

Exams during the 2020/2021 academic year

Questions for the DfE

On 1 October, **The Exams Office** forwarded the following questions on behalf of our members to the Department for Education via UNISON.

Replies will be added below as they are received.

Questions

- What is the contingency plan if we end up in a similar situation to last year - at which point/stage of the academic year will a final decision be made on the staging of examinations in the context of the amount of education which students have missed?
- How will exams be conducted and invigilated with so many invigilators giving up the role due to health concerns?
- With the suggestion of exams possibly starting later in summer 2021, how soon will we know the series dates and results dates so that centres can begin to plan ahead of the exam entry deadline of 21 February?
- If health regulations still apply, how will we accommodate examinations in separate rooms (for example, to facilitate access arrangements, or to ensure that only well-ventilated rooms are used etc)? Will this not create a lack of classrooms for other year groups?
- If the summer exam series is pushed back to June/early to mid-July, has the impact upon independent schools, who normally close for summer at the end of June/early July, been considered?
- How are centres expected to deal with a candidate who tests positive for Covid19 during the exam season which forces other candidates/potentially the rest of the year group to isolate for 2 weeks?
- To ensure that the latest exams-related information is received by exams officers could all DfE updates also be sent to exams officer registered on the National Centre Number Register?
- Will exams go ahead if the school/college is in an area where local restrictions are in place?

Replies

Received 2 October:

Hi,

Thanks for these. They are all very much live issues and are firmly on the radar of colleagues who are working through a very complex set of inter-related challenges.

It is likely that a decision on timing of the Summer 2021 exam series will be one of the first to be made. That decision needs to take into account the impact on a range of settings (including schools in Northern Ireland that have different term dates).

The one question exam colleagues may be able to respond to now is this one below. I am not sure how dissemination of this information works.

- *to ensure that the latest exams-related information is received by exams officers could all DfE updates also be sent to exams officer registered on the National Centre Number Register?*