	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE)	Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC)	May / June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	TBC
Antigua and Barbuda						
Barbados						
Belize						
British Virgin Islands						
Cayman Islands						
Dominica						
Grenada						
Guyana						
Jamaica						
Montserrat						
St. Kitts and Nevis						
St. Lucia						
St. Vincent and the Grenadines						
Trinidad and Tobago						
Turks and Caicos Islands						
USA	ACT	ACT	4 th April 2020	13 th June 2020	14 th April - 29 th May 2020	23 rd June - 7 th August 2020

4. Spotlight on Assessment Changes in Selected Countries

This section is designed to focus in on the assessment changes in a few select countries, most typically where the examinations – at least in their typical format – have been cancelled and alternative approaches to assessment and calculating grades will be adopted. UK NARIC will produce further spotlight files for its members, providing guidance on approaches in key countries.

United Kingdom

The principal secondary school examinations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are the GCSEs (lower secondary), AS and A levels (upper secondary) and fall under three different regulators:

- The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)
- Qualifications Wales
- The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA).

The qualifications have, over the last few years, undergone significant reform, with the aim of enhancing the content and ensuring that non-exam assessment is used *only* where necessary to test specific skills. The qualifications regulated across England, Wales and Northern Ireland share many common features, namely that:

- Assessment is primarily through examination, although the actual amount of non-exam assessment differs by subject and by regulator
- Content requirements and assessment objectives are similar across the three jurisdictions
- AS levels are graded on an A-E scale, and A levels on an A*-E scale.

There are some differences in the qualifications regulated in each of the three jurisdictions, specifically:

- Ofqual-regulated secondary qualifications are all linear, where exams are taken at the end of the course. Qualifications regulated by Qualifications Wales and CEA may be linear or modular.
- GCSEs regulated by Ofqual are graded 9-1 whilst those regulated by Qualifications Wales and CEA are graded A*-G
- AS Levels contribute to the full A Level for qualifications in Wales and Northern Ireland, but not in England.

In Scotland, students looking to access higher education take Highers and Advanced Highers. Students can also opt to take the Scottish Baccalaureate, which is a group qualification made up of one Higher, two Advanced Highers and an interdisciplinary project. Highers and Advanced Highers are graded A-D.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, all secondary examinations are cancelled across all four jurisdictions. More information on how grades will be calculated for the 2020 graduating cohorts can be found in the relevant sub-sections below.

An additional section is provided on the [International GCSEs, AS and A Levels](#).

England – A levels, AS levels and GCSEs

A level, AS level and GCSE qualifications in England are regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) and awarded by the following examination boards: AQA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC Eduqas.

How are the qualifications normally assessed? What has changed for 2020?

Final examinations usually account for all, or a high proportion of, the student's final grade, depending on the subject. Some subjects also have a component of non-examination assessment, such as coursework.

All A level, AS level and GCSE examinations due to take place in May and June this year have been cancelled.

Ofqual has set out details of how students will be awarded grades for these qualifications in England. Schools and colleges will provide centre assessment grades for each subject. This grade should reflect the grade that the student would most likely have achieved if they had sat the examinations.

The school or college should use a variety of evidence to inform this grade, including:

- Work completed in class
- Any non-examination assessment, e.g. coursework (complete or incomplete)
- Results of assignments
- Results of mock examinations
- Previous examination results (e.g. AS level results for A level students)
- Any other records of student performance over the course of study.

Schools and colleges will also submit the rank order of students within each grade for each subject, e.g. if a school has 10 students with a centre assessment grade of 5 in GCSE maths, they should be ranked 1-10, where 1 is the most secure/highest attaining student. This ranking information will be used by Ofqual for the statistical standardisation of grading and will not be shared with students.

When will results be available?

A level and AS level results will be released on 13th August 2020 and GCSE results will be released on 20th August. Schools and colleges will not share centre assessment grades with students before this date.

What if students wish to appeal their results?

Students who feel that their results in a particular subject do not reflect their ability will be able to retake the exams in that subject in the autumn examination session. They will be able to use the higher of the two grades for progression.

