

Home-educated children & assessment

Home Educators' Qualifications Association
24th February 2021

1. The DfE's plan

Summary: the situation is *stark*

The DfE has not listened to private candidates

There has been no progress since 4th January

The DfE's plan has no prospect of succeeding

2. Exam centres

What did centres do when exams were cancelled?

*"As I am sure you are aware, the Government announced on 6 January 2021 that the Summer series of GCSE and A Level examinations have been cancelled. Therefore, we will be withdrawing all examination entries made for private candidates through the Connie Rothman Learning Centre. **Unfortunately, we cannot offer assessed grades to any private candidates.**"*

What did centres do when exams were cancelled?

"For this summer, I am advising all private candidates, that if they are not in the position of providing us with a robust predicted grade from a qualified tutor, there is no point in being entered for these exams this summer."

What did centres do when exams were cancelled?

"Regrettably we are not in a position now to accept applications from private candidates for exams this Summer in light of the Secretary of State for Education's announcement in Parliament on the 6th January 2021 regarding the cancellation of exams."

What did centres do when exams were cancelled?

"The GCSE and A level exams are cancelled in Summer 2021 and some form of teacher assessment will be used to award grades. As a centre we do not have the capacity (and certain subject expertise) to review external candidates work and provide a teacher assessed grade."

Why are centres expelling candidates?

Centres are willing to **invigilate** private candidate tests

Centres **do not have *capacity* to assess** private candidates

Centres **do not have *expertise* to assess** private candidates

Where do candidates sit exams?

OCR: 26 centres had *only private candidate entries* in 2020



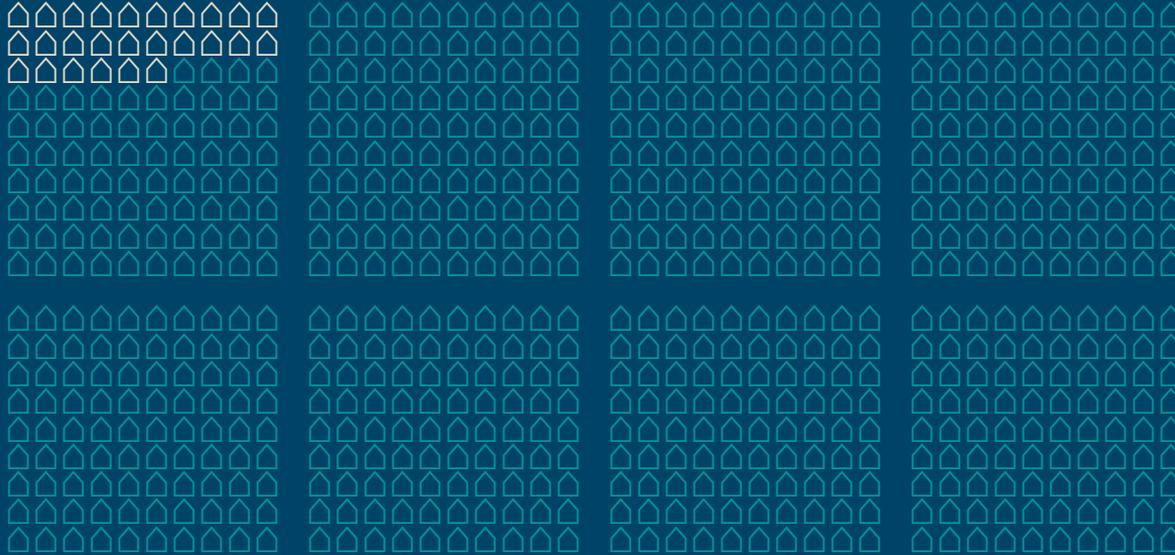
Where do candidates sit exams?

***Only 15%* of private candidates sit OCR exams**



Where do candidates sit exams?

Many more centres have just private candidates *for some subjects*



Centres can invigilate, but *cannot assess*

Almost all centres accept entries for subjects they don't teach
(Latin, Astronomy, Human Biology, Further Mathematics, ...)

In normal years this is fine: **invigilation is straightforward**

None of these centres are equipped to assess these entries

3. Portfolios

Portfolios: the typical situation

We polled a home education support group:

- **many families:** external support in some subjects
- **80%:** at least one subject without it
- **< 7%:** high quality easily-verifiable evidence in all subjects

Portfolios: many diverse situations

Some candidates have **neither verifiable nor unverifiable work**:

"We study over two years but we work orally in the main. Revision is also mainly oral, with Quizlets, and only working on written work towards the end"

4. Pace

Varying paces, incomparable outcomes

*In a school, **progress** through each syllabus is **synchronised***
Teachers can assess students together, then **rank** and grade

*Every home-educated child **progresses at a different pace***
Teacher assessment **cannot** be used to **rank** and grade

*(Exams solve the problem: **arrival at the destination is synchronised**)*

5. What's
workable?

What *exam boards* can and can't do

Exam *boards* can

- construct assessments
- assess unknown candidates
- set grade boundaries and standardise results
- process appeals

Exam *boards* cannot

- invigilate
- deal with individual candidates

What *exam centres* can and can't do

Exam *centres* can

- invigilate
- deal with individual candidates

Exam *centres* cannot

- assess unknown candidates
- determine grade boundaries

Centre assessment is unworkable for many private candidates
(no expertise; no capacity; assumptions for schoolchildren invalid)

Portfolios cannot be compulsory
(many have no verifiable, or even unverifiable evidence)

Home-educated candidates' situations are **diverse**
(some shielding, many with special needs, etc.)

Equivalence with school grades is **unachievable**
(but assessment is needed regardless)