



Cambridge Nationals Level 1/2 General FAQs

For subject-specific questions, please visit
Answers@OCR

Issue date: December 2012



Frequently Asked Questions

Why the change to Cambridge Nationals?

We've entered a new landscape for all vocational qualifications, shaped in part by the Wolf Report on vocational education and the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). We see these changes affecting three key areas:

- The age range that qualifications are targeted at
- The type of assessment used
- The curriculum time devoted to vocational learning.

These changes affect all awarding bodies' vocational qualifications.

What do these qualifications look like?

For 14–16-year-olds, we've developed the Cambridge Nationals qualifications, to improve upon what are already some of the UK's most popular qualifications.

We've also developed a separate range of vocational Cambridge Technicals, to meet the specific needs of 16–19-year-olds.

Though there will be visible differences between the two qualification ranges, progression from one to the other, or to other programmes of learning, is a guiding key principle for us for developing the qualifications.

What are the key differences between OCR Nationals and Cambridge Nationals for 14–16-year-olds?

- The assessment has changed so that some elements (normally 25%) are set and assessed externally by OCR. This change is needed to meet future performance measures criteria for vocational qualifications.
- Cambridge Nationals are series-based. This means there will be specific deadlines for making entries and submitting marks, specified periods within which moderation must take place, and specific results release dates. There will be three series per year – January, June and November. (The November series is for internally assessed units only, with either the postal or OCR Repository moderation options.)
- We've combined Levels 1 and 2. All students will start on the same programme, with their final uniform mark determining which award they achieve: Level 1 or Level 2.
- We've introduced a Distinction* grade. There are seven grades to achieve – Pass at Level 1, Merit at Level 1, Distinction at Level 1, Pass at Level 2, Merit at Level 2, Distinction at Level 2, Distinction* at Level 2.
- We've streamlined the number of units for some subjects into theme-led streams of work.
- The assessment process recognises students' strengths. Good performance in some units will compensate for weaker performance in others.



Frequently Asked Questions

What subjects are available for teaching from September 2012?

ICT, Business, Science, Science in the Workplace, Health and Social Care, Sport.

What subjects will be available for September 2013?

Creative iMedia will be available to teach from September 2013.

Can I still make entries for OCR Nationals?

No. Entries for OCR Nationals qualifications closed on 31 August 2012. Claims against these entries are available until 31 December 2014. As of 31 August 2012, entries can only be made for the Cambridge Nationals qualifications.

Will OCR accept entries after the last entry date?

No. As part of OCR's accreditation agreement with our regulator, Ofqual, we are prohibited from accepting entries after this date.

Will I still be able to top up my candidates' entries on the old OCR Nationals qualifications after the last entry date?

If your candidates have **full** award entries you will be able to top up these entries as usual until the last certification date, which is 31 December 2014. However, if your candidates have unit-only entries you will not be able to access the top-up facility. It has always been the case that top-ups cannot be made against unit entries.

OCR is not replacing the OCR Nationals in Applied Art, Design and Media, Travel and Tourism, and Public Services. What are the alternatives?

Where OCR is not providing a Cambridge Nationals qualification, there is an alternative pathway for students to follow.

For example, Applied Art, Design and Media students could study the Cambridge Nationals in Creative iMedia. The Leisure and Tourism and Travel and Tourism students could follow the GCSE route.

Will existing centres be given automatic approval to offer the new specifications or – given the new examined element – will all centres have to re-apply?

You will get automatic approval if you do GCSE, A Level, Level 1/2 Certificate or Level 2 Award, Principal Learning or Project with us. If not approved for any of these then you will need to go through the normal [approval process for 14–19 qualifications](#).

Will the examined units be available on demand or in examination series?

The assessments are series-based – the external assessment takes place in January and June.



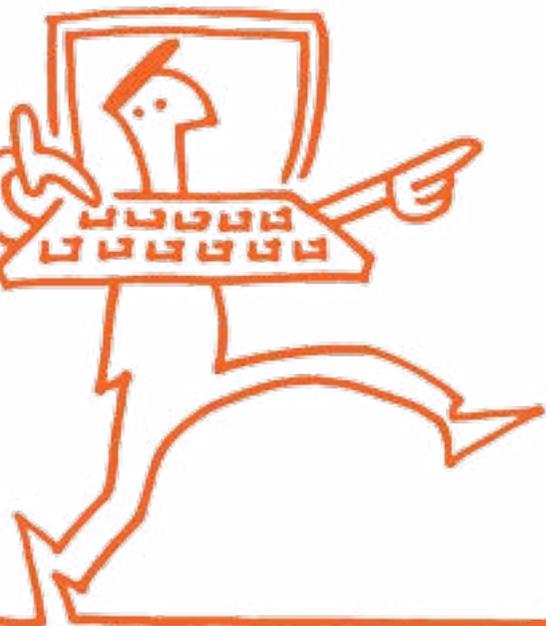
Frequently Asked Questions

Will centres be expected to run the examined units at the end of the course?

A centre can choose in which series to undertake the external assessment (i.e. January or June).

Now that there is an examined element in the Cambridge Nationals, what makes it different from GCSE?

There are major differences between Cambridge Nationals and GCSEs. A lot of the Cambridge Nationals assessment can be taken throughout the course, there are no terminal rules, candidates can have unlimited resits and, where they have taken a unit more than once, the best result will count.



How long will it take to find out results?