Wales – A levels, AS levels and GCSEs

In Wales, these qualifications are awarded by WJEC and regulated by Qualifications Wales.

How are the qualifications normally assessed? What has changed for 2020?

All A level, AS level and GCSE examinations due to take place in May and June this year have been cancelled.

Final examinations usually account for all, or a high proportion of, the student's final grade, depending on the subject. Some subjects also have a component of non-exam assessment, such as coursework. In Wales, AS levels make up the first half of an A level course, so AS level grades also count towards the final A level grade, along with A2 units taken in the second year.

Qualifications Wales have set out details of how students will be awarded grades for these qualifications in Wales, in the absence of examinations

Schools and colleges will provide WJEC with centre assessment grades for each subject. This grade should reflect the grade that the student would most likely have achieved if they had sat the examinations. The school or college will use a variety of evidence to inform this grade, including work completed to date and standardised teacher assessment grades.

Schools and colleges will also submit the rank order of students within each grade for each subject, e.g. if a school has 10 students with a centre assessment grade of 5 in GCSE maths, they should be ranked 1-10, where 1 is the most secure/highest attaining student. This ranking information will be used for the statistical standardisation of grading and will not be shared with students.

AS level grades awarded in 2020 will not count towards A level grades awarded in 2021. Students taking AS levels in 2020 will have two options for calculating their A level grades in 2021:

- Option 1: A level grade based on A2 units only
- Option 2: Sit AS and A2 units in 2021 (results will be compared with the grade awarded under Option 1 and students will receive the higher of the two grades).

When will results be available?

A level and AS level results will be released on 13th August 2020 and GCSE results will be released on 20th August. Schools and colleges will not share centre assessment grades with students before this date.

Northern Ireland – A levels, AS levels and GCSEs

In Northern Ireland, these qualifications are awarded by the CCEA.

How are the qualifications normally assessed? What has changed for 2020?

All A level, AS level and GCSE examinations due to take place in May and June this year have been cancelled.

Final examinations usually account for all, or a high proportion of, the student's final grade, depending on the subject. Some subjects also have a component of non-examination assessment, such as coursework. In Northern Ireland, AS levels make up the first half of an A level course, so AS level grades also count (40%) towards the final A level grade, along with A2 units taken in the second year.

CCEA has set out details of how students will be awarded grades for these qualifications in Northern Ireland.

Schools and colleges will provide centre assessment grades for each subject. This grade should reflect the grade that the student would most likely have achieved if they had sat the examinations. The school or college will use a variety of evidence to inform this grade, including work completed to date and standardised teacher assessment grades.

Schools and colleges will also submit the rank order of students within each grade for each subject, e.g. if a school has 10 students with a centre assessment grade of 5 in GCSE maths, they should be ranked 1-10, where 1 is the most secure/highest attaining student. This ranking information will be used for the statistical standardisation of grading and will not be shared with students.

AS level grades awarded in 2020 will not count towards A level grades awarded in 2021.

Students taking AS levels in 2020 will have two options for calculating their A level grades in 2021:

- Option 1: A level grade based on A2 units only
- Option 2: Sit AS and A2 units in 2021 (results will be compared with the grade awarded under Option 1 and student will receive the higher of the two grades).

When will results be available?

A level and AS level results will be released on 13th August 2020 and GCSE results will be released on 20th August. Schools and colleges will not share centre assessment grades with students before this date.

Scotland – National 5, Highers and Advanced Highers

These qualifications are awarded by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

How are the qualifications normally assessed? What has changed for 2020?

Final grades are usually based on final examinations and externally marked coursework. All examinations for National 5, Highers and Advanced Highers have been cancelled for 2020 though.

In 2020, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications will be awarded on the basis of estimated grades. Teachers and lecturers will submit estimated grades to SQA, based on student performance throughout the course. Schools and colleges will also submit an estimated band within the grade (upper, middle or lower) and rank order for students within each grade band for each subject. These grades will then be moderated by SQA.

Coursework will not be marked and will not count towards the final grade. Any coursework that has already been completed by students may be used by teachers to help determine the student's estimated grade.

