



Pearson

# International Qualifications

A guide for centres accepting private  
candidate entries



# International Qualifications

This guidance provides an overview of the May/June 2021 assessment process for centres accepting entries for private candidates taking International GCSEs, International AS or International A Levels. More detailed guidance on the assessment process for all May/June 2021 candidates will be provided at the end of March.

## **Private candidates**

Private candidates are candidates who have not studied with the exam centre which makes their entry. Included in this group are, for example:

- School age students who have been home educated;
- Adults who have studied independently;
- Students who have studied with a distance learning provider which does not offer exam entry;

This guidance also applies to students at a school or college who have studied an additional subject outside of the school or college, as well as private candidates entered through the British Council.

## **Assessment Options for Private Candidates**

The assessment process for private candidates is the same as for other candidates. All candidates will be assessed on the basis of a range of evidence, used to determine a Teacher Assessed Grade.

Centres accepting private candidate entries will need to have an initial discussion with the student in order to determine the most suitable assessment option and gain an understanding of the specification content they have covered in their studies. This will also enable the centre to identify whether any reasonable adjustments or access arrangements are required. This could be achieved by means of a short interview with the student - which could be conducted remotely - or a short questionnaire.



### **Unseen Test Materials for International GCSE and International AS/A level**

Pearson will provide unseen test materials for centres who are hosting students entered for International GCSEs and International AS/A Levels this summer. Centres will be responsible for ensuring the use of the test materials, the assessment of the student's performance and attributing a grade. Pearson will support the use of the unseen materials, will carry out a quality assurance process to ensure that the grades are fair, will issue grades to students and will provide an appeals process.

Pearson will despatch the test materials securely to centres with private candidate entries for International GCSEs and International AS/A Levels; centres must ensure that all test materials are kept securely until a specified date for each assessment at which time the test materials will be shared with students in a high control setting. Pearson will provide details of the protocols that must be followed to ensure the integrity of the materials – it will be very similar to the normal secure conditions stipulated for exam materials.

Teachers and students will be familiar with the style of the materials as they will look like question papers used in a normal exam series. Unseen test materials for all components of the qualification for which the student is expecting a result must be responded to by the student. Test materials should be taken in high control conditions on a day specified by Pearson – no other supporting evidence would be required when deriving the grade. Should it not be possible for a student to be assessed on the specified day and in high control conditions the centre would be responsible for ensuring the authenticity and integrity of the student's response to the test materials;

in this circumstance it may be appropriate to include other supporting evidence to derive the grade.

To support the use of these unseen materials Pearson will provide an optional marking service in which our assessment associates will mark the student responses to the unseen test materials and return a mark to the centre for their consideration when deriving the student grade. Pearson will provide support in order to ensure understanding of how the mark aligns to published performance descriptors so that there is confidence in understanding the mark, and ultimately the grade. This will be an optional service, if centres would prefer to mark the materials themselves, Pearson will provide a mark schemes and training materials so that they can do so with confidence.

This approach will be underpinned by a robust quality assurance process which will focus on the following elements as appropriate:

- The use of unseen materials
- The method of marking
- The inclusion of any other supporting evidence
- How the mark is translated into a grade.

### **Additional assessments set by the centre**

In cases where additional evidence of the student's performance is needed, including cases where the unseen materials were sat outside of the specified timeframe or were not sat under supervision, you may set additional assessments if you wish, to ensure that the range of evidence available is sufficient to enable you to determine an appropriate grade. This might also be useful in cases where a student's performance is

considered borderline and additional evidence would help to support the centre's final grading decision.

Where a centre wishes to supervise an assessment, but the candidate is unable to sit the assessment at the centre, remote supervision can be used. Centres do not need to have specialist remote invigilation software – the candidate could be observed remotely using standard video conferencing software (for example, Microsoft Teams or Zoom).

### **Pre-existing evidence**

Some private candidates may request that evidence they have generated during their studies – such as essays, assignments and mock exams - is also considered by the centre. Before deciding whether to accept pre-existing evidence a centre will want to consider the conditions under which it was produced and the level of confidence they can have in its authenticity. Guidance on this is given below.

Some centres may prefer not to accept pre-existing evidence and instead to set new assessments on which the grade will be based. This is at the discretion of the centre provided that students are informed of this in advance so that they can make an informed choice when selecting a centre.

Pre-existing evidence must not be accepted if the centre has concerns about its authenticity, for example if the standard of work is much higher than in comparable assessments completed under centre supervision.

### **Accepting Pre-existing evidence**

Pre-existing evidence **may** be accepted where it has been produced under the instruction of:

- A tutor or organisation which has established links with the centre making the entry;
- An established educational organisation which is approved by an appropriate independent authority.

Exceptionally, in cases where a private candidate does not have sufficient other evidence, the centre may accept evidence generated with a private tutor but should always validate the student's performance by setting at least one other assessment under centre supervision. If there is a marked difference in performance, the student should be asked to complete further assessments in order to establish the student's performance standard.

Pre-existing evidence **may not** be accepted where it has been produced by the candidate entirely independently, or under the instruction of a family member.

The centre should ask for pre-existing evidence to be submitted to it directly by the individual or organisation concerned, along with a supporting statement confirming:

- the conditions under which the assessments were taken;
- whether any reasonable adjustments, access arrangements or special consideration were applied;
- that the third party is not aware of any potential conflicts of interest, for example that there is no personal or family relationship between the student and tutor;
- that the third party will cooperate with the awarding organisation if needed, for example, during the appeals process.

If the individual or organisation has also submitted a proposed grade, the centre will additionally need to seek assurances that the person responsible for the student's assessment is familiar with Pearson's requirements.

The following guidance may be helpful:

**A tutor or organisation which has established links with the centre making the entry**

For example, a distance learning provider or tutor who has a contract with the centre or has worked regularly with them in the past.

**An established educational organisation which is approved by an appropriate independent authority**

For example, a centre which is approved with a different awarding organisation or by a national department for education. This would also include hospital and prison education services, or a national performing arts or languages institute

**Examples of assessment approaches for private candidates**

The following table illustrates how private candidates could be assessed on the basis of a range of evidence.

**Student 1**

This student sits the unseen test materials during the specified time frame under centre supervision.

The centre uses the Pearson marking service and uses the mark and supporting guidance to determine an appropriate grade.

**Student 2**

This student sits the unseen test materials outside of the specified time period.

The centre then sets some additional assessments based on content the candidate has studied.

The teacher bases the grade on all of the available evidence.

**Student 3**

This student has studied for part of the course with a nationally approved languages institute. The institute submits evidence to the centre, and a proposed grade, along with the required assurances.

The centre is confident that the range of evidence is appropriate and that the institute is familiar with the Pearson guidance on grading students. They submit the proposed grade on this basis.