Results will be released on 6 March 2013 for the January 2013 series (for release to candidates on 7 March) and on 21 August 2013 for the June 2013 series (for release to candidates on 22 August). Centres will receive unit grades and UMS results. Candidates' raw marks will be available via the results reports downloadable from Interchange, together with raw mark grade boundaries. For candidates who are certificating, qualification grades and total UMS will also be issued.

Will the internally assessed units be based on controlled assessment?

There are conditions under which assessment will have to take place but this is not controlled assessment as in GCSE and Principal Learning.

How many vocational qualifications can be taught and how does that affect other vocational qualifications being managed in the centre?

There is a difference between what can be taught and what can count in headline performance measures.

For the headline measures, a maximum of two non-GCSE qualifications can be counted. However, schools are able to teach anything they wish to that is on Section 96. There will be qualifications on Section 96 that are not eligible for performance points and qualifications that will be eligible.



Frequently Asked Questions

What's happening about model assignments?

OCR provides a bank of model assignments for each subject. This will ensure that quality standards are maintained while being able to satisfy demand from the market. All model assignments are available from the [OCR website](#).

Will candidates still be able to resit?

Cambridge Nationals have an unlimited number of resits.

Is there a cost for resits?

Yes. There will be a cost for resits. Please see the [Fees List](#).

What are guided learning hours (GLH)?

GLH refers to the number of guided learning hours required.

For Cambridge Nationals Level 1/2:

Cambridge Nationals Level 1/2	Total GLH	Qualifications of the same level and of similar size	Available qualifications
Award	60	1 GCSE Short Course	ICT, Health and Social Care, Business, Sport Science, Sport Studies
Certificate	120	1 GCSE	ICT, Health and Social Care, Business, Sport Science, Sport Studies, Science, Science in the Workplace
Diploma	240	2 GCSEs	ICT, Health and Social Care

What does the GLH you've given to your mandatory assignment mean? Do I have to stick with it?

We will not insist that you follow any particular delivery approach or allocate any particular time to teaching the skills that the students need to complete the assignment. We are specific about when the material for the assignment will be released and when you are meant to submit the completed assignment for moderation. We will provide guidance on the conditions that apply to the assignment, e.g. what research materials can and cannot be available.

What training is going to be available? When can people start to book?

As with all our qualifications, there will be a range of events to support centres. The reputation of our training support is second to none and we will continue to build upon reputation in providing exemplary support. The details and dates are to be confirmed.

We have introduced more accessible training formats (such as twilight sessions) which may be more suitable for centres. We will also introduce blended learning to suit individual learning styles; this will include online training, as well as our existing face-to-face sessions.

To view and to book training, visit: www.ocronlinetraining.org.uk/

Will there be any new specimen assessment materials?

Yes. The specification and a sample question paper and model assignment are available on the relevant [qualifications pages of the OCR website](#) under the 'Support Materials' heading.



Frequently Asked Questions

What teaching resources are available?

Learning resources are an important part of any qualification and the Cambridge Nationals are no exception. We have a suite of support and learning resources that fulfil what teachers say they want.

We've worked in partnership with teachers and education specialists to develop ideas and ensure that there is a range of tasks that suit differing levels and abilities of students.

By working in this collaborative way, we have ensured that our range of resources supports classroom activities from lesson planning and teaching to monitoring student progression and success. This includes our 'teaching links' offering additional resource information and teaching tools such as games and activities directly linked to some units.

Other resources include:

- Administration guides and tools which include a 'rules of combination' online tool and a progress tracker.
- Specimen assessment material for the mandatory units
- Teaching packs including introductory unit presentations.

These resources are free and available to download from

www.ocr.org.uk/cambridgenationals.

Will I have the same moderator for three years?

Centres are never guaranteed to have the same moderator in each series. However, we are aware that continuity of visiting moderator is popular with centres and we aim to provide this where possible.

What moderation methods are available?

We offer three different moderation methods for you to choose from:

- A. Moderation via the OCR Repository
- B. Postal moderation
- C. Visiting moderation.

Within each series you must enter all candidates taking a particular unit for the same moderation method.

When can I arrange my moderator visit?

Moderators should contact you to arrange the visit – the dates by which this should happen for 2012/13 are in the [Admin Guide](#), where you will also find the periods during which visits will take place. Please note that, if entries for visiting moderation are not made on time, we may have to ask you to swap to the postal moderation option.

How many moderator visits will I receive per year?

If you enter for the visiting moderation option, you are entitled to two visits per year, per centre – these are likely to be arranged according to two moderation sessions – January/February and May/June. This is in keeping with the practice of the majority of schools.

Can I see assignments for all the optional units?

Yes. The bank of model assignments is available on the relevant [qualifications pages of the OCR website](#) for all units.

Will I be able to adapt the OCR assignments for the optional units?

Yes. Guidelines on adapting assignments will be provided with the published specification and in the assignments themselves.



Frequently Asked Questions

I'm used to making decisions about grades on the existing specification. Marking is a major change. Will I be provided with guidance?

Yes, guidance on marking is provided within the published specification. The marking grids are designed to be clear to follow. There will also be a national INSET programme, with venues across the UK, providing INSET on the implementation of the new qualifications.

If my moderator disagrees with my marking, will my candidates' marks be scaled?

Our hope is always that scaling will not be necessary. Scaling would only need to be applied if marking had not been carried out in line with the marking grids.

How much will the qualification cost?

Please see the [Fees List](#) on the OCR website.

Can I change which units I take after I've entered for the qualification, as I can at the moment?

Entries for individual units should be made once unit choices have been made. You will also need to make a certification entry for those candidates who are certifying the qualification.



www.ocr.org.uk

OCR customer contact centre

Vocational qualifications

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