When will results be available?

Results will be issued to students by 4th August.

International A levels, AS levels and GCSEs

How are the qualifications normally assessed? What has changed for 2020?

All examinations for International A level, AS level and GCSE qualifications have been cancelled. These qualifications are offered by Cambridge Assessment International Education, Oxford International AQA Examinations and Pearson for the international market.

International A levels, AS levels and GCSEs are not regulated by Ofqual, but awarding bodies will adopt a similar approach to awarding grades to that which has been outlined in Ofqual guidance for qualifications awarded in England.

How will grades be awarded without examinations?

Teachers will use a range of evidence to submit a predicted grade for each student in every subject and will also rank students within each grade. This information will be submitted to the awarding body, which will carry out a standardisation process and confirm final grades.

In the event that a candidate is not happy with their result, they will have the option to sit exams in a later examination series, currently envisaged as November 2020 or June 2021 in the case of Cambridge Assessment International Examinations.

For Pearson, the exact dates for Autumn 2020 International GCSEs, AS and A level exams are still to be confirmed. There will be an additional series of International GCSE exams in January 2021 for selected maths and science programmes.

When will results be available?

A level and AS level results will be released on 13th August 2020 and GCSE results will be released on 20th August. Schools and colleges will not share centre assessment grades with students before this date.

France

Baccalauréat

Entry to higher education in France is typically based on the *Diplôme du baccalauréat*, a three-year upper secondary qualification finishing after 12 years' of schooling.

This may lead to the title of the *Diplôme du baccalauréat général*. An international option (the *Option internationale du baccalauréat*) is also available, which is mostly followed by students with foreign language proficiency. They will take some subjects through the medium of French, and others through a foreign language.

A technical stream of the *Baccalauréat* is also available.

All students achieving a mark of 10/20 in the *Baccalauréat* are able to access university studies.

How are the qualifications normally assessed? What has changed for 2020?

Examinations are centrally organised and administered by the *Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Jeunesse*. This includes examinations taken in the penultimate and final years.

For this academic year, all final *Baccalauréat* examinations have been cancelled for each of the three streams (*général, technologique and professionnelle*).

Students' grades will be based on continuous assessment throughout their final year: in this case, on performance throughout the 2019-2020 academic year. Grades achieved in the first year exams will still count towards the final grade. Assessments carried out during the lockdown period will not be taken into account.

Grades will be moderated and reviewed by an examination panel. The same 0-20 scale will be used, where 10 reflects the pass mark.

The *Baccalauréat* was already undergoing reform with the first cohort due to graduate in 2021. These reforms mean fewer final examinations and continuous assessment will account for 40% of the final grade. Further details on the secondary school reforms are outlined on UK NARIC's [International Comparisons](#) database.

When will results be available?

Results will be available on 7th July. Students should receive their final diploma in September / October.

Students who achieve an average grade of less than 10 but higher than 8 will be able to take remedial oral exams in the usual way; these will be held on 8th - 10th July.

India

Standard XII

In India, there are two principal exit qualifications in school, one taken on completion of 10 years' of schooling (Standard X), and another on completion of 12 years (Standard XII). Entry to higher education in India is based on the Standard XII.

The titles vary according to the awarding body, which could be a state education board or one of three national boards:

- The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
- The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE)
- The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS).

A full list of titles is available on [International Comparisons](#)^[1]

How are the qualifications normally assessed? What has changed for 2020?

For the Standard X, students would sit internal exams in Year 9 and external exams in Year 10, whilst the Standard XII certificate is based on internal exams taken in Year 11 and external exams in Year 12. Some of the exams had taken place in March before India went into lockdown. For example, Maharashtra state board Standard X and XII examinations were all completed prior to lockdown.

For Standard XII, students are usually examined in five or six subjects. Grading systems differ among boards, so university admission requirements are usually based on the percentage scores achieved in the best five subjects.

