

Frequently Asked Questions for Private Candidates with Cambridge International A Level entries in June 2020 via British Council centres.

British Council's Recommendation:

Q. What is the British Council position on the assessed grade option for private candidates sitting A Levels with the British Council?

Our guidance for these private candidates is:

- **For any Cambridge International A Level subjects where you have taken the staged assessment route**, i.e. you have AS Level grades gained in June 2019 and/or November 2019, where possible we will support you through the assessed grade approach.
- **For any Cambridge International A Level subjects where you have taken the linear assessment route**, i.e. you are only entered for all the components in June 2020, we request you defer your entry to November 2020.

Assessed Grades

Q. What approach is Cambridge International following?

Following its decision not to hold June 2020 examinations worldwide due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cambridge has adopted a very similar approach to Ofqual's 'assessed grade' process, as have other Awarding Bodies.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2020

Q. What is Cambridge International's approach to awarding assessed grades?

Please see visit the [Cambridge website](#) on how assessed grades will be awarded

Q. Why can the British Council follow Cambridge's approach for private candidates with A Level entries following the staged assessment route?

- The British Council can follow Cambridge's approach for A Level entries following the staged assessment route because the [Cambridge International guidance](#) shows that for candidates *"taking an A Level by carrying forward an AS Level result from a previous series, their performance in the AS Level is a strong indicator of their likely outcome in the A Level. Candidates who achieve a particular grade in their AS Level would normally be expected to achieve the same grade in their A Level after a further year of study and making progress at a usual pace."* Candidates will still need to have evidence of their work available to support this process. Please refer to the Cambridge website for examples of the work that can be submitted.

Q. Why can't the British Council follow Cambridge's approach for private candidates with A Level entries following the linear assessment route?

- However, The British Council is unfortunately not in a position to run the assessed grade process for private candidates entered for A Level subjects via the 'linear route', i.e. you are only entered for all the components in June 2020. Unlike the 'staged route' we lack the key evidence of AS Level grades and marks to make

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judgements about predicted grades. The British Council does not deliver direct teaching to private candidates, and therefore we cannot determine the predicted grades ourselves or provide a ranking order, which is a requirement of the assessed grade process. Our relationship with private candidates is to facilitate access to Cambridge exams and to administer them in a secure environment, meeting all Cambridge International's regulatory and exam administration standards.

Q. Why can't the British Council provide a predicted grade and a ranking for A Level entries following the linear assessment route?

The British Council can't follow Cambridge's approach for these A Level entries because we don't teach students, and therefore we can't provide predicted grades, or rank students based on their academic attainment.

The [Cambridge International guidance](#) requires that *"Subject teachers should determine a predicted grade for each candidate in each syllabus based on the evidence they have gathered on candidates' performance, weighing up what these different sources of evidence tell them about each candidate's performance."*

To determine rankings, the [Cambridge International guidance](#) requires that centres *"should now consider the group of candidates entered for a syllabus for whom you have predicted the same grade. Your centre should place these candidates in a rank order. A rank order is a list of candidates in order of their attainment, from the highest-attaining to the lowest-attaining. Do this separately for every grade at which you have predicted candidates will achieve, and for each syllabus in which you have entered candidates."*

Unfortunately, The British Council doesn't have subject teachers who can determine predicted grades, or place candidates in a rank order and therefore we're unable to follow Cambridge's approach.

Q. I think I'll get a better A level grade if I sit the exam in November instead. Can I still withdraw now, and defer my entry to November 2020?

Yes, you can. Please see below under 'Managing Entries'.

Managing Entries

Q. What do I need to do to manage my entry?

- **Private candidates with A Level entries where you have taken the staged assessment route**, i.e. you have AS Level grades gained in June 2019 and/or November 2019 – we will retain your entry and we will be in touch very shortly with further information. However, if you do not want to follow the assessed grade process then you can still defer your entry to November 2020, or withdraw your entry and receive a full refund from the British Council. You can use the following link to opt your preference <https://forms.gle/tadBps4YTbkvh3eu7>
- **Private candidates with A Level entries that follow the linear assessment route**, i.e. you have A Level entries that required all the components are sat in June 2020. These entries will be automatically withdrawn by the British Council and we recommend you defer these entries to the November 2020 series. There is no increase in June 2020 fees for students deferring their entry to November 2020.

Q. What if my A Level subjects are a combination of entries that follow the staged assessment route and entries that follow the linear assessment route?

The British Council can only help you with entries that follow the staged assessment route. These entries will be retained and the entries following the linear assessment route will be automatically withdrawn and you will receive a full refund. Alternatively, you can then defer your entries to November 2020.

Q. If I defer my entry to November 2020 will I need to pay an extra fee?

There is no fee increase for students deferring their entry to November 2020. The fee will remain the same as the June 2020 fee.

Q. I don't want to defer my entry to November 2020, can I withdraw my entry and get a refund instead?

Yes, you can ask us to withdraw your entry and receive a full refund instead.

Q. What happens if a subject I want to take is not available in November 2020?

If any subjects are not available in November 2020 then we recommend that students defer their entry to the next series when the subject is available.

Q. What happens if I defer to a future exams series and it gets cancelled again?

This is a difficult time for everyone with many uncertainties. We cannot predict with full confidence what will happen in the months ahead.

Q. Why is this advice so close to the deadline for making my decision?

We have needed this time to fully consult with Cambridge, and also monitor the ongoing developments at the [Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation](#) (Ofqual), to fully understand how the grading process could work for private candidates entered via the British Council. We apologise for the time it has taken to provide clear advice to you.

General

Q. Where can I find the latest updates from Cambridge International?

The latest Cambridge updates can be found here: www.cambridgeinternational.org/covid/

Q. Is the British Council different to a school?

British Council centres are registered by Cambridge as examination venues only. Some British Council centres are involved in teacher-training but unlike schools, we don't deliver direct teaching to candidates.

Q. I would like to discuss this further with you, who should I contact?

Please contact the British Council centre where you made your entry. We'll do everything we can to help you.