

Finding an exam centre

- Home educators are termed private or external candidates.
- Exam centres can be schools or private exam centres dedicated to external candidates.
- Students take the exam under exam conditions, at the published time of the exam, usually alongside other candidates.
- Home educators deal with the exam centre, not the exam board. The exam boards do not take entries direct.
- Your local exam centre will usually be: a school, fee paying or state; or you may have a private exam centre in your area, such as 3A Tutors in Bristol or Tutors&Exams (who have centres across the UK)
- You can find a local exam centre in your area by: ringing local schools, asking fellow home educators in your area, asking Kate – who may know of some near you.

Booking Exams

It is best to try to register with an exam centre **at least six months** before the exams are due.

Find your exam codes

These will be on or in the exam syllabus from the exam board; you need to be very specific and get these details exactly right with your exam centre. You download the syllabus from the exam board website.

Check the exam dates

Check the date that the exam is scheduled - see exam board's timetable, published on their own sites. These are usually published approx. 6 months, sometime more, ahead of time.

Email the exams officer, giving the exam code and date, your child's full name and date of birth, and a candidate identification number if you already have one

Photographic Proof of ID

Make sure you have acceptable Photo ID for your child; the exam centre will need this. The JCQ rules specify that the exams officer must see photo ID for private candidates. You need to bring this photo ID to every exam.

ULN

ULN s are now issued for all state school pupils, but they are not needed for private candidates. Often, home-educated young people won't have a ULN as these are usually only generated by state schools for their own pupils. Occasionally the centre will generate one for you, but it's not necessary & involves extra admin. If you don't have a ULN then a UCI will be automatically generated when the exams officer does your entries.

Ask for a Statement of Entry

The exams officer will usually send you a Statement of Entry which shows the codes for all the exams entered, plus a UCI or ULN number.

Check it carefully for **errors** of any kind – errors on exam codes, times, child's name, etc. If there are errors, send amendments via email and ensure you get confirmation and a new

Statement. Be sure that you and your child come to know have the UCI or ULN numbers for your records.

Deadlines etc.

May/June Exams:

- make first contact with your exam centre as early as possible (June through October)
- the 'standard' exam entry deadline is in December or January, for May/June exams
- if you miss this deadline and they still have places available, you may still get a place but there are likely to be late fees

The Exam Booking Process

1. Check if there are any 'exam centres' in your area which accept "external candidates" for a particular board before you commit to an exam board syllabus. The main exam board are:
Edexcel AQA CIE OCR WJEC/Eduqas
2. Try to register with an exam centre *at least * six months before the exam date.
3. When contacting the exam centre, have the exam board name, course name, and course number to hand. You want to ensure that they are registered with that board and are willing to administer that specific exam.
4. When you contact them, they will let you know their fees, admission deadlines, and processes. Most exam centres want a firm confirmation from you, and payment, 4-5 months ahead of the exam date.
5. It is possible to enter much later, even up to a week before the exam, but exam board fees rise sharply for late entries.
6. Exam fees are made up of the exam board entry fee (between £30 and £50 plus an administration fee for the exam centre.)
7. If a school is registered with Edexcel for GCSEs then they can accept candidates for IGCSEs too. It is possible that the school might not be aware of this but you can ask them to contact Edexcel, who will confirm it for them.
8. Schools are under no obligation to accept private candidates; it creates extra work and may involve some disruption to their schedule. A school that accepted candidates last year may not accept them this year. It's one reason why home educators may find a lack of centres in their area, because past families have been awkward to deal with, and the school has decided that it is not worth the hassle.
9. Often, independent schools / colleges may be your best bet for finding a centre near you.
10. Private, or Independent, exam centres are businesses which specialise in organising exams for external candidates. They are not schools, but are often tutorial colleges offering intensive or after-school tuition.

Home educators arrange exam centres themselves. This is because your needs will be exacting, according to your own personal requirements. You can assess travel distance, access arrangements, room arrangements, discuss fees and any other private information that is relevant for you and your child.

Marks and Afterward

- Your exam centre will tell you how and when you can access your marks, it does depend on the centre. Some Exams Officers email them, others require you to collect in person, others will post them on to you (usually at an additional cost), other places will provide online login details to get the results etc.
- All results are 'available' for all candidates, across the UK, on the same 'results' day; these are published every year by Ofqual/the exam boards.