Standard X and XII examinations administered by many of the boards were interrupted by the national lockdown, or by local disruption due to COVID-19. For example, the CBSE Standard XII exams in subjects including Business Studies, Computer Science, Geography, Hindi Core, Hindi Elective, Information Technology and Sociology, were postponed until the first two weeks of July. CISCE Standard XII exams in subjects including Biology, Business Studies, Geography, Home Science, Sociology and Psychology were also postponed. Several of the state boards have also postponed some or all of their Standard XII examinations until a later date. Many boards have not yet announced new dates for the delayed examinations.

When will results be available?

State boards that have completed their examinations are due to be released in June, but UK NARIC will continue to monitor this.

CBSE has yet to announce when it will release results and whether this will be a single release, once all examinations have been taken, or whether results on exams completed could be issued in the interim. The work of marking the CBSE Standard X and XII examination papers commenced today, 12 May.

UK NARIC will provide further updated information on developments in India as appropriate.

^[1] Log-in required.

Ireland

Leaving Certificate

The Leaving Certificate grants access to higher education in Ireland. Subjects are offered at Higher and Ordinary level, with a Foundation level also available in Irish and mathematics. There are three streams: Leaving Certificate Established, Leaving Certificate Applied and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. Students are required to sit a minimum of five subjects, though most take six or seven.

How is the qualification normally assessed? What has changed for 2020?

The Leaving Certificate is usually assessed through final written examinations, with additional oral and practical examinations in some subjects. Examinations are administered by the State Examinations Commission.

Examinations for the Leaving Certificate have been cancelled. All students will be offered a State certificate of calculated grades which can be used to progress to further or higher education, or for employment. Without examinations, subject teachers will submit an estimate of the percentage mark the student would have achieved if they had sat the Leaving Certificate examination. Teachers will also rank students within each class based on their predicted level of achievement. These grades and ranks will be reviewed and finalised by the school, before being submitted to the Department of Education and Skills. Statistical methods will be used to make any necessary adjustments to grades to ensure a national standard is applied.

When will results be available?

The date for the release of results is yet to be confirmed. It is planned that processes for admission to further and higher education in Ireland will run close to original dates. Results were originally due to be made available on 11th August.

Malta

Matriculation Certificate Examination

The Matriculation Certificate is taken at the end of upper secondary education (grade 13) and administered by the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Board (MATSEC) of the University of Malta.

How is the qualification normally assessed? What has changed for 2020?

Students typically sit six exams – two at Advanced level, and four at Intermediate level. These must be taken across four subject groups to ensure students take both humanities and science subjects.

Subjects are graded on an A-E scale at both Advanced and Intermediate level.

The exams usually run in two sessions, the first during the April to June period. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, these examinations have been postponed until 31st August - 10th October.

When will results be available?

Results will be released on 6th November. This date falls after the start of the academic year in Malta, which is scheduled to start on 19th October, subject to advice from public health authorities. This means that first-year students at the University of Malta will not have received their Matriculation Certificate Examination results prior to beginning their studies.

Most first-year students will be admitted with probationary status, pending the release of their Matriculation Certificate Examination results. Their status will be changed to that of a regular student if their results meet the entry requirements for the programme they are enrolled in.

Students whose results do not meet the entry requirements will be permitted to continue with probationary status, as long as they have gained a minimum of 36 points in the Matriculation Certificate. These students must either pass all 60 ECTS credits of the first year of the programme in order to continue or alternatively, can resit the Matriculation Certificate Examinations in December 2020.

Medical degrees will have a delayed start and begin on 9th November once the examination results have been released.

Pakistan

Higher Secondary School Certificate

The Higher Secondary Certificate is the qualification awarded after two years of upper secondary (grades 11 and 12) that provides access to undergraduate studies in Pakistan. The qualification is offered by 30 boards administered at a regional level. The precise title of the award varies slightly between boards.

Students sit examinations in one of the following streams or "groups":

- Commerce
- Humanities
- Pre-engineering
- Pre-medical
- Science (general).

Other groups, such as fine arts, home economics, medical technology and pre-agriculture, are offered by some boards of higher secondary education.

