How are general timetables created?

The JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) creates a provisional timetable, based on feedback from all the awarding organisations. This provisional timetable is constructed to ensure it meets the current needs of candidates, schools and colleges. It also takes into account any special requests or occasions, such as Armistice Day or religious festivals.

The common timetable for the awarding organisations to review is published on the Pearson website. The final timetable is agreed upon, completed and published on Pearson's website.

How is the common timetable compiled?

The common timetable is compiled by selecting exam slots that ensure it meets the needs of candidates, schools and colleges. It is used to help minimise clashes in the exam timetable.

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Exams are scheduled during standard examination periods, from May to July. The timetable is published on the website by the 28th February for Summer.

Ithink that a candidate could take exams for over 550 subjects in a single exam series. This is because there is only a limited window in which exams can take place.

Where there is more than one specification available at the same level, these are allocated to the same slot, as it is unlikely that candidates will take more than one qualification in the same examination period.

The majority of candidates take one exam in any morning or afternoon session.

How does Pearson ensure a timely release of results?

Pearson allocates our exams to the common JCQ slots. This ensures that schools and colleges have time to complete the teaching of the courses, while allowing us time to mark the exams. When creating the timetable, special care is taken to ensure there is enough time for the examiners to mark the exams. This reduces the risk of candidates receiving their results too late.

Exams are scheduled in line with their UK counterparts, to ensure consistency from year to year and across different awarding organisations. This also includes a provision for candidates doing a combination of International GCSE and GCSE or IAL and A level.

The JCQ and awarding organisations consider all feedback and changes are made to the common timetable. If comments from a wide range of stakeholders, including schools, colleges and religious groups, are unable to take both. If it is a completely new qualification, this is because rules state they cannot take both.

Most exams are taken by a whole cohort. For some subjects, e.g. GCE Maths, we will take more than one qualification in the same year. Where there is more than one specification available, these are allocated to the same slot, as it is unlikely that candidates will take more than one qualification in the same examination period.

Exams are scheduled in line with previous series, as far as possible.

The final timetable is published on the website by the 28th February for Summer; 30th April for Summer; 28th February for October; 31st October for October; 31st January for January; 31st March for January; 30th June for Summer; 30th June for January; 30th June for October.

Exams are scheduled in line with previous series, as far as possible.