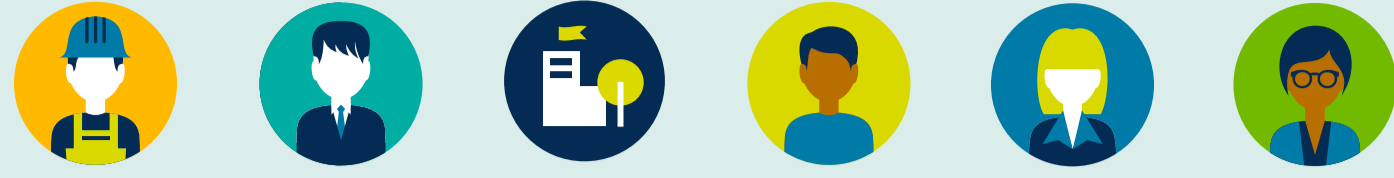


Pearson Summer 2021

UK qualification fees update: GCSE, AS and A level



We appreciate what a challenging year this has been for teachers, schools and colleges, and understand that given the changes, you want to know how the money we get from qualification fees has been spent.

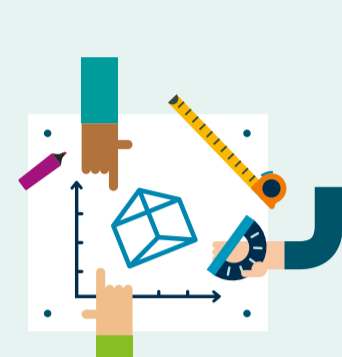
Whilst we have had additional work to do to meet our regulatory requirements, we have no intention of benefiting financially from this year's disruption.

Our focus has been, and remains, on doing all we can to support you and your students as fully as possible.

Take a look below at what our qualification fees cover and what's been different this year.

What do qualification fees cover?

Whilst the general qualification fees are paid at the very end of the two-year course, they cover more than just the final exams. The fees enable us to provide the expertise and support you've had access to whilst teaching the course, as well as the assessments, results and our supporting services.



Development of our qualifications

A proportion of each qualification fee contributes to the investment made in the research and development of the specifications and sample assessment materials, as well as ongoing management and improvements over the life of the qualification.



Planning and getting ready to teach the course

Planning and getting started guides, training, and events to support ongoing departmental CPD.



Support for teaching and learning

Teaching resources (e.g. schemes of work, mapping documents), network events, guidance for tiering, internal assessment and NEA, Exams Officer and Subject Expert helplines, plus information for exams officers (including regular newsletters and bulletins).



Assessment and results

Practice papers and topic tests, mock exams, past papers, mark schemes, examiners reports, exemplars and sample marked learner work, live examinations, marking, standardisation, results (including our Access to Scripts and ResultsPlus services) and Exams Officer helpline.

All the above are included as part of the qualification fee. We also provide the option of further training events and a mocks marking service that can be purchased at an additional cost.

What type of costs do we have?

We incur different types of costs when providing these services, which affects the amount that we can pass back to schools and colleges.

Fixed costs

– incurred every year regardless of assessment arrangements



Like a school or college, we have a high proportion of costs that are fixed. These include:

- experienced teams who develop our qualifications and assessments – including answering your queries and ongoing improvements to specifications and supporting materials to help teachers deliver the courses
- teams that answer queries from teachers and exams officers, and keep candidate data and records on our systems up to date
- technology systems
- offices/buildings, including our specially designed processing centre.

We took the decision not to claim government support for our staff costs through the furlough scheme and retained our teams so that we could continue to support teachers.

Variable costs

– these vary according to the assessment arrangements



Some of our costs are variable, which means we can change these if the assessment process changes. These include:

- printing, distributing and processing exam papers
- marking exam papers.

This year, we have spent some of these costs – for example, despite exams being cancelled in January, we had already started printing papers in preparation for summer examinations. We did not spend all the money allocated to these activities and are committed to passing these savings back to schools and colleges.

Additional costs

– what we've needed to do differently for summer 2021



While some of the activities we would carry out in a normal series – such as the marking of exam papers – are not taking place this summer, there are many new processes that we have needed to deliver so we can award grades this summer.

Here are just some of the additional activities we've been working on:

- training for teachers on over 100 qualifications – providing live events, on-demand sessions, videos, downloadable guides and documents
- preparing over 4,500 assessment materials and grade exemplification materials for teachers and students
- recruiting and training of hundreds of senior assessment associates so they can complete rigorous subject-level quality assurance processes
- reviewing over 7,000 individual centre policies
- developing new technology systems to accept centre policies and teacher assessed grades
- increasing our customer service support for the results period
- setting up and running a new appeals process.

The Department for Education is providing funding to awarding organisations for appeals to enable these to be offered for free to pupils from state-funded centres and to private candidates in England, and some of the cost in delivering a full suite of autumn exams.

Supporting schools, colleges and the system

We know that many teachers, schools and colleges are looking forward to next year and hope, like us, that exams can take place.

We are also continuing to invest in further improvements to support teachers and students, and think it's important that we play our part in ensuring the ongoing sustainability of the exam system.

Third party auditors are carrying out an independent review of our rebate calculation - to provide comfort that we are passing the right amount of money to schools and colleges.



Thank you

We'd like to thank you and your colleagues for the incredible work you have been doing not just this summer but throughout the last 18 months.