

Taking GCSEs and A-Levels whilst Electively Home Educated (EHE)

Where Can I Sit an Exam as a Private Candidate?

When you are home educated, if you have chosen to sit public exams it will be as an external (also known as private) candidate. You will need to find a registered exam centre accredited with the exam board you have chosen to use. Exam centres can be difficult to find. However, if you contact the examinations officer at your local high school you may find that they are currently willing to accept external candidates. The situation can change yearly. In most cases, a school where a young person may have attended previously, will be the most likely school to support by offering the opportunity to sit examinations as an external candidate.

Please be aware that the arrangements for your child to sit their exams as an external candidate should be made as soon as possible and no later than the beginning of November to avoid additional administration costs. Please also be aware that some settings will have limited places available.

Some independent schools will take external candidates to sit their exams. As with all schools the fees are dependent on the exam, exam board and any administration fees that the schools themselves identify.

In all cases, please contact the school directly for further information. Contact details are as follows:

- Search Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) for your nearest exam centre taking private candidates <https://www.jcq.org.uk/private-candidates/>
- St Felix School, Halesworth Rd, Reydon, Southwold IP18 6SD, <https://stfelix.co.uk/>, 01502 722175, schooladmin@stfelix.co.uk
- Culford School, Culford, Bury St Edmunds, IP28 6TX, <https://www.culford.co.uk/>, 01284 728 615.
- Summerhill School Leiston, IP16 4HY Tel: 01728 830540

The following settings which are academies have also offered this service:

- Unity Schools (Secondary Schools) - <https://www.unitysp.co.uk/our-schools/>
- Thomas Gainsborough School - <https://tgschool.net/> Great Cornard, Sudbury, CO10 0NH. Tel: 01787 375232 Exam boards: AQA, Edexcel, OCR, WJEC. No subjects involving coursework. Exams officer: Tony Marshall. Email: amarshall@tgschool.net

The Suffolk County Council Elective Home Education team and the Education, Skills and Learning team are all aware that finding centres where external candidates can take examinations has been difficult in the county. We are pleased to be able inform you that Unity School have offered their services as exam centres. SENDAT have offered to be an exam centre for pupils with additional needs.

The team will support home educating families wherever possible. If there are any updates about examination centres, these will be shared with families and put on the SCC EHE website.

How Old Must I be to Take Exams?

There is no specified age to sit GCSEs / iGCSEs and you can begin studying for GCSEs and IGCSEs when your child is ready. You may want to stagger the exams, so consider beginning when your child is around 13 years of age.

Where Do I Start?

You will need to contact the relevant exam boards that offer the GCSEs / iGCSEs for which you would like to study. Exam boards publish a syllabus and subject specification for all GCSEs and iGCSEs. Often the exam board will publish their own student book which covers the whole syllabus.

Exam Boards Offering GCSEs and iGCSEs

The 4 boards in England and Wales offering GCSEs are:

- Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)
- Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Exams (OCR)
- Pearson (Edexcel)
- Eduqas /Welsh Joint Examinations Committee (WJEC)

The Exam Boards Offering iGCSEs are:

- Pearson (Edexcel)
- Cambridge International Examinations (CIE)
- AQA (iGCSEs are called AQA Certificate)

Introductory information on exams can be found at the home educator's exams wiki https://he-exams.wikia.org/wiki/HE_Exams_Wiki and on the Ed Yourself website <http://edyourself.org/articles/exams.php>. Other information is available from organisations such as Education Otherwise <https://www.educationotherwise.org/> 08445 867542, 08445 867543, 08445 867544. Education Otherwise Association, 2Senlac Green, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1NN

Marking and assessment of mock papers and individual pieces of work, at GCSE and A Level, for children educated at home and at school, can be found on the MarkMyPapers website <https://www.markmypapers.com/>

You can register with more than one exam centre but be aware of clashes and the possibility of having to use two different exam centres.

How Much Does It Cost?

As an external candidate you are responsible for all exam costs which will include the costs of study, registering with an exam centre and sitting the exams. You may

find that the cost varies locally depending on which exam centres you are able to use.

GCSEs

GCSEs graded 9-1 have been phased in from September 2015. The following link provides further information about GCSEs on offer and which subjects are still subject to coursework / controlled assessments:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-changes-a-summary/summary-of-changes-to-gcses-from-2015>

For more information about GCSEs see this useful parent guide

Tutorful - GCSEs: Simplified

The Grading System

The 2015 grading system and its equivalent to old GCSE grading system is as follows:

9 → A**

8 → A*

7 → A

6 → B

5 → C

4 → D

3 → E

2 → F

1 → G

U → U

5 & 6 are considered a good pass (DfE). 4 and above is equivalent to the bottom of grade C and above.
--

IGCSEs - have no coursework and are offered by the following examination boards

- Edexcel - Pearson Edexcel International GCSE – November Series from 2023 - <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-international-gcses/about-international-gcses/international-gcse-november-series-from-2023.html>
- Cambridge International Exams (CIE) - Cambridge IGCSE curriculum <https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/programmes-and-qualifications/cambridge-upper-secondary/cambridge-igcse/curriculum/>
- AQA (iGCSEs are called AQA Certificate) - <http://www.aqa.org.uk/qualifications>

Registered examination centres for IGCSE

- Stephen Perse Foundation Sixth Form - Union Road, Cambridge, CB2 1HF, 01223 454700, office@stephenperse.com <https://sixthform.stephenperse.com/sixthform>
- 3ATutors in Bristol <https://www.3at.org.uk/gcse-igcse-examination-entry/> is also a registered exam centre for external candidates for GCSE, IGCSE and 'A' level 3A Tutors Ltd, 1A High Street, Staple Hill, Bristol, BS16 5HA, 0117 910 9931, enquiries@3at.org.uk
- CloudLearn <https://cloudlearn.co.uk/> For online tutoring for IGCSEs and A-Levels. Detailed information about exam centres nationally. <https://cloudlearn.co.uk/ExamCentres>
- Southwest Science School <https://www.southwestscienceschool.com/> IGCSE and A-Level Science subjects available online including exam bookings.

