

EXAMINATION INFORMATION

Qualifications

The internal assessment component of many standard qualifications and courses, such as National Vocational Qualifications and GCSE's can restrict the choice of qualifications which home educated children may wish to aspire to. Likewise GCSE qualifications are not offered or centrally organised by one examinations board. There are a number of different examination boards and each offers a variety of syllabuses. It is crucial therefore that if you wish your child to sit GCSE examinations; before embarking him/her on a particular course, you should first ensure that you identify a centre such as a school or college, which will accept his/her examination entry. In such circumstances you may find it helpful to consider the following procedures:

- If you have an existing and positive relationship with a school or college you may wish to enquire as to whether your child could be entered there for the exams you wish him/her to sit. At the same time you should ensure that the school or college would be willing to undertake to assess any coursework.
- If you do not have a relationship or contact with a school or college, you will need to contact an examinations board, which should be able to arrange a local centre on your behalf. If you do this you should also ensure that the board could arrange for any coursework to be assessed.

In either case you should ensure that you know and have a copy of the exact syllabus to be studied for that year. Examinations boards can supply syllabuses and copies of previous exam papers at nominal cost.

It is usual for GCSE courses to be studied over two years; some students however, can complete them in a single year. Examination entries need to be finalised in January prior to the exam (in June of that year). Careful, advanced planning is therefore essential.

If a child has been withdrawn from school in order to be home-educated part way through Key Stage 4, there may be a need to liaise with the school in order to ensure continuity of learning.

At present, home educated young people who take GCSEs as private candidates need to find someone who can authenticate the coursework

element of their GCSE and sign a statement vouching that this is all the student's own work. Many home educating families' sign up with a distance learning provider such as [NEC](#) or [Oxford Home Schooling](#).

Further information on GCSE Examination Boards

Oxford Cambridge & RSA (OCR)

OCR is one of three unitary examining bodies in England incorporating the RSA (Royal Society of Arts), UCLES (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate), and MEG (Midland Examining Group).

Contact: OCR Information Bureau, General Qualifications:

7-11, Hills Road

Cambridge

CB2 1BP.

Email helpdesk@ocr.org.uk Tel 01223 553998

Fax 01223 552627

OCR Information Bureau, Vocational Qualifications:

Progress House, Westwood Way, Coventry, CV4 8JQ

Telephone: 024 7647 0033

Fax: 024 7646 8080 email: cib@ocr.org.uk

Edexcel

Edexcel was formed in 1996 by the merger of BTEC and the University of London Examinations and Assessment Council (ULEAC). Edexcel is one of the main examination boards for England and Wales.

Contact: Edexcel,

Stewart House

32 Russell Square

London

WC1B 5DN.

Tel 0870 240 9800

Fax: 020 7758 6920

Website: www.edexcel.org.uk

Email: enquiries@edexcel.org.uk

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)

The AQA is one of three unitary examining bodies in England incorporating the now merged Associated Examining Board and the Northern Examinations and Assessment Board. The AQA also has responsibility for the City and Guilds' GNVQ qualification.

Contact: AQA

Devas Street

Manchester, M15 6EX

Telephone: 0161 953 1180

Fax: 0161 273 7572

Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Email: mailbox@aqa.or.uk

An alternative to GCSE is IGCSEs?

The **International General Certificate of Secondary Education** (IGCSE) is an international qualification for school students (usually aged 14 to 16).

- IGCSEs, like UK General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs), prepare students for further study, including progression to GCE AS or A levels, BTEC or employment.
- IGCSE exams are normally taken after two years' study, with the coursework (where taken) submitted in the second year.

What choices are available?

- There are currently 38 IGCSE subject qualifications available in the new IGCSE from 2009.
- Double awards are available for science.

What are IGCSEs worth?

- IGCSEs are recognised by academic institutions and employers around the world.
- University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) recognises IGCSEs as equivalent to the UK GCSE.

How are IGCSEs assessed?

- IGCSEs are 100% externally assessed.
- IGCSEs are graded in the same way as GCSEs (A* to G). For tiered subjects, Foundation tier papers are targeted at grades C to G, and Higher tier papers are targeted at grades A* to D. This allows students of all abilities the opportunity to gain good results.

Further information on IGCEs can be found on the following websites:

www.oxfordhomeschooling.co.uk

www.cie.org.uk

www.edexcel.com