All students must take four compulsory subjects: Urdu, English, Pakistan Studies and Islamic Education (Islamiyat). Students take a further three or four subjects depending on their chosen group.

How is the qualification normally assessed? What has changed for 2020?

Students sit two sets of examinations for the Higher Secondary School Certificate: Part I at the end of grade 11 and Part II at the end of Grade 12.

Examinations for the Higher Secondary School Certificate have been cancelled by all boards across Pakistan.

This year's cohort of grade 12 students sat their Part I examinations in 2019. The Part II examinations scheduled for this year have been cancelled. In an announcement from the Education Minister on 7th May, it was confirmed that students would be able to gain admission to universities in Pakistan on the basis of their Part I (grade 11) results.

Further details of the grading policy are still to be confirmed by the Inter-Board Committee of Chairmen (IBCC), the umbrella body for all examination boards in Pakistan.

The Caribbean

Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE)

The main upper secondary qualification is called the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE). Examinations are administered by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) and are offered in 16 countries and territories across the Caribbean⁴.

How is the qualification normally assessed? What has changed for 2020?

The CAPE is usually awarded on the basis of a final exam and school-based (internal) assessment in each subject. CAPE examinations would usually take place in April-June. In 2020, it is envisaged that they will take place in July, subject to local public health guidance.

Format

The format of the examinations has been adapted: Examinations will consist of multiple-choice questions and be marked electronically.

Final grades will be based on the results of at least one multiple-choice examination paper per subject and school-based assessments, which will be externally moderated. Additional elements will be required for some subjects, including languages and visual arts.

It is understood these will be marked using the normal grades – grade I-VII (1-7) for the overall subject and A-G for the individual module (“profile”) grades.

When will results be available?

A date has not yet been confirmed for the release of CAPE results. The switch to multiple-choice examinations is intended to reduce the time required for marking and administration in order to minimise disruption to admissions for the new academic year.

⁴ Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands.

USA

Overview of Pre-University Awards

The principal secondary school qualification in the US is the High School Diploma, awarded to those who have met their State's graduation requirements. Those wishing to progress to undergraduate education will normally need to take Advanced Placement exams or standardised tests like the SATs or the American College Testing (ACT).

The May and June sittings of the SAT have been cancelled. An additional date has been scheduled for September and additional weekend administrations may be added from August. Further dates are also available later in the year.

The ACT was due to take place in early April 2020 and has been rescheduled for now until mid-June.

The AP exams are still running but with an adapted format, as detailed below.

Advanced Placement (AP)

AP courses are college-level courses available in 38 subjects. They are offered in many high schools in the US, as well as many other countries internationally, with the final exam developed and administered by the College Board.

How are the qualifications normally assessed? What has changed for 2020?

AP courses are typically assessed through written examinations, around 3hr 15 minutes in length, comprising multiple-choice as well as free-response questions. Some subjects also have short-answer questions. Short-answer and multiple-choice questions typically account for 45%-60% of the final mark for each course depending on the subject. The free-response section of the exam usually includes around two to three- long answer questions testing essay writing skills.

AP exams would usually take place in May at designated testing centres. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the College Board developed an online free-response exam for each AP course enabling students to take the exams at home. These are taking place online between 11th and 22nd May. All students worldwide will sit the exams at the same time. Make-up exams will be held on 1st-5th June.

Format

Exams are open-book and will consist of free-response questions. The questions have been designed specifically for the adapted exam format. Each exam will last 45 minutes. Most exams can be taken on a desktop computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone; students also have the option to write their answers by hand and submit a photo. World languages are assessed through speaking tasks available on an app. Only content covered in AP classes up until March 2020 will be included.

When will results be available?

Results will be reported on the usual 1-5 scale (where 1 is low, and 5 is considered "extremely well qualified"). Results will be available around mid- July.

5. Looking Ahead

This report has reflected principally on countries where the final assessments for pre-university qualifications were scheduled for April to June 2020. With protracted school closures, UK NARIC will continue to monitor adjustments and changes to exams on its blog and in response to enquiries from its members.