Distance Learning (KS3, IGCSE/GCSE & A-Level)

Most GCSE distance learning providers have now converted to the IGCSE where GCSE coursework is required. Exam centres are not always signposted.

- The National Extension College 0800 389 2839, <https://www.nec.ac.uk/contact/info@nec.ac.uk>. The Michael Young Centre, School House, Homerton Gardens, Cambridge, CB2 8EB, See website for fee information including possible monthly installments, special offers and financial assistance.
- ICS Learn <https://www.icslearn.co.uk/courses/gcse-and-igcse/>, Course Advisors: 0333 220 4397 Student Services 0141 302 5518, hs.enquiry@icslearn.co.uk
- IGCSEs have also been offered at online schools such as King's InterHigh <https://kingsinterhigh.co.uk/>
- Oxford Home Schooling <http://www.oxfordhomeschooling.co.uk/>, Oxford Home Schooling, 4 Kings Meadow, Oxford, OX2 0DP, enquiries@ool.co.uk, 0800 0 111 024, 01865 304 856, Skype: oxfordopenlearning
- Wolsey Hall Oxford The Home Schooling College - <https://wolseyhalloxford.org.uk/>

- Catherine Mooney Courses <http://www.catherinemooneytutoring.co.uk/>, 07722 642709, info@catherinemooneytutoring.co.uk A personal approach to studying IGCSE English Language and/or English Literature from home. The course is very structured and supported and is geared towards children from 12 onwards.
- Little Arthur Independent School <https://www.homeeducationspecialists.org.uk/> Home Education Specialists, Little Arthur Independent School, St Martins, Isles of Scilly, Cornwall, TR25 0QL, megmorton-school@outlook.com. This school in the Isles of Scilly, Cornwall offers distance learning for KS3/4 (11-16) in maths, science, English and IGCSEs. Packs cover a year's work in the core subjects and assignments can be sent in to be marked within the cost of the pack. It is an approved University of Cambridge International Exam Centre.
- Structured Home Learning (SHL) <http://www.structuredhomelearning.com/> Primary and secondary resource packs for home educating families up to KS3 including weekly plans. Packs can be split.
- Distance Learning Centre www.distance-learning-centre.co.uk Distance Learning Centre Swaledale, 4 Coaley Lane, Newbottle, Houghton le Spring, Tyne & Wear, DH4 4SQ, 0845 129 7238, online contact form for enquiries. A variety of courses including GCSE, IGCSE and A Levels.
- BBC Bitesize <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize> KS4 and SATS revision at other Key Stages.
- CloudLearn <https://cloudlearn.co.uk/ExamCentres> has more information about the different independent schools offering IGCSE exams nationally.
- Southwest Science School <https://www.southwestscienceschool.com/> IGCSE and A-Level Science subjects available online including exam bookings.
- British Online School (Oxford Education) <https://oxfordeducationonline.co.uk/>

Children and Young People with Additional Needs

Some students with Special Educational Needs and/or a disability may qualify for adjustments with exams, these are known as 'access arrangements' and you can read the full regulations and guidance that settings must consider on the JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) website.

Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres, others require prior JCQ awarding body approval.

Suffolk Sendiass has detailed information and links to relevant websites that explains access arrangements in detail. <https://suffolksendiass.co.uk/education/equality-and-inclusion/access-arrangements/>

If you believe your child may qualify talk to school, this will usually be with the SENCO or the examinations lead. Consider whether you have any school, specialist or medical reports that might help to evidence any adjustments.

Other Ways to Sit Formal Examinations

West Suffolk College Elective Home Education (Year 10 and 11)

(Please note that EHE 14 to 16 programmes are for years 10 and 11)

WSC offer a range of subjects for Year 10 and 11 EHE pupils. They have one start date a year in September and are usually oversubscribed, so it is a good idea to apply early. <https://www.wsc.ac.uk/find-a-course/elective-home-education>

In 2024/2025 the following sessions are being offered:

- Maths (Functional Skills or GCSE)
- English (Functional Skills or GCSE)
- History GCSE
- Computer Science GCSE
- OCR Combined Science
- Introduction to Motor Vehicle Industries Entry level 3/Level 1
- Introduction to Hair & Beauty Entry level 3/Level 1
- Introduction to Hospitality and Catering Level 1
- Performance Music and Media Level 1
- Music Level 2 Art & Design Level 1

Students can choose to stay with the College and access the 16+ provision, others may go on to Apprenticeships or Scholarships. The tutors/support team will help students with choices, application and preparation for the next steps.

East Coast College – Lowestoft Sixth Form 14-16 Connect to College

Offer for home educated children only. Based at Lowestoft Sixth Form College.

Part time – 12 hours per week

Includes GCSE English Language, GCSE Maths, GCSE Science (double award), with some PSD (personal and social development)

Currently offered to year 11 students only.

<https://www.eastcoast.ac.uk/>

0800 854 695

Apply online

30 September 2024