

# Guidance for Managing BTEC Exams in 2022 (Covid-19)

The confirmed policy position is that exams and assessments will go ahead in 2022

## Overview

This guidance applies to timetabled BTEC exams held in the **2021/2022** academic year. It outlines changes to the normal rules for conducting BTEC exams and the use of special considerations, designed to support centres experiencing disruption due to Covid-19.

Please refer to the [BTEC Instructions for Conducting External Assessments](#) document for detailed information about conducting BTEC external assessments.

Further teaching, learning and assessment guidance can be found on our [website](#), or please [contact us](#) if you need further guidance or support.

## Managing absences

In some cases, absences will be unavoidable due to COVID-19. You can find an infographic of scenarios [here](#). Full explanations of the different support in place can be found below.

## Published start times

Centres are normally permitted to vary the published exam start times (9am and 1.30pm) by up to 30 minutes. For the 2021/2022 academic year only, if centres are not able to start an exam on time because of disruption relating to Covid-19, the examination may start later than that provided that learners are supervised by a member of centre staff from no later than 30 minutes after the published start time until the exam starts. In these circumstances, the centre must notify Pearson by emailing [regulation@pearson.com](mailto:regulation@pearson.com) on the day of the exam explaining the circumstances.

## Exam Accommodation

BTEC exams can already be sat under supervision in classrooms rather than exam halls.

If a centre needs to relocate an exam to an alternative venue, they should refer to the [JCO guidance on alternative sites](#). The notification of intent to conduct examinations at an alternative site must normally be submitted online no later than six weeks before the start of the examination series. However, if the notification is for a learner to sit an examination at home or in hospital due to a medical condition, it may not be possible to submit the information six weeks in advance. In these circumstances a late submission should be made as soon as the details are known.

For the 2021/2022 academic year, centres should continue to use this process if they need to relocate an exam due to disruption related to Covid-19, and should submit their notification as soon as they are able. Where an alternative site is used, question papers should remain in secure storage until 90 minutes before the published start time of the exam and be transported to the alternative site by a member of centre staff.

### Invigilation requirements

Centres are normally required to ensure that at least one invigilator is present for each group of 30 learners or fewer sitting written assessment tasks or exams in controlled conditions, and at least one invigilator is present for each group of 20 learners or fewer completing practical assessments (e.g. Art & Design, Applied Science).

For the 2021/2022 academic year only, where it is not possible for the centre to meet the standard requirements, exams may be conducted provided that at least one invigilator is present for each group of **40** learners or fewer sitting written assessment tasks or exams in controlled conditions, and at least one invigilator is present for each group of **30** learners or fewer completing practical assessments (e.g. Art & Design, Applied Science).

In exceptional cases, where a number of invigilators are not able to be present at short notice and the centre has exhausted all other options to meet the required ratio, the exam may continue provided that the Head of Centre is confident that the exam can be conducted with integrity. In these circumstances, the centre must notify Pearson by emailing [regulation@pearson.com](mailto:regulation@pearson.com) on the day of the exam explaining the circumstances.

### Subject teachers as invigilators

Under normal circumstances, a teacher who has prepared the learners for the subject being assessed must not be an invigilator at any time during the assessment (except where specifically indicated in the BTEC specification (e.g. Art & Design)).

For the 2021/2022 academic year only, where no other suitable invigilators are available, subject teachers may invigilate an examination, provided that they are not the sole invigilator for a group of students who they have taught.

### Special Consideration

Pearson has provided the following guidance to explain when Special Considerations can be used for the 2021/2022 academic year.

### Where learners are unable to sit an assessment

It is in the best interests of learners, centre staff and centres that wherever possible, learners' complete assessments under the appropriate conditions within the normal centre environment. However, in every exam series, there are occasions where a learner is fully prepared to take the assessment but is unavoidably absent through illness or other exceptional circumstances.

Where a learner is, for reasons outside of their control, unable to sit an assessment in the 2021/2022 academic year, the centre should first consider whether it is possible for the learner to enter for the assessment in the next available sitting. Where this is not possible, or would disadvantage the learner, the centre may apply for special consideration. If the application is accepted, affected learners would have the result for the affected assessment populated by Pearson **at the point of certification**, as this is when all unit grades have been submitted and quality assured, and a full award claim has been made. When submitting the application for special consideration the centre should explain why the learner was unable to sit the assessment and why entering for the assessment in 2022/2023 would disadvantage the learner.

### Where learners sit an assessment but are disadvantaged

As in any exam series, special consideration can also be applied in cases where a learner who has taken an assessment has been disadvantaged by the impact of illness, bereavement or other personal circumstance. In these cases, Pearson will review the information provided by the centre and, where appropriate, apply a small percentage uplift (this is called a tariff) to the mark awarded to the learner to reflect the potential disadvantage. Applications can only be accepted where sufficient evidence is provided.

In 2021/2022 academic year, centres should apply for special consideration in the [normal way](#) where they believe that a learner's performance in an assessment may have been adversely impacted by illness or other personal circumstance **on the day of the assessment**. The application should be supported by medical or other evidence where appropriate. Further information about the special consideration process can be found in the JCQ [Guide to the Special Consideration Process](#).

We understand that sitting formal assessments can be stressful for some learners, and that this anxiety may be heightened due to the ongoing impact of Covid-19. Performance in the assessment will be considered in the broader national context during the awarding process. Centres should only apply for special consideration on grounds of anxiety where individual learners have been adversely impacted on the day of the assessment as a result of their personal circumstances. Special consideration on grounds of anxiety is normally granted only where the learner is being treated for anxiety, either through medication or counselling, or where the anxiety is related to specific circumstances within the learner's family or home environment.

### Remote Invigilation

Remote invigilation is not normally permitted for BTEC external assessments. For the 2021/2022 academic year only, remote invigilation **may be permitted in exceptional cases** where all other options have been considered and an **individual learner** would otherwise be disadvantaged. Remote invigilation may only be used where prior approval has been granted by Pearson.

In individual cases where it is not possible for a learner to be invigilated in person, either at the centre or an alternative location in line with the JCQ ICE, the centre should first consider whether the exam could be deferred to a later series. This will generally be the best option for learners who are not claiming certification until a later series. Where a deferral is not suitable, the centre should consider requesting special consideration for the missing assessment, which will be granted at the point that certification is claimed in line with the guidance above. In cases where neither deferral nor special consideration would be appropriate, the centre may wish to consider whether remote invigilation would be a suitable option for the individual learner concerned, taking into account the needs of the individual learner and the availability of centre resource to ensure that the exam can be conducted securely and safely.

If a centre wishes to use remote invigilation, they must seek prior approval from Pearson by emailing [uk.special.requirements@pearson.com](mailto:uk.special.requirements@pearson.com), confirming the learner's circumstances, the reasons why alternative options are not considered appropriate and the proposed remote invigilation arrangements. **Permission will not be granted for entire cohorts of learners.**