The impact is likely to extend beyond this calendar year though: the situation has raised a number of key considerations for the future, and for exam boards, schools, university admissions and credential evaluation agencies alike.

USE OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

The current situation has highlighted the varying use and weighting of internal and external assessment in international secondary systems. In the **UK**, educational reforms introduced from 2015-19 were designed to minimise non-exam assessment in the GCSE, AS and A level, allowing its use only where key skills could not be tested by written exam. During the current crisis, the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) has announced that non-exam assessment does not need to be completed and will not be counted in the calculation of grades this year, as a means of ensuring fairness to all students.

By contrast in **Singapore**, coursework accounts for 60-70% of the final grade in each subject which has raised questions in the country on the impact of home-based learning on student performance, noting the absence of teacher supervision. To address these, the Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board (SEAB), is intending to:

- Extend the submission deadlines by two weeks
- Adjust task requirements where appropriate, whilst ensuring a valid assessment
- Accept evidence of learning (in-school assessment) and special considerations from the school.

Thus, on the one hand, continuous assessment provides a source of evidence in determining likely student performance, whilst on the other, it can present an added challenge given that its scheduling and/or the timing of school closures may not be consistent across the country.

ASSESSING PRIVATE CANDIDATES

One key question being faced in many countries is how to ensure fair and valid certification of private candidates during this time. Private candidates are students learning outside of a traditional school setting, typically enrolled to undertake the assessment only. In the **UK**, for example, the JCQ has issued some preliminary guidance. The key message is that where centres have sufficient evidence on private candidate performance, they can propose a calculated grade; guidance on the implications for private candidates where centres had insufficient evidence has yet to be published. International approaches announced to date likewise focus on school-based candidates, with no clear policies on awarding qualifications and grades to private candidates.

ADJUSTING ASSESSMENT VOLUME

Many secondary school programmes are two- to three- years in duration, typically with mid- or end-of-year exams. The implications of lost instructional time may therefore be seen in assessment in future years. This may take two forms: reduction in the number of topics assessed, proportional to the length of time schools were closed for; and/or reduction in the number of tasks included. A key consideration for exam boards will be ensuring fairness for all candidates and ongoing validity.

Some upper secondary programmes include examinations in the penultimate year of study in addition to those at the end of the course. In Wales and Northern Ireland, AS level grades achieved usually contribute to the final A level; students in Pakistan take Part I of their examinations in grade 11. Following this year's cancellations, the first part of these courses will not have been assessed, so exam boards will need to consider how assessment for these qualifications in 2021 will allow for this, without burdening students with additional examinations covering content studied in the 2019-20 academic year.

