



Having only updated you yesterday regarding examination arrangements for Summer 2021 the phrase '24 hours is a long time in politics' certainly applies following the PMs announcement Monday night. As you are no doubt aware, he stated *'In the circumstances, we do not think it is possible for all exams in the summer to go ahead as planned. We will accordingly be working with Ofqual to consult rapidly to put in place alternative arrangements that will allow students to progress fairly.'*

I suspect the ambiguity of the statement was deliberate, allowing time for the DfE/Ofqual to formulate a proposal/strategy to assess candidates this Summer and then disclose what 'alternative arrangements' will be put in place, for all candidates to receive a grade. I understand Gavin Williamson MP, Secretary of State for Education, is expected to make an announcement to the House of Commons today. Hopefully this will give us an insight to the DfE's thinking but as always, the devil is in the detail. I strongly suspect we will not have definitive answers to the questions that our learners have raised for at least another week or two.

We are currently 'scenario planning' and implementing measures in readiness for 'Centre Assessed Grading'. We have secured meetings with key personnel within Awarding Bodies to discuss likely arrangements for private/elective home learners and will work closely with all partners to ensure our learners get the grade they deserve.

One of the benefits arising from the cancellation of exams last Summer is the increased 'visibility' of private candidates to education stakeholders following their plight and the issues highlighted to the education authorities by our exam partner Tutors & Exams. Rest assured we will be taking up the cause again on behalf of all 'home educated' candidates to ensure they are treated fairly when it comes to grading.

I appreciate this is an unsettling period for all concerned and that many of you will be anxious. However, I would ask for your patience until such time that Ofqual announce how learner assessment will be conducted. As soon as we receive any relevant information, I will be sure to update you at the earliest opportunity.

In the meantime, bookmark and regularly check our [COVID update page](#) to ensure you are getting the most up to date information as we get it from the exam boards.

As you would imagine we are receiving thousands of calls, chats and emails daily requesting information. We cannot respond to each one individually, so our focus is to ensure you are ALL receiving regular updates and getting the information you need at the right time.

We were able to get ALL CloudLearn candidates the grades they deserved in Summer 2020 in an unprecedented period of chaos. That is no guarantee that we will be able to do the same this year, all is dependent on the decisions taken by Government, Ofqual and the exam boards. Rest assured however that I am personally very confident that CloudLearn will again be able to deliver Centre Grading for all CloudLearn candidates in 2021.

Whilst we await the guidance from the exam boards, I will try to offer some advice and to answer some of the standard questions that are being raised:

## **Are exams cancelled, I don't know what is going on?**

The PM advised that GCSE and A-Level exams are unlikely to proceed as normal in the Summer 2021 exam season. Currently we are awaiting guidance from OfQUAL and the exam boards as to possible alternatives, including Centre Assessed Grading (CAG), which we successfully delivered last year. To be eligible for CAG you must be a CloudLearn exam candidate and be entered for the June exams. If you have not yet done so you should make this a priority as entry can be stopped at any point by the exam boards.

## **As exams are cancelled can we get a grade using Centre Assessed Grading (CAG)?**

This is our hope. CloudLearn was able to provide ALL CloudLearn candidates in Summer 2020 with CAG, so I see no reason that we cannot do so in 2021. We have no guarantees however at this stage, this will be determined by the DfE, OfQUAL and the exam boards. We hope to have definitive guidance on this in the coming weeks, so it is important that you get booked in for the exam, and continue studying as normal (as you would if the exams were to go ahead) and complete as much assessment as possible - the more assessment you complete the better chance we have at securing your grade using CAG.

## **Do I still need to book the exam?**

Yes, CAG will only be available to those entered for the June 2021 exams. CloudLearn will only be able to provide CAG for CloudLearn exam candidates.

## **Can I request CAG if I am booked with an external exam centre?**

No. Last year we went to extreme efforts to provide CAG for all CloudLearn students, many of whom were booked with external centres. In the end about 75% of external centres refused to process the CAG and many students were left without a grade. We advised ALL students in this scenario to book their exams with CloudLearn, many followed this advice and achieved grades.

## **What should I do to ensure I get the best grade?**

The same as you would if the exams were going ahead. Study, study, revise and complete as much assessment as possible, including online assessments, coursework and TMAs all contained online in CloudPort. Last year a lot of candidates submitted the bare minimum of assessment and stopped studying, this resulted in lower grades than would have been received otherwise. The students who put in 100% effort got the best grades.

## **I have purchased the exam, is that ALL I need to do?**

No, when you purchase the exam we add a link in your profile called 'Book My Exam', contained within is all the information you need to make your 'entry', this includes confirming your chosen venue, exam series, and uploading your ID documents. If you do not complete this step you will NOT be entered for the exam and will not be eligible for CAG.

## What will happen next?

We will continue working with our exam board partners to get the correct information to you in a timely manner. The [COVID update page](#) will be the publishing point, so ensure you have bookmarked the page and regularly check for updates. Once we have guidance on the processes and procedures, we will advise ALL CloudLearn exam candidates of what to do next. Last year this included completing a CAG request form, ALL candidates will be emailed this online form and asked to confirm their choice to apply for CAG or to defer to the next exam series.

I would like to reiterate that we understand how unsettling and frustrating this is for all students and candidates and that many of you will be very anxious about the process. I would ask for your patience until such time that Ofqual announce how learner assessment will be conducted. As soon as we receive any relevant information, it will be posted on the update page immediately.

As per last year I would ask all candidates to give us their full support and allow us the time to work on your behalf. Together we are stronger.



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