A MOVE TO ONLINE ASSESSMENT

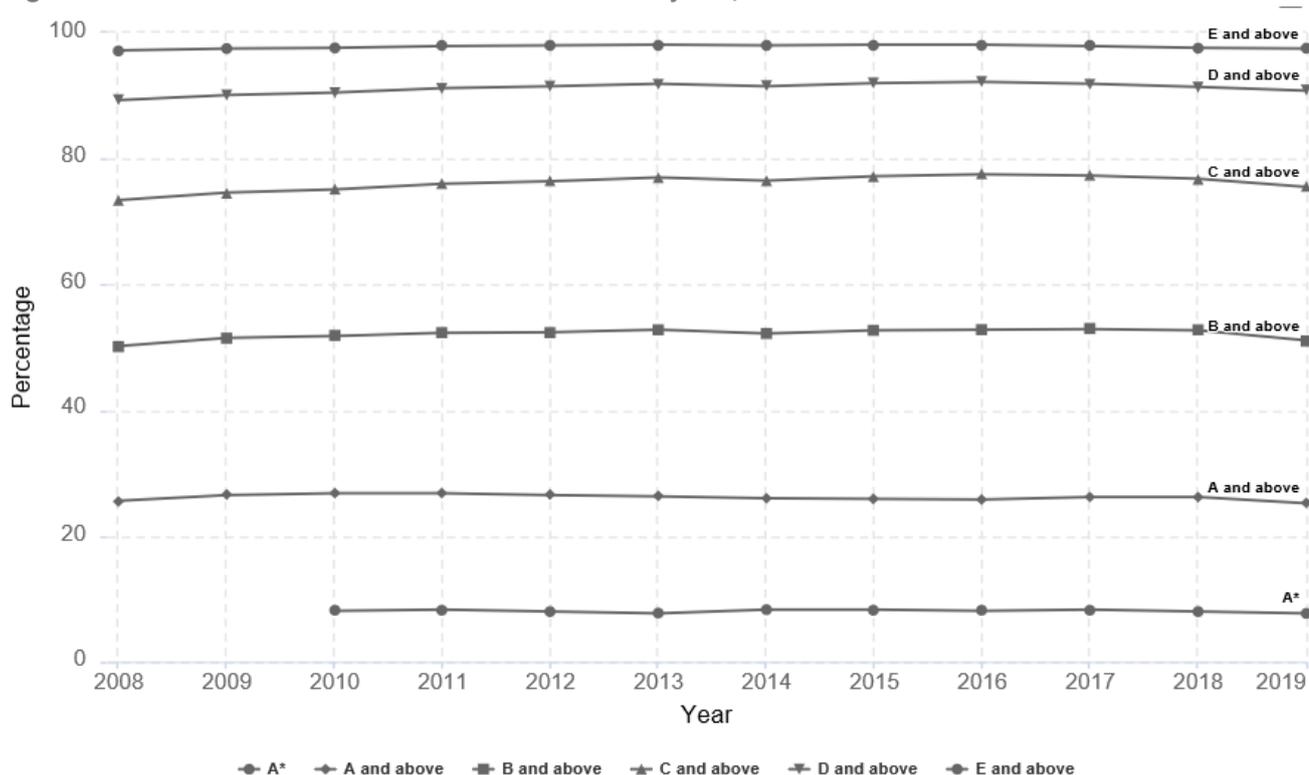
As we've already seen, the AP in the **US** has moved to an online, "at-home", format, allowing students to sit their exams on time from any device, whilst in **New Zealand**, it is envisaged that a large number of subjects will have digital assessments available. A number of English language test providers have similarly developed, or are in the process of developing "at-home" tests.

This allows for minimal impact to students' progression overall, whilst at a national level, consideration must be given to the challenges of digitalisation both in terms of the timeframe for assessment (accounting for technical difficulties without risking test validity by increasing candidates' thinking time); and more widely, the risk of increasing inequality with some students unable to access the technology or sufficiently reliable internet access to take assessments remotely.

MONITORING GRADING AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION

A final consideration will be whether the pandemic has any impact on grading practices. As we've already seen, countries which have cancelled examinations have set out guidelines for calculating grades, with previous statistical data used to standardise the final awarded grades. This is the case for example for GCSEs, AS and A levels in the UK where data on expected outcomes together with data on the prior attainment of cohorts at each school/college in recent years will be referenced.

Figure 4: GCE A Level Outcomes 2008-2019 – all subjects, all candidates



Source: Ofqual⁵

Using UK NARIC

UK NARIC collates grade distribution data over time as part of its International Grade Comparisons database, presenting this alongside student performance data for the GCE A Level. We will continue to collate this data to enable evaluation of qualifications in the context of the time in which they were awarded wherever possible.

UK NARIC will also continue to research international approaches, analyse transcripts and collate data on student performance, ensuring it can provide members with clear information and insight on assessment methods, volume and grading used for each qualification.

About UK NARIC

As the designated National Agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills, UK NARIC plays a key role in the sphere of international student recruitment and admissions.

UK NARIC’s International Comparisons database describes the secondary qualifications and grading systems of over 190 countries worldwide, whilst the International Grade Comparisons database, covering 130 countries, provides details of student performance and grade comparisons over time.

UK NARIC members can additionally request further information on specific countries through the Member Enquiries portal. Members and non-members alike can also access specialist webinars on key themes and education in key countries and regions. Please see our [Training Schedule](#) for details.

⁵ Ofqual (n.d.) *A level outcomes in England*. Accessed May